

**What do a red cross, roses, three lions and Jerusalem have in common? Listen and find out.**

**Optional activity:**

While you listen, decide whether the following sentences are true or false.

Sentence	True or False?
1. The Saint George's Cross can be seen in the Union Jack.	
2. Saint George was a Christian martyr from the eleventh century.	
3. Saint George's day, on 23rd April, is a very special day for the majority of English people.	
4. Both the red rose and the white rose are symbols of England.	
5. 'Jerusalem' is the official English national anthem.	

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**Three Symbols, a Saint and a Song**

One of England's symbols that you will recognise from football shirts around the world is the Saint George's Cross: a red cross on a white background. This is the English flag and it is also incorporated into the Union Jack; the flag of Great Britain. The design for the flag can be traced back to the eleventh century when the English soldiers taking part in the Holy Crusades used to wear it into battle. They adopted the cross at the same time as they adopted Saint George himself; a fourth century Christian martyr, to be the Patron saint of England. Saint George's day is England's National day. It falls on April 24<sup>th</sup> but is not celebrated extensively. It was not until 1277 that the flag was officially declared the national flag of England.

Let's move on to plants and flowers. While Wales has the daffodil and the leek, Scotland the thistle and Northern Ireland the shamrock, England's flower is of course the rose. Everybody talks about the English rose. We are used to seeing the red rose as an insignia on the England national rugby team's shirts and it is this red rose that we usually associate with England. But the white rose is also linked to England and is used on different occasions. When we sometimes refer to a certain type of woman as being "An English Rose" we are talking about an unflawed complexion, fair skin and a faint blush of pink about the cheeks – the colours of the roses that we find in gardens all over the nation.

Besides a cross and a rose, England also has a third symbol: Three Lions. Once again, the national football team wears the three lions on the pitch and so does the English national cricket team of course.

And what about music? A national anthem? Well, England does not have an official anthem of its own but over the years the hymn "Jerusalem" has become associated with the nation and has taken on the role of national anthem. We hear it played at sporting events and even at Royal weddings or funerals. "Jerusalem" was originally written in 1804 as a poem by William Blake and the music was composed later by Hubert Parry, in 1916. It might be fitting to end this talk with what has become England's national hymn.

**Jerusalem**

And did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon England's mountains green?  
And was the holy Lamb of God  
On England's pleasant pastures seen?  
And did the Countenance Divine  
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?  
And was Jerusalem builded here  
Among these dark Satanic Mills?  
Bring me my Bow of burning gold;  
Bring me my Arrows of desire;  
Bring me my Spear; O clouds unfold!  
Bring me my Chariot of fire!  
I will not cease from Mental Fight,  
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand,  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green & pleasant Land.

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**Answer key:** 1 T, 2 F, 3 F, 4 T, 5 F