

高等学校英语 **拓展** 系列教程

英语国家概况 (修订版)

A GUIDE TO ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

© 主编：谢福之

语言文化类

外语教学与研究出版社
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前言

随着我国国际交往的日益频繁和涉外工作的需要，大学生不仅要学好英语，提高语言综合运用能力，还应加深对主要英语国家社会与文化的了解，提升文化素养，提高多元文化意识和跨文化交际能力。

《英语国家概况》是高等院校普遍开设、并深受学生欢迎的一门课程。本教材自 2007 年出版以来，被许多院校选用，并受到广大师生的一致好评。为了带给学生最新的文化体验，使学生及时了解主要英语国家的社会发展和变化，时隔六年之后，我们对教材进行了修订，更新了部分内容、信息，并补充了近几年这些国家社会文化发展的概况。同时，为了加深学生对文化信息的理解，带给学生更加直观的文化感受，修订版采用彩色装帧设计，并且甄选出教材中的重要文化信息辅以图片和文字说明。

本教材共分为 18 章，介绍了六个主要英语国家（英国、爱尔兰、美国、加拿大、澳大利亚和新西兰）的社会与文化，涵盖地理、历史、政治、经济、教育和文学等各个方面。对各国的介绍内容相对统一，但也根据各国的社会文化特点，选取其特色之处进行了重点介绍。

本教材具有以下主要特点：

- 一、参考资料权威、丰富。作者参考了众多国内外出版的权威报刊、杂志、教材、对外宣传材料及相关部门的官方网站，对大量的信息进行筛选，力求使编入教材的内容准确、客观、翔实。
- 二、选材新，紧跟时代和社会的发展。编写过程中，我们尽量选用最新的材料和统计数据，不仅涵盖了 20 世纪末到本世纪初所发生的重大事件，而且对于近期发生的事件，也介绍了其最新进展情况。
- 三、内容编排合理，适合课堂教学。教材每章围绕一个主题，各个章节既自成一体，又紧密联系。教师可根据学生水平和具体的课时安排选用部分章节进行课堂教学，其他章节可安排学生课外自学。

四、语言难易适中，有利于自主学习。教材尽量选用常用词汇，便于学生自主阅读和学习。对于较难的词汇和专有名词，教材给出了中文注释，便于学生理解章节内容，免去查证之苦；为一些重要文化信息提供了脚注，便于学生了解相关的背景知识，加深理解。

五、练习丰富、题型多样。每章提供了四种形式的练习，便于教师对学生进行测评和学生自测。此次修订，在每章前增设 Think and Talk 这一版块，以问题的形式提示章节中的重要文化信息，启发学生积极思考，并激发其学习兴趣。各章后增设 Learn and Check 这一版块，帮助学生回顾、总结章节的主要内容。

六、补充资源丰富，帮助学生拓展视野。教材配有四个附录，便于学生查找相关信息，也可作为学习内容。此外，教材还配有学习课件，提供补充文化信息、视频资源等，帮助学生更加全面地理解教材的文化内涵。

外语教学与研究出版社的领导和编辑在本教材的编写和修订过程中给予了很多支持和帮助；Matthew Korean（英）和 Oliver Ross（美）审阅了全稿，并提出了许多宝贵意见；胡永华和陈泳均两位老师帮助收集了很多资料，并参加了部分编写工作。在此一并表示感谢。

由于编者水平有限，本书难免有不足之处，敬请读者指正。

谢福之

2013年3月

Contents



The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------|-----|
| Chapter 1 | Geography, People and Language | /2 |
| Chapter 2 | History | /13 |
| Chapter 3 | Government and the Commonwealth | /30 |
| Chapter 4 | Economy | /43 |
| Chapter 5 | Education, Media and Holidays | /53 |
| Chapter 6 | Literature | /66 |



The Republic of Ireland

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------------|-----|
| Chapter 7 | Society and Culture | /82 |
|-----------|---------------------|-----|



The United States of America

- | | | |
|------------|-------------------------------|------|
| Chapter 8 | Geography and People | /100 |
| Chapter 9 | History | /112 |
| Chapter 10 | Government | /125 |
| Chapter 11 | Economy | /139 |
| Chapter 12 | Education, Media and Holidays | /150 |
| Chapter 13 | Literature | /163 |



