

Anger in UK over wildlife pictures on banknotes

19th March 2026



Some people in the UK are angry that pictures on British banknotes will change. Their anger has been caused by the Bank of England replacing famous historical figures with wildlife. The process to make this change was

democratic. More than 26,000 people voted after a public discussion. The theme of nature was the most popular choice. This means national heroes like WWII leader Sir Winston Churchill, writer Jane Austen, and artist JMW Turner will be replaced by animals and birds. Sustainability expert Ali Fisher said: "This is a powerful reminder of how deeply people feel connected to and value British wildlife." She added: "It's a beautiful opportunity to put biodiversity in all our hands."

The Bank explained that images of wildlife would make faking banknotes more difficult. It said nature was a great choice when looking at the security of banknotes. Despite this, many leading politicians are very unhappy about removing the historical figures. The head of the Conservative Party said: "Removing Churchill from banknotes is erasing our history. Changing the pictures to put wild animals on them is a silly thing to do. I absolutely do not support it." The Liberal Democrat Party leader said: "I can't think of a worse time to do this with a war waging in Europe." However, Churchill's granddaughter had no problem with an animal replacing her grandfather.

Sources: euronews.com / yahoo.com / bbc.com

Writing

All banknotes and coins should have pictures of national heroes on them. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

angry / banknotes / bank / democratic / discussion / choice / artist / biodiversity / bird / wildlife / nature / politician / historical figure / history / silly things / war / grandfather

True / False

- 1) The Bank of London is changing the pictures on Scottish banknotes. T / F
- 2) More than 26,000 people voted to choose the new banknote theme. T / F
- 3) Pictures of wildlife will replace figures from politics, literature, and art. T / F
- 4) Very few British people feel connected to nature. T / F
- 5) Pictures of animals and birds make it more difficult to fake banknotes. T / F
- 6) All British politicians think the wildlife pictures are a good idea. T / F
- 7) A politician said changing banknotes at a time of war is a bad idea. T / F
- 8) A grandchild of Winston Churchill has no problem with the new images. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. angry | a. safety |
| 2. replacing | b. specialist |
| 3. theme | c. totally |
| 4. expert | d. substituting |
| 5. opportunity | e. issue |
| 6. faking | f. chance |
| 7. security | g. furious |
| 8. erasing | h. forging |
| 9. absolutely | i. deleting |
| 10. problem | j. subject |

Discussion – Student A

- a) Is the British English word 'banknote' or American English 'bill' best?
- b) What do you think of the design of banknotes in your country?
- c) Do you like banknotes, or is digital money better?
- d) What are the pros and cons of using cash?
- e) What do you think of the anger in the UK over the wildlife pictures?
- f) Which are better to put on banknotes, wildlife or national heroes?
- g) How connected do you feel to nature?
- h) How much do you worry about biodiversity?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Some people in | a. figures with wildlife |
| 2. replacing famous historical | b. banknotes more difficult |
| 3. The theme of nature was the most | c. our hands |
| 4. how deeply people feel connected to and | d. Europe |
| 5. put biodiversity in all | e. value British wildlife |
| 6. images of wildlife would make faking | f. thing to do |
| 7. Removing Churchill from banknotes is | g. the UK are angry |
| 8. a silly | h. erasing our history |
| 9. I can't think of a worse time | i. popular choice |
| 10. a war waging in | j. to do this |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you think of what the angry politicians said?
- What do you think of the pictures on your banknotes?
- Why might pictures of animals be more difficult to fake?
- Who are your country's most important historical figures?
- What do you know about Sir Winston Churchill?
- Do you agree with what Sir Winston Churchill's daughter said?
- What questions would you like to ask a banknote designer?

Spelling

- replacing famous sltiaircho figures
- The ropessc to make this change
- Sustainability rtpex
- velua British wildlife
- a beautiful nptotproyui
- put dtiroyvebiis in all our hands
- iesmag of wildlife
- iakgfn banknotes
- looking at the curyesit of banknotes
- many leading csalitipnoi are very unhappy
- isgeran our history
- I oalbslteyu do not support it

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. j	4. b	5. f
6. h	7. a	8. i	9. c	10. e

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions. (Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	What is replacing the pictures on the banknotes?
2.	How many people voted to change the banknotes?
3.	Which writer is going to be replaced by an image of wildlife?
4.	What might the new banknotes make people value?
5.	What did a sustainability expert say people could have in their hands?
6.	What do wildlife pictures make it more difficult to do?
7.	What did the head of the Conservative Party say is being erased?
8.	What did the head of the Conservative Party call the change?
9.	Where did the leader of the Liberal Democrat Party say war was waging?
10.	Who had no problem with Sir Winston Churchill's image being replaced?

Speaking – Banknote Pics

Rank these with your partner. Put the best pictures to put on banknotes at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| • National heroes | • Literary characters |
| • Wild animals | • Famous buildings |
| • Flowers | • Shopping items |
| • National food | • Famous paintings |

Answers – True False

1	F	2	T	3	T	4	F	5	T	6	F	7	F	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.