GOSSIP AT THE OFFICE.- Culture and People.

Situation

Read the text and listen to the situation.

Script

It's a beautiful Saturday morning. For a change, the sun is shining and the weather forecast is promising, so the girls decide to go to St. James' park for a picnic. Their inseparable **Kate** goes with them. When they get to the park, they take all their stuff out and they lie down on the grass.

Lourdes: Umm this is the life! I love this feeling! I really needed a little bit of sun heating my face!

Susana: So did I! Ufff, it's so long since we saw a little ray of light!

Kate: Come on girls, don't exaggerate!the weather hasn't been that bad this year!

Lourdes and Susana: What???

Susana: Come on, **Kate**! It's been raining every day!

Kate: Oh girls, see that guy down there? (she whispers) The one in the red T-shirt!

Susana: Wow, he's really cute!

Kate: I know, we were dating for 6 months.

Lourdes: Really? What happened?

Kate: To keep it brief let's say he was very selfish! Well, he's Scottish after all!

Susana: Selfish? What does it have to do with being from Scotland?

Kate: Oh you don't know? she asked really surprised. Scottish people have a reputation for being selfish and tight-fisted, and in this case I can tell it's true! He would never buy me a drink or anything! No small gifts no nothing! The most boring six months of my life!

Lourdes: He, he... I guess that Scottish people have the same reputation as people from Catalonia in Spain!

Kate: Oh really? He, he... stereotypes are very common in all cultures, aren't they?

Susana: Yes! Come on Kate, please tell us some more!

1.- British stereotypes.

A **stereotype** is a fixed idea that people have about what specific social groups or individuals are like, especially an idea that is wrong. Other terms that are associated with the term stereotype are prejudice and cliché. The term has a Greek origin: "stereos" means solid or firm and "typos" mean blow, impression, engraved or mark. This term was first used in the printing business.

Because stereotypes are standardized and simplified ideas of groups, based on some prejudices, they are not derived from objective facts, but rather subjective and often unverifiable ideas. The existence of stereotypes may be explained by the need of groups of people to view themselves as more normal or more superior than other groups. Consequently, stereotypes may be used to justify ill-founded prejudices or ignorance and prevent people of stereotyped groups from entering or succeeding in various activities or fields.

However, stereotypes may also be a funny way of learning a language. Since they are based on old ideas and traditions, stereotypes can be a good way of getting to know a foreign culture.

If we take the British Isles for example, we observe four different countries: The Scots, Welsh and Northern Irish, of Celtic descendant, and the English from Angle-Saxon origin.

Though at first sight there are not many differences between them, especially for foreigners, if we asked people from these countries, we would find out that they see themselves very different. The English for example, like to see themselves as calm, reasonable, patient and commonsensical people, who should be distinguished from the excitable, romantic and impulsive Celts. The Celts on the other hand, may consider the English to be arrogant, patronising and cold, and themselves having all the virtues.

According to tradition, the English are usually associated to the London City gent with his bowler hat and umbrella. They love queuing and they spent the whole day drinking and drinking cups of tea. Opposite to them, the Scottish have a reputation for being rude and they prefer drinking Scotch whisky while wearing their beloved quilt and bagpipes.

On the other hand, the Welsh only speak about sheep, they always wear a woollen pullover or a red rugby top and they spend the day singing 'Delilah' by their idol, Tom Jones.

Finally, the Irish are well-known for being friendly and very talkative, and they always spend the day at Irish pubs drinking Guinness. By means of curiosity, in every British joke, the Irish are always the unintelligent ones.

Facts or fiction? What do you think? If you want to find out, you'd better go to the British Isles!

? Now it's your turn

Read the previous text again and answer the following questions.
A stereotype is:

- ○ a wrong way of judging people.
- ○ silly things that pass from one generation to another.
- ○ a group concept without taking personal characteristics into account.

How many countries are there in the British Isles:

- ○ Four: England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- ○ Four: England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.
- ○ Five: England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland.

According to Irish, Welsh and Scottish people, what are the English like?

- ○ They are arrogant, patronizing and cold.
- ○ They are romantic, impulsive and excitable.
- ○ None of the others.

Tom Jones is from:

- ○ England.
- ○ Scotland.
- ○ Wales.

In British jokes, who are always the silly ones?

○ Northern Irish.
○ The Irish.
○ The Scottish.

❓ Now it's your turn

What do you think about stereotypes?
Do you agree with them?
Think about the most common stereotypes in Spain and tell your classmates on the forum.

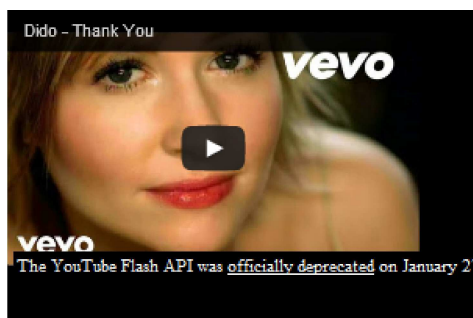[Submit]

1.1.- Song.

Think about it

Look at this picture. Do you know this woman? Can you guess her name?

1. Gwyneth Paltrow.
2. Dido.
3. Avril Lavigne.

Dido was born in 1971 in London. She is a world-wide famous singer and she has won several awards including the MTV Europe Music Award and the BRIT awards for Best British Female and Best Album.

"Thank you" is one of Dido's most acclaimed and famous songs. It first appeared in 1998, though it wasn't released as a single until 2000. It appeared on a famous film, and it has recently been featured by Eminem in his song "Stan." Do you already know which song are we talking about? Click on the link below and have fun watching the video.

Text summary

A step ahead

If you want to sing along with the video you can read the lyrics here.

Text summary

? Now it's your turn

Having enjoyed the song, answer these questions.

1. Who did she write this song for? Surf the net for this information.
2. At the beginning of the song, two construction workers put a notice on a door. What does this notice say?

Submit

Think about it

Now, it is time to learn some curiosities about her life. Surf the net for the following information.

1. **When is her birthday? When does she officially celebrate it?**
2. **According to Dido, what was the most irritating thing that her parents did to her when she was born?**
3. **In the text above, it is mentioned that Dido's "Thank you" appeared on a famous film. Which one?**

Appendix.- Licenses of resources.

Licenses of Resources used in Culture and People

Resource (1)	Resource information (1)	Resource (2)	Resource inf
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