Canada

Chapter 14 Geography and History /180

Chapter 15 Government and Society /192



Australia

Chapter 16 Geography and History /206

Chapter 17 Government and Society /222



New Zealand

Chapter 18 Society and Culture /242

Key to Exercises /259

Appendices /279

Appendix 1 Shires of the United Kingdom /279

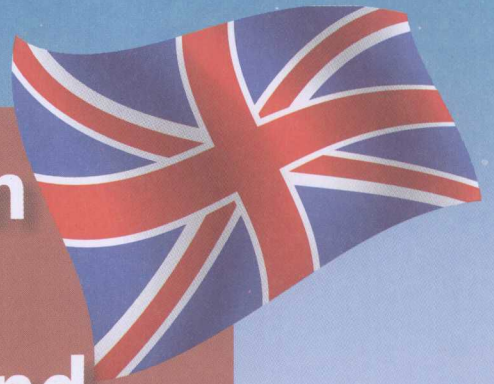
Appendix 2 States of the United States /281

Appendix 3 Provinces and Territories of Canada /283

Appendix 4 States and Territories of Australia /283

References /285

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland



1

Chapter

Geography, People and Language

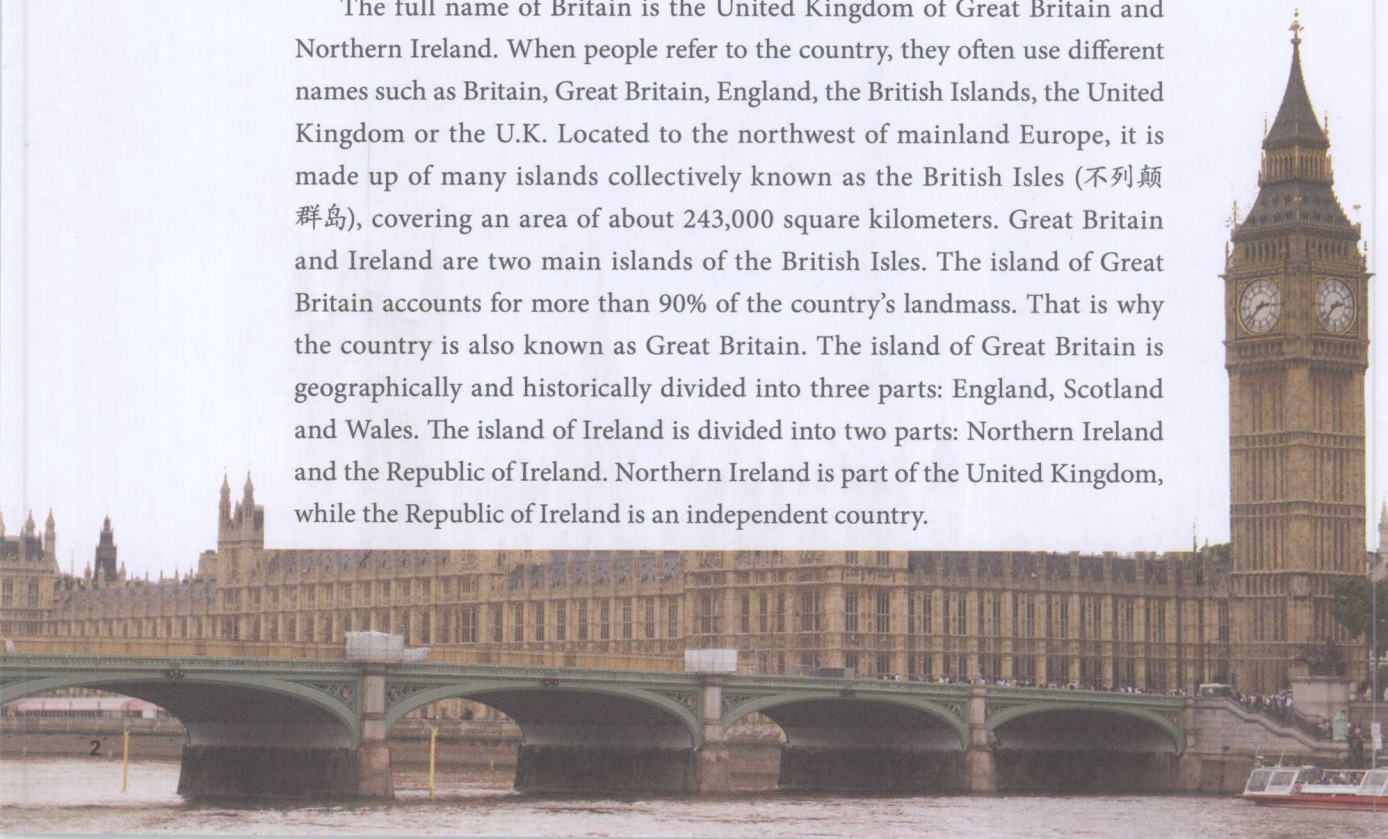
▼ Think and Talk

- ▶ Do you know the full name of Britain?
- ▶ Do you know the geographical features of this country?
- ▶ Do you know its major cities—London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast, etc.?
- ▶ Do you know how the English language develops into a universal lingua franca?

