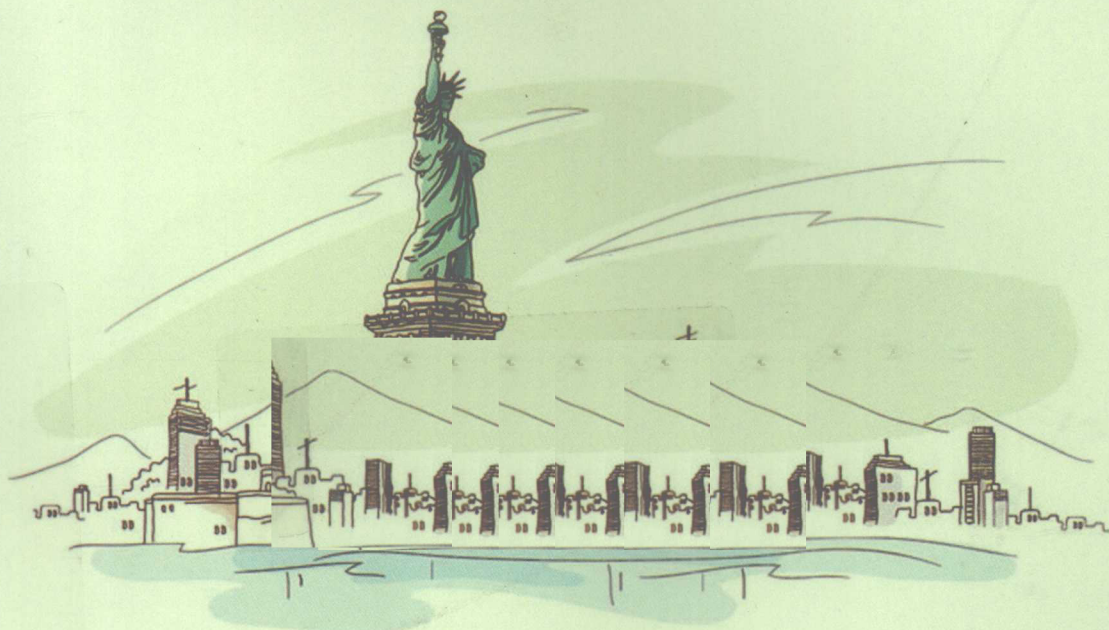




普通高等学校“十一五”规划教材

# 英美文化简明教程

马海英 编著



国防工业出版社

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# 英美文化简明教程

国防工业出版社

·北京·

## 内 容 简 介

本书面向高职高专英语专业的学生编写,从自然地理、社会历史、政治体制、经济生活、教育体系、科学成果、文学名家、宗教流派、风俗习惯、家庭社会、体育运动等几个方面较为全面地介绍英美两国的基本状况,并在成书的过程中,尽量收录了最新的官方资料和统计数字。

全书共两部分。第一部分共 14 章,全面介绍英国文化。第二部分共 15 章,全方位介绍美国文化。特别要说明的是,本书第 14 章和第 29 章是编者针对高职高专院校普遍对英美文学开课不足的状况着力安排的内容,使本教材更具针对性。

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# 前 言

本书面向高职高专英语专业的学生编写，共两部分。第一部分共 14 章，介绍英国文化；第二部分共 15 章，介绍美国文化。

本书介绍英美两国的自然地理、社会历史、政治体制、经济生活、教育体系、科学成果、文学名家、宗教流派、风俗习惯、家庭生活、体育运动等基本概况，以期帮助专科学生了解并掌握一定的英美社会文化知识，初步形成跨文化交际意识，进而提高英语交际能力。

本书各章节力求重点突出，同时材料尽量宽泛，以适应专科学生课时设置的特点。本书语言通俗易懂，除一些专业术语不可避免外，尽量做到语言的日常化，更利于高职高专学生的学习。各章前均有导语，学习目标一目了然；各章后有讨论话题，既可巩固学生所学知识，又可以提高表达能力，活跃课堂气氛。

特别要说明的是，本书第一部分第 14 章和第二部分第 29 章是编者针对高职高专院校对英美文学开课不足的状况着力安排的内容，这使得本书更具针对性。另外本书中未加注释，没有图片和附录，主要是考虑到目前网络的普及性和学生上网查询的便捷性，这也使得本书更加简明。

本书在编写过程中参考了大量前辈和同仁的著作，对于诸位作者在此遥表感谢。

由于编者水平所限，书中难免存在不足之处，恳请读者批评指正，不胜感激。

编 者

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# **Part 1 The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

## **Chapter 1 Physiographical Features**

*Directions:* The chapter focuses on the different names of the UK, some are formal, some are not; and the size of the country, including the total area, also the area of each part; besides, the location of the UK in geography, in addition to some basic physiographical features, from landform to weather all over the UK.

