

Would an independent Scotland be better off than as a part of the UK?

Facts:

- Although a majority of Scots (about 55%) voted to remain in the UK in the 2014 referendum, the cause for Scottish independence has gathered new momentum after Britain voted to leave the European Union in 2016.
- In the wake of the Brexit referendum, Nicola Sturgeon, the First Minister of Scotland, has announced plans for a second referendum bill in order to defend Scotland's "Remain" vote.
- At the moment, about 65% of Scotland's exports go to the rest of the UK (excluding oil and gas)

Data extracted from: [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scotland#/media/File:Scotland's_international_trade_under_independence.png); <http://fullfact.org/scotland/scotlands-international-trade-under-independence/>; http://www.jkrowling.com/en_GB/#/news-events/latest ; <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/24/scotland-oil-money-nationalist-dream-nicola-sturgeon-independence> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/oct/15/nicola-sturgeon-scotland-trade-eu-scottish-national-party>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scotland creates a large part of the UK's revenue. Most of the money, however, is siphoned off to Westminster and does not come back to the people who generated it in the first place. An independent Scotland would be able to use 100% of the oil and gas revenue it creates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An independent Scotland would have to decide on a lot of currency-related issues – keep the Pound in a currency union, or introduce the Euro? Whatever the decision, Scotland will not be able to decide alone. Either alternative might be vetoed by the UK or the EU.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advocates of Scottish independence say that oil and gas revenue will make Scotland a very rich country and provide more than enough money to finance independence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At the moment, pensions are managed by the UK government. An independent Scotland would have to remove Scottish pensioners from the system and set up its own pension scheme. This process would doubtlessly be fraught with enormous difficulties, especially if we consider the fact that Scotland has a more rapidly ageing population than the rest of the UK, combined with a shrinking working age population.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If Scotland became independent all the British forces would have to leave, including the nuclear Trident submarines stationed on the Scottish coast. Thus, Scotland would have the chance to create a nuclear-free state and divert the funds used for the upkeep of a nuclear fleet to areas like housing, education etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An independent Scotland would be totally dependent on North Sea oil and gas. However, there are no clear and reliable estimates of how much oil there really is. Running out of oil resources would plunge an independent Scotland into a severe financial crisis. From 2014 to 2015, Scotland's share of the oil and gas revenue collapsed from £1.8bn to £60m, pushing up Scotland's fiscal deficit to nearly £15bn.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scotland has the highest potential in Europe to tap tidal and wave power. However, the UK government has chosen not to follow the EU's goals for renewable energies but focuses on nuclear and gas-fired power stations instead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With the possibility of a "hard Brexit" looming on the horizon, Scotland would probably have to choose between free trade with either the EU or the UK. If an independent Scotland were a member of the EU, they would not have any power to negotiate a special free trade deal with the UK.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unlike the rest of the UK, Scotland has always had a very positive attitude to the EU. Therefore, an independent Scotland would quickly become a new member of the EU and might even be allowed to join the Eurozone. Remaining in the UK would mean Scotland would have to share the government's anti-EU policies although the country does not agree with them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Just being Euro-friendly will not guarantee quick admission to the EU. Countries like Spain would probably veto a Scottish application because they do not want to give fuel to their own regions seeking independence (e.g. Catalonia).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Many people believe that going independent would spark off a renaissance of Scottish culture and self-confidence along with an increased international standing and global influence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "This separation will not be quick and clean: it will take microsurgery to disentangle three centuries of close interdependence, after which we will have to deal with three bitter neighbours." (J.K. Rowling)