I. Geography

Geographical Features

The full name of Britain is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. When people refer to the country, they often use different names such as Britain, Great Britain, England, the British Isles, the United Kingdom or the U.K. Located to the northwest of mainland Europe, it is made up of many islands collectively known as the British Isles (不列颠群岛), covering an area of about 243,000 square kilometers. Great Britain and Ireland are two main islands of the British Isles. The island of Great Britain accounts for more than 90% of the country's landmass. That is why the country is also known as Great Britain. The island of Great Britain is geographically and historically divided into three parts: England, Scotland and Wales. The island of Ireland is divided into two parts: Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, while the Republic of Ireland is an independent country.

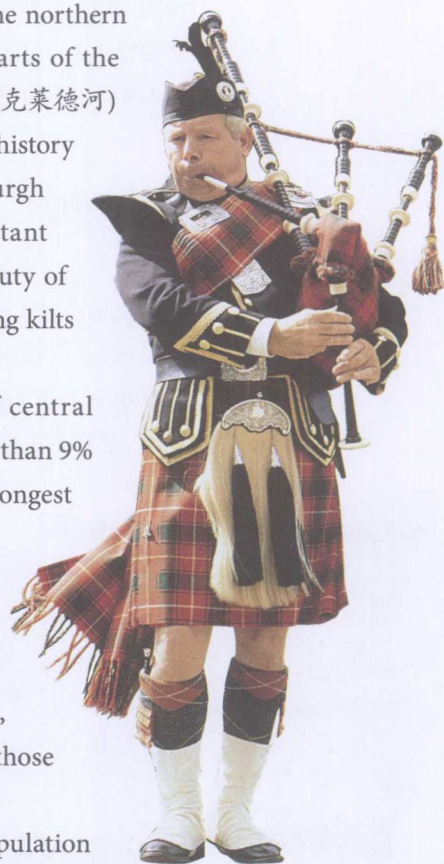


England is the largest part of Great Britain, located in the south of the island, with Wales to the west and Scotland to the north. It has an area of 130,281 square kilometers and covers more than half of the whole island. The River Thames, the second longest and the most important river in Britain, originates in southwestern England and flows through the Midlands of England to London and empties into the North Sea. England is the most populous and wealthiest part of the country, so people sometimes refer to the whole country as England, a name that people of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland do not like very much. England is highly urbanized, with about 80% of the population living in cities. London, the capital of both England and the United Kingdom, is located in southeastern England.

Scotland, with an area of 78,772 square kilometers, occupies the northern part of Britain. It is the second largest of the four constituent parts of the United Kingdom, both in population and in area. The Clyde River (克莱德河) is the most important river in Scotland. For a substantial period in history Scotland remained a unified state independent of Britain. Edinburgh (爱丁堡) is its capital. Tourism is one of Scotland's most important industries. Tourists from all over the world come to enjoy the beauty of Scottish scenery, to drink Scotch whisky and to see Scotsmen wearing kilts (格子呢褶裥短裙) and playing bagpipes (风笛).

Wales is very close to the most densely populated parts of central England. Its entire area is 20,780 square kilometers and it covers less than 9% of the whole island. The capital of Wales is Cardiff (加的夫). The longest river of Britain, the Severn River (塞文河), originates in mid-Wales and flows through western England to the Bristol Channel (布里斯托尔海峡) and the Atlantic Ocean. Wales has been dominated by England longer than the other parts. However, it retains a powerful sense of its difference from England. Its own language, Welsh, is spoken by about 20% of the population, much more than those who speak Gaelic (盖尔语) in Scotland and Ireland.

Northern Ireland is the smallest of the four parts, both in population and in area. It has an area of 14,135 square kilometers and occupies the northern one-sixth of the island of Ireland. The capital of Northern Ireland is Belfast (贝尔法斯特). Lough Neagh (内伊湖), the largest lake in the British Isles, is located in northern Ireland. It covers an area of 396 square kilometers.