### **1.1 Name, Size and Location**

#### **1.1.1 Name**

England, Britain, Great Britain, the British Isles and the United Kingdom are used to mean the same country. Strictly speaking, England, Britain, Great Britain and the British Isles are used to be called geographically, since England is only one part of Great Britain, which doesn't include Northern Ireland, however, the British Isles include Great Britain and the whole of Ireland, which contains both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, which doesn't belong to the UK, for it was self-governing in 1937. The United Kingdom is the official name, the full title is "the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland", and the UK for short. The UK is made up of four parts: England in the south, Scotland in the north and Wales in the southwest, the three parts are on the island of Great Britain, the other part is Northern Ireland, located on the island of Ireland, which is separated from the island of Great Britain.

### 1.1.2 Size

The total area of the UK is 2,441,000 km<sup>2</sup> (1985), it runs over 1,000 kilometers from south to north and extends, at the widest part, about 500 kilometers. The UK consists of Scotland, Wales and England, and also about one-sixth of Ireland, the Northern part, of which England has an area of about 1,304,000 km<sup>2</sup>, Scotland has about 788,000 km<sup>2</sup>, Wales has about 207,000 km<sup>2</sup> and Northern Ireland has about 141,000 km<sup>2</sup>, covering about one-sixth area of Ireland.

### 1.1.3 Location

The UK is situated in the northwest of Europe, lying to the north of France and the west of the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway, the English Channel separates it from the continent of Europe. On the north and the east, it faces the North Sea and on the west, it faces the Atlantic Ocean. It lies between 50° and 60° north latitude, and roughly between 2° east and 8° west longitude. The prime meridian of 0° just passes through the old observatory at Greenwich.

## 1.2 Physiographical Features

### 1.2.1 England

England is predominately a flatland or undulating country, although there are the Pennines in the north and the moorlands in Yorkshire. The flatlands are mainly in the east and the south, crossed or dotted by the Cotswolds, Lincolnshire Wolds, Chiltern Hills, Berkshire Downs, and the Weald. It is sometimes called the Lowland Zone.

The Pennines is a kind of “upland”. Since the 19th century, it has been called the “Backbone of England”, which runs about 120 kilometers from the south to the north. In the west of the Pennines is the Lake District which consists of a crudely radial arrangement of lakes set in spectacular U-shaped valleys among jagged mountains. This area is quiet and beautiful, which is also called the Lake Poets, for many famous English poets, such as William Wordsworth (1770—1850) and Samuel Coleridge (1772—1834), are connected with it. To the north of the Pennines lie the Cheviot Hills along the border with Scotland.

Mountains and Slieve Gullion. In the north, a broad plateau terraced around its sides, leads to the splendid north coast where the Giant's Causeway can be seen near Ballycastle.

## **1.3 Climate and Weather**

### **1.3.1 Climate**

The climate of the UK is much milder than that of any other places in the same latitude, Alaska in the USA, Kanchaka in Russia, and Heilongjiang in China. Its climate is generally mild and temperate. Prevailing winds are southwesterly.

There are three main features about the climate in Britain. The first feature is more fog; London used to have fog and smog in winter. The second is more rainy days and less sunny weather, sunny days are rare. That's why English people often have their umbrellas with them when going out. The third is its instability or changeability. All the seasons are very variable; there is no part of the year at which it is possible to expect the weather exactly. It is an insular country with an insular climate. And Englishmen describe this peculiar meteorological conditions of their country as "other countries have a climate; in England we have weather".

### **1.3.2 Weather**

Some English people claim that they have no climate but weather in England. Their argument is based on the variability of their weather and the small differences between the seasons.

Generally, the weather in Britain is neither too cold in winter nor too hot in summer, and the annual temperature is about 10°C, varying from around 5°C in the coldest month to 17°C in the warmest month on an average. In winter the temperature falls steadily. There are rarely extremes of coldness or heat in Britain.

