



**Región de Murcia**

Consejería de Educación, Formación y Empleo  
Dirección General de Promoción, Ordenación  
e Innovación Educativa

**PREMIOS EXTRAORDINARIOS DE  
BACHILLERATO  
(2010-2011)**

**COOL BRITANNIA**

Cool Britannia is a term used in some media to describe the contemporary culture of the United Kingdom, coined in the mid-1990s and closely associated with the “New Labour” government of Tony Blair. It is a pun on the title of the patriotic song “Rule Britannia”.

The phrase “Cool Britannia” was first used in 1967 as a song title by the Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band, but there is no connection between that usage and the modern coining of the term. This seems to have arisen from the description of London in Newsweek in late 1996 as “coolest capital city on the planet”. The phrase was coined shortly after and widely used in the media and in advertising. The election of Blair’s government in 1997 in a platform of modernization and with Blair as a relatively young Prime Minister gave the idea of fresh currency. (There is a strong parallel between this and the catch-phrase “Swinging London” during the early years of Harold Wilson’s Labour government.)

To the extent that it had any real meaning, “Cool Britannia” referred to the transient fashionable London scene, the 1990s bands such as Blur, Oasis, and later the Spice Girls, fashion designers and magazines. By 1998 the Economist was commenting that many people are already sick of the phrase and by 2000 it was being used mainly in a mocking or ironic way.

Similar terms for Wales and Scotland, “Cool Cymru” and “Cool Caledonia” respectively, were coined but had next to no currency whatsoever and to this day most people have never heard of them.

“Cool Britannia” was also a registered trade mark for one of Ben and Jerry’s ice-creams (vanilla with strawberries and chocolate covered shortbread), designed for the British market.



**1. Are the following statements true / false or you don't know? Underline the right answer. (1.5 marks)**

a. The modern coining of the term is closely related to the song "Cool Britannia"

True

False

We don't know

b. The term was spread due to its use in the media and in advertising

True

False

We don't know

c. Prime Minister Tony Blair gave the idea of introducing this term.

True

False

We don't know

d. People didn't want to hear about the terms "Cool Cymro" and "Cool Calcedonia" for Wales and Scotland respectively.

True

False

We don't know

e. By 2000 the term "Cool Britannia" wasn't used any longer with the same connotations as it was used in the 1990s.

True

False

We don't know

f. The phrase "Cool Britannia" is also used as an ice-cream flavor in the UK

True

False

We don't know



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### **2-Find words or expressions in the text that mean the following (1.5 marks):**

- a. Invented (1<sup>st</sup> paragraph)
- b. Humorous use of different words which sound the same (1<sup>st</sup> paragraph)
- c. Relationship (2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph)
- d. Fed up with (2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph)
- e. The state of being in common or general use (2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph)
- f. Lasting for a short time only (3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph)

### **3-Complete the sentences using information from the text. Avoid copying literally from the text. (2 marks)**

- a. In 1967 Bonzo Dog Doo Dan Band ...
- b. The description of London in Newsweek ...
- c. The idea of fresh currency ...
- d. 1990s bands such as Blur and Oasis ...

### **4-To which main points is the term “Cool Britannia” associated ? (25-50 words) (2 marks)**

### **5-What are the advantages and disadvantages of a great capital such as London, Madrid, Paris... or any other you know? (50 -75 words) (3 marks)**