Climate

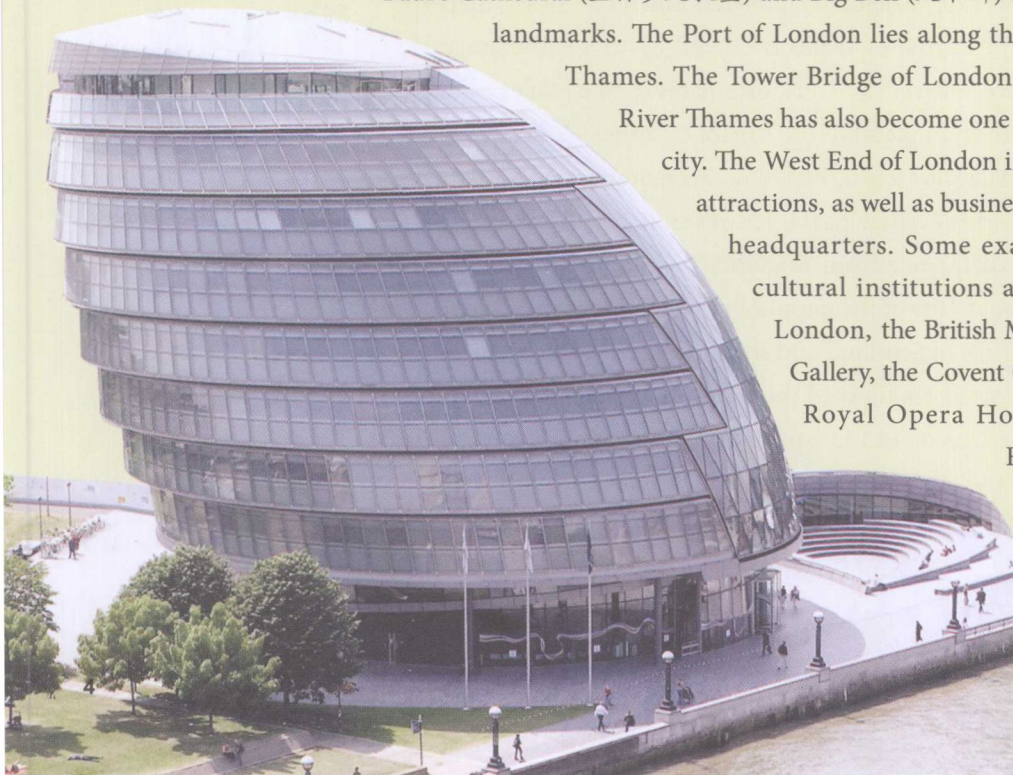
The climate of Britain is classified as temperate, with warm summers, cool winters and plentiful precipitation (降雨量) throughout the year. Its climate is generally mild and temperate due to its proximity (接近) to the Atlantic Ocean and the warming of the waters around the British Isles by the Gulf Stream (墨西哥湾流). The summer temperature is usually around 20°C, with the high rarely going above 32°C. The average temperature in January is around 0°C and seldom falls below -10°C, even in northern Scotland.

The climate in Britain has three principal features. The first is the frequent fog that occurs in winter, for which London is famous. The second is the large number of rainy days. The third is its instability or changeability. Indeed, during a hot day in July the temperature can be the same as a mild day in January.

Major Cities

London, the capital of both England and the United Kingdom, is the political, industrial, cultural and financial center of the country. It is one of the world's leading banking and financial centers. Buckingham Palace (白金汉宫), Guildhall (市政厅), St.

Paul's Cathedral (圣保罗大教堂) and Big Ben (大本钟) are some of the city's landmarks. The Port of London lies along the banks of the River Thames. The Tower Bridge of London (伦敦塔桥) over the River Thames has also become one of the symbols of the city. The West End of London includes many tourist attractions, as well as business and administrative headquarters. Some examples of London's cultural institutions are the University of London, the British Museum, the National Gallery, the Covent Garden (科芬园), the Royal Opera House and the Royal Festival Hall.