In all parts of Britain it rains every month of the year, there is usually more rain in the west than in the east, there is no "dry season", and more snow in the north than in the south. So it is colder in the north, warmer in the south, drier in the east and wetter in the west. Ireland is especially wet. Snow falls in Scotland every winter, and sometimes in England and Wales too. Falls of snow in Ireland are most unusual. But

thanks to the Gulf Stream, the Western Isles of Scotland sometimes have milder winter days than the south of France.

**Discussions:**

1. The location and the physiographical features of the UK.
2. The weather and the climate of the UK.

## **Chapter 2    The History of the UK**

**Directions:** This chapter deals with the long history of the UK, from the very beginning until now, it shows several notable events, which effect on the developing of the history.

### **1. Early Periods ( before 55B.C.)**

Before the great Ice Age, Great Britain was joined to the continent of Europe. It was then that men first came to Great Britain. They were usually called cave men or the Stone Age men. The severing of the land bridge, about 6000—5000 B.C., had significant effects on Britain. Migration became more difficult and remained for a long time impossible to large numbers.

After a very long period of time, about 3000 B.C., Iberians from the Mediterranean lands sailed right up the west coast of England and around Scotland to Scandinavia, for at that time the English Channel was still impassable. Some of them settled in Britain.

From about 750 B.C. the Celtic tribes who had crossed from Europe in search of empty lands began to settle in the country. The first to come were the Gaels, whose language is still spoken in Scotland. From about 500 B.C. another group of the Celts called Britons, from whom the modern Welsh are mainly descended, arrived and drove the Gaels to the north. The third group came around 100 B.C. from Gaul.

Among the Celtic tribes, the Britons were quite numerous. With their developed knowledge of agriculture, the growth of their towns and the beginning of trade with the continent, they had a civilization of their own. Their society practised a kind of primitive communism.

### **2. The Roman Occupation (55 B.C. -410)**

Between 55 and 54 B.C. Julius Caesar, a Roman general, invaded Britain twice. Because of the resistance of the British people, he returned to the continent with hostages, having imposed a small tribute. For 96 years after the nominal conquest by Julius Caesar, Britain was left in peace and freedom.

The real conquest began in 43 A.D. after a series of small battles. The British

chieftains were defeated and Britain now became a Roman province in name, though the conquest of England took quite a long time on account of fierce British fighting against the Romans time and time again. There was a marked contrast in attitude towards the Roman occupation between the lowland Britons on the one hand and the inhabitants of Wales and the mountainous Scotland on the other. The lowland Britons had an economy based on settled agriculture, and they soon accepted and appreciated the Roman way of life. The hill dwellers had an economy based on sheep and their freedom of life was threatened by the Roman urban civilization. Resistance in Wales was stamped out in the first century A.D., but even so, Roman influences were still weakened except in the plain of Glamorgan. In the Pennines, the Picts and the Scots living in Scotland frequently revolted against the Romans.

The Roman occupation lasted almost 350 years. The resulting growth of its civilization was more obvious in urban among the agricultural peasants and weakest in the resistant highland zone. In the southeastern part, the Romans influenced life and culture radically. The English upper classes were thoroughly Romans and transformed into Roman landlords and officials.

With the downfall of the Roman Empire, Roman power in Britain collapsed in 410, leaving behind a leaderless and defenceless people who were no match for the fierce northern tribes that now poured into the island.

### **3. Anglo-Saxon Times (410-870)**

The northern tribes began to come to England from the continent in the middle of the 5th century. They were the Germanic tribes: the Angles, Saxons and Jutes. The first arrivals were invited by a British king to defend his kingdom against the Pits and Scots. They were conscious of their kinship with the continental Germans and were little influenced by the civilization of the previous inhabitants. These newcomers were farmers and fishermen, soldiers and sailors, so they combined all the qualities that were necessary to develop and defend an independent island. They spoke a language that we now call Old English. The Anglo-Saxons worshipped northern gods. The Celts, in spite of brave leaders, one of whom may have been King Arthur, were wholly defeated. Those who escaped the sword were pushed back into the mountains of Wales or Scotland or across to Ireland, where their separate languages, Welsh, Gaelic, and Erse, may still be heard.