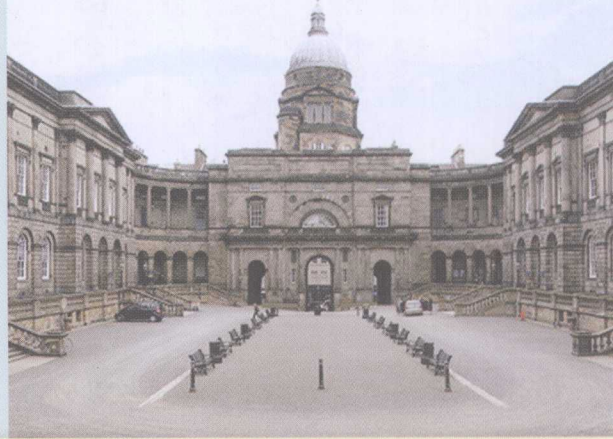


伦敦市政厅



Edinburgh is the capital of Scotland. Located on a river, the city is stunningly beautiful and its architecture is renowned the world over. Edinburgh is Scotland's administrative, financial, legal, medical and insurance center. It is also famous for the University of Edinburgh, one of the top-rated research universities in Britain.

爱丁堡大学老学院



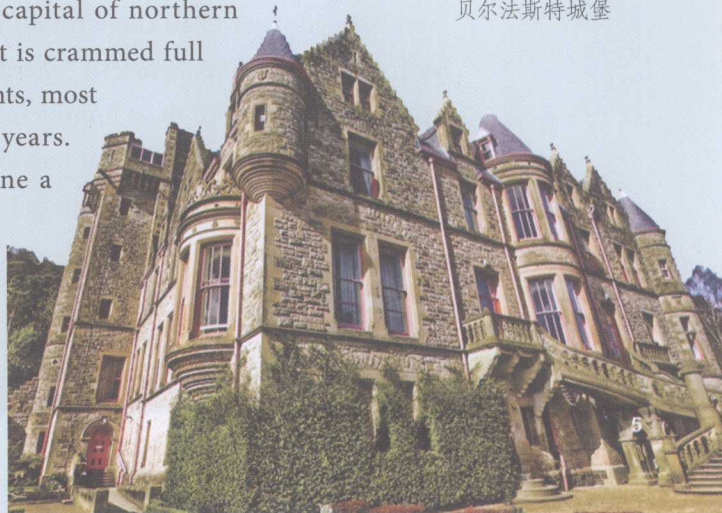
威尔士国民议会大厦



Cardiff is Europe's youngest capital city and has been the capital city of Wales since 1955. The city has undergone an enormous amount of urban regeneration (重建) and restoration and has recently become one of the most fashionable cities in Britain. With modern shopping centers, historic Victorian shopping arcades (室内购物商场), an impressive selection of hotels, world-class restaurants and a trendy waterfront area, Cardiff has become a popular city attracting thousands of visitors each year from home and abroad.

Belfast is the largest city and the capital of northern Ireland. As an important historic city, it is crammed full of spectacular landmarks and monuments, most of which date back many hundreds of years. In recent years this city has undergone a remarkable transformation. Many areas have been redeveloped, new restaurants and hotels have been opened, and impressive new shopping areas have been built.

贝尔法斯特城堡



II. People

Britain has a population of about 63 million (2012). Its overall population density is among the highest in the world. About 53 million people live in England, with nearly 8 million in the capital. The rest are distributed in Scotland (around 5.2 million), Wales (around 3.1 million), Northern Ireland (around 1.8 million).

The majority of the population is descendants of the Anglo-Saxons*, a Germanic people from Europe who went to England between the 5th and 6th centuries. These people settled in England and drove the native Celtic people (凯尔特人) to the mountainous areas of Wales and Scotland. Their language became the official language of the country.

Most people in Wales and Scotland are descendants of the Celtic people who were the earliest known inhabitants of Britain. The Irish people are also of Celtic origin.

Besides the early groups from Europe, Britain has a considerable number of Italians, Greeks, Australians and New Zealanders who have settled in the country as permanent residents. In addition, there is a large number of immigrants from Africa and Asia. Most of them come from the former colonies of the British Empire, such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh (孟加拉国), the Caribbean Islands and a number of African countries. All these immigrants have made Britain one of the most culturally diverse countries in Europe. In London, for instance, it is estimated that more than 300 languages and dialects are spoken.

* Anglo-Saxons: 盎格鲁-撒克逊人，属于日耳曼民族，包括盎格鲁人 (the Angles)、撒克逊人 (the Saxons)、朱特人 (the Jutes) 等。



III. The English Language

English is a member of the Indo-European family of languages (印欧语系). This broad family includes most of the European languages spoken today. English is in the Germanic group of this family. This group began as a common language about 3,000 years ago and was later split into three distinct subgroups: East Germanic, North Germanic and West Germanic. English evolved from the West Germanic group. The development of the English language can be divided into three periods: Old English, Middle English and Modern English.