Before long the distinctions between these three tribes lost significance, and by the end of the 7th century they regarded themselves as "the nation of the English ". But they lacked unity and English was divided into a number of kingdoms, considered by

historians to have been seven and therefore the “Heptarchy”. The various kings of England fought one another for supremacy. The fighting lasted for almost 200 years. Finally in 829 Wessex won the overlordship of all the rest, and Egbert, the king of Wessex, began to call himself “King of the English”. By this time Danish Viking raids were a great threat and Egbert’s son, who succeeded him in 839, combined the kingdoms against the Vikings.

#### **4. The Invasion of the Vikings and the Danish Rule (871-1042)**

Around the turn of the 8th century northern warriors, called the Vikings, invaded England. Some of them came from Norway and attacked the rocky coasts of Scotland and northern England, but the main body came from Denmark. They sailed up the rivers of the east and south, seized one small Saxon kingdom after another. When their land was almost completely lost, the Saxons were saved by the courage of King Alfred of Wessex, who defeated the Danes through many great battles. Alfred was considered the first national hero.

Near the end of the 10th century, during the reign of Ethelred, fresh waves of fierce Danish fighters from the continent attacked the south. In 1013 the Danish king, Sweyn, became master of England, soon afterwards Sweyn died, and the English sent for their “lawful king”. So Ethelred came back. After his death in 1016, his son, Edmund, fought most heroically against the Danes, but he could not get enough forces to drive the Danes out. So he made an agreement with Canute, the son of Sweyn, providing that the country should be divided between them. Very soon after the treaty, Edmund died with mysterious suddenness, and Canute became the ruler of England.

Canute died in 1035 and his two sons, Harold I and Hardecanute, reigned successively. After the death of Hardecanute in 1042 there was no capable man of the Danish line to claim the throne. The English once again ruled England.

#### **5. The Norman Conquest and Its Consequence (1066)**

Normandy was the most highly organized state in Europe at that time. The Norman Duke owed loyalty to the kings of France; but in fact they were completely independent. The Norman ruling class was Scandinavian Vikings who had settled down and adopted the French language and religion. There were a number of lords, but the most important class was the knights. These knights were small landowners who were also experienced professional soldiers, for they held their lands on condition that they fought for their lords whenever necessary. Their lords owed the same duty to the duke.

The Danish kings ruled England until 1042 when Hardecanute died without a son and Ethelred’s son Edward became king. He was known as the “Confessor” because of



his reputation for saintliness.

Edward ruled for 24 years and died in January 1066. Harold II, Earl of Wessex, was chosen to be king. Though he was not from a royal family, he had proved himself to be a great warrior and he was accepted as king upon Edward's recommendation. Yet there were several other claimants to the throne including William, Duke of Normandy and the King of Norway. When William heard the news of Harold II's coronation, he got very angry and claimed that he had the sole right to be king of England because Edward had promised the crown to him and that Harold II had promised to help him become king of England.

In September, Duke William landed on the Sussex coast. Learning the news of the landing, Harold II rushed south. On October 14, the two armies met 9 miles from Hastings. Harold II's forces numbered more than those of William's, but many of them were gentlemen of the countryside and half-armed rustics and had no experience of fighting against cavalry, and the Normans were the finest fighting horsemen. The battle went on all day and ended only at dusk, when Harold II was killed and his army completely defeated. The Battle of Hastings paved the way for the conquest of England.

On Christmas Day of 1066, Duke William, known in history as William the Conqueror, was crowned in Westminster Abbey. In the following years, William the Conqueror put down one uprising after another, made an expedition into the south of Scotland and invaded Wales.

William the Conqueror established a strong monarchy in England. The Norman lords received land grants from the king after the Conquest, and in turn they were bound to regard the king as their feudal superior, to pay him certain dues and to do their military service for him if necessary. William the Conqueror required his vassals to take an oath that they would be faithful to him against all other men. This pledge bound the vassals directly to the king even against their immediate feudal lords. After William confiscated the land from the Anglo-Saxon nobility, he owned one seventh of the cultivated land and all the forests. So the land directly under him was larger than that of any of his lords. Instead of giving each of his Norman lords one large piece of land, he gave them several pieces in different parts of the country. This made it more difficult for them to rise up against him. Thus the feudal system of England acquired a more centralized character than in other European countries of the time.

## **6. Henry II and His Reform**

After the William's death, his great grand-nephew became king as Henry II