Old English

The Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes began populating the British Isles in the 5th and 6th centuries. They spoke a mutually intelligible language—now called Old English. They drove the original Celtic-speaking inhabitants out of what is now England into Scotland, Wales and Ireland, leaving a few Celtic words behind. The Celtic languages survive today in the Gaelic language of Scotland and Ireland, and in Welsh of Wales.

Old English was strongly influenced by Old Norse (古斯堪的纳维亚语) spoken by the Vikings (北欧海盗) and was closely related to the German and Dutch languages. The introduction of Christianity added the first wave of Latin and Greek words to the language. The Old English period ended with the Norman Conquest*, when the language was influenced by the French-speaking Normans.

* Norman Conquest: 诺曼征服，指诺曼底公爵 1066 年对英格兰的军事征服。

Middle English

William the Conqueror (征服者威廉), the Duke of Normandy (诺曼底公爵), invaded and conquered England and the Anglo-Saxons in 1066.

In the early part of this period, French, spoken by the Normans, replaced English as the official language in England, while English was only used by the lower class. Numerous French words came into the English vocabulary. One interesting phenomenon was that the animals began to have different names from their meat because they were raised by servants who spoke English and so kept the English names. The meat gained a French name when it was served to the French-speaking masters. For example, “pig” became “pork”, “sheep” became “mutton” and “cattle” became “beef”.

In 1204, King John lost the province of Normandy to the King of France. Norman nobles of England began to estrange from their French cousins and to adopt a modified English as their native tongue. After the Black Death* (1347-1351), the laboring and merchant classes grew in economic and social importance, and English increased in importance compared to French. English evolved gradually into what is now referred to as Middle English.

Modern English

From the late 15th century onward, the English language changed further into what is now described as Modern English. The printing press was introduced to England in 1476 by William Caxton, who brought standardization to English. The dialect of London became the standard. Spelling and grammar became fixed. The first English dictionary was published in 1604. Samuel Johnson's dictionary—*A Dictionary of the English Language*, published in 1755, was influential in establishing a standard form of spelling.

English continued to assimilate foreign words, especially from Latin and Greek, throughout the Renaissance (文艺复兴). Despite some differences in vocabulary, the written material from the early 17th century, such as the works of William Shakespeare and the King James Bible (英王詹姆士钦定版《圣经》), is considered to be in Modern English.

* Black Death: 黑死病, 14 世纪蔓延于欧亚两洲的鼠疫。



征服者威廉



The Industrial Revolution and the rise of technology necessitated the introduction of new words in modern English for things and ideas that had not previously existed. Words like “oxygen”, “protein”, “nuclear” and “vaccine” were created using Latin and Greek roots. English roots were used for such terms as “horsepower”, “airplane” and “typewriter”. This proliferation (激增) of neologisms (新词) continues today, perhaps most visible in the field of electronics and computers. “Byte”, “cyber-”, “hard drive” and “microchip” (芯片) are good examples.

What is more, the rise of the British Empire and the growth of global trade led to the assimilation of words from many other languages. Hindi (印地语) and the other languages of the Indian subcontinent (印度次大陆) provided many words, such as “pundit” (专家), “shampoo”, “pajamas” and “juggernaut” (不可抗拒的强大力量). Virtually every language on Earth has made a contribution to the development of English, whether slight, as in the case of the Finnish word “sauna” and the Japanese word “tycoon” (大亨), or vast, as with French and Latin.

Standard English

Standard English is based on the speech of the upper class of southeastern England, adopted as a broadcasting standard in the British media. It is used as much in printed materials as is normally taught at schools and to non-native speakers learning the language. It is also called “the Queen’s English” or “BBC English”, and has become the language preferred by the educated. It has developed and has been promoted as a model for the correct British English. Standard English also refers to the norm carried overseas for non-native speakers learning English.

Today, Standard English is codified to the extent that the grammar and vocabulary of English are much the same everywhere in the world where English is used. The variation among local standards is really quite minor, so that the Singaporean, South African and Irish varieties differ only slightly so far as grammar and vocabulary are concerned.

At present, it is estimated that a third of the world’s population use English. It has become a universal *lingua franca**.

* *lingua franca*: 母语不同的人之间使用的通用语。