



主编◎张锦涛

英语国家概况



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英语国家概况

A Survey of English-Speaking Countries

主编 张锦涛

国防工业出版社

· 北京 ·

内 容 简 介

本书介绍了美国、英国、爱尔兰、加拿大、澳大利亚、新西兰、印度、南非等主要英语国家的地理概貌、历史变迁、政治制度、经济概况、教育体系、宗教信仰、风俗习惯、国防建设、对外关系等方面的基本知识。

本书既可供英语专业本科生使用,也可作为非英语专业本科生高年级英语的拓展教材,还可用作非英语专业研究生的英语课程教材。

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前言

本书介绍了美国、英国、爱尔兰、加拿大、澳大利亚、新西兰、印度、南非等主要英语国家的地理概貌、历史变迁、政治制度、经济概况、教育体系、宗教信仰、风俗习惯、国防建设、对外关系等方面的基本知识,旨在扩大学习者知识面,拓展国际视野,加深对主要英语国家思维方式、价值观念、生活方式、军政文化的理解和把握,增强跨文化意识,巩固英语能力,提高人文素养。本书具有以下特点:

第一,内容全面丰富。“全面”体现在两方面,其一,它摆脱以往类似教材以英、美两国概况为核心的传统做法,将五大洲八个主要英语国家概况囊括其中,通过对它们的介绍可进一步了解它们所在地区的基本概貌;其二,教材除介绍英语国家地理、历史、政治、经济、教育、宗教等内容外,还介绍了这些国家的军事和外交,几近涵盖了一个国家的各个方面。

第二,内容新颖、趣味性强、语言通俗易懂。“新颖”在于引用了权威机构发布的大量最新数据和信息。同时,本书还介绍了各国在相关领域最近发生的事件,特别是军事和外交领域的事件,既新颖,又增强了趣味性。

第三,教材各单元正文之后均附有讨论题、术语解释和思考题。讨论题旨在加深对正文的理解,进一步厘清单元内容脉络;术语解释涉及主要事件、历史人物、重要组织或机构、特色城市和地理概念等,旨在加深对所学知识的理解;思考题要求学习者基于已知信息,对相关问题进行一定的研判,旨在提高分析和评价能力。同时,通过这些练习,对进一步巩固英语应用能力又能够起到积极作用。

第四,多媒体教材与纸质教材相配套,构建了立体化教材体系。多媒体教材集文字、视频、音频、声像技术为一体,使交互学习形式更丰

富、更逼真、更直观,有利于知识的获取与保持。多媒体教材的时空的开放性和超文本性使学习者在任何时间、任何地点进行网络学习,并可结合自己的学习状况和认知水平,选择与自己感兴趣或适合自己的学习内容。

本书既可供英语专业本科生使用,也可作为非英语专业本科生高年级英语的拓展教材,还可用作非英语专业研究生的英语课程教材。本书共计八章、四十个单元,在使用过程中,应注意处理以下几种关系:

第一,处理好掌握概况知识和提高英语应用能力的关系,使两者相得益彰。一方面要引导学习者了解和掌握主要英语国家地理、历史、政治、经济、国防、外交、法律、宗教、教育、科技、艺术、风俗等概况知识,另一方面通过阅读、听课、讨论、练习等方式,使学习者巩固已有的英语知识和技能,扩大词汇量,进一步提高实际英语应用能力。

第二,处理好一般内容和重点内容的关系,确保点面兼顾。本书内容丰富,既有一般性介绍,又有详细的描述,还有深入的分析。授课教师应根据所指导学生的类型,取舍得当,点面结合,引导学生把全面了解与重点掌握相结合。

第三,处理好传统教学方法与现代教学方法的关系,发挥现代化教学手段的作用。以本书为基础开发了配套多媒体课程,授课教师除课堂教学外,指导学生充分利用现代化的教学手段,进行课下自主学习,提高教学效果。

本书在编写过程中,得到了解放军理工大学校院各级领导和训练部机关的大力支持,在此表示衷心感谢。

本书参考了国内外大量有关文献,谨向作者致以衷心感谢。由于作者水平有限,错漏之处在所难免,恳请读者和同行专家批评、指正。

编者
2010年

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Chapter One

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland



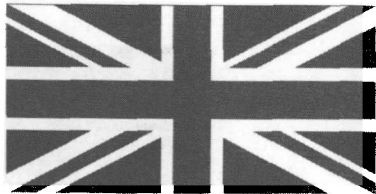
Core Information of the United Kingdom

Location: northwestern Europe	Area: 244,100 km ²
Population: 61.6 million (2009 est.)	Capital: London
Largest City: London	Anthem: God Save the Queen
Languages: English, Welsh, Scottish	Main Religions: Christian, Muslim
Currency: Pound sterling (GBP)	GDP: \$ 2.198 trillion (2009 est.)
Education Expenditure: 5.6% of GDP	Military Expenditure: 2.5% of GDP
Literacy: 99%	Internet Users: 48.755 million (2008)

Unit 1 Land and People

I. Names for Britain and Its Parts

While reading English books, one is likely to come across different names such as Britain, Great Britain, England, the British Isles, the United Kingdom or the U. K. and even the nickname—John Bull.



Strictly speaking, the British Isles, Great Britain and England are all geographical names. To the west and off the European Continent, there are several thousand islands. Of all the isles, the two large islands are Great Britain and Ireland. Great Britain is the larger one of these two islands. It forms the United Kingdom with Northern Ireland—the northern part of Ireland. So the official name of the United Kingdom is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. But people just say Britain, the United Kingdom or simply U. K.

The island of Great Britain itself is divided into three political areas, known as England, Scotland and Wales. England is the largest, most populous and generally speaking the richest section, so people tend to use “England” and “English” when they mean “Britain” and “British”. This sometimes annoys the Scots or the Welsh who do not regard themselves as English and who have a culture and even a language of their own.

II. Geographical Features

Britain is an island country surrounded by the sea. It lies in the Northern Atlantic Ocean off the north coast of Europe and is separated from the rest of Europe by the English Channel in the south and

the North Sea in the east. The English Channel between England and France is quite narrow and the narrowest part is called the Straits of Dover, which is only 33 km across. In 1985 the British government and the French government decided to build a channel tunnel under the Straits of Dover so that England and France could be joined together by road. After eight years of hard work, this channel tunnel which is called "Chunnel" was open to traffic in May 1994.

Britain covers an area of 244,100 square km. It runs 1,000 km from north to south and extends, at the widest part, about 500 kilometers. So no part of Britain is very far from the coast. The British coast is long and has good, deep harbors. Sea routes extend far inland, providing cheap transportation.

Britain has been slowly tilting with the North-West slowly rising and the South-East slowly sinking. The north and west of Britain are mainly highlands. In western parts of Scotland are flat areas of land in an otherwise mountainous area, which provide the main farming, settlements, and industrial areas as well as route-ways. The east and southeast are mostly lowlands with level land and fertile soil.

1. England

England is the largest and most developed of all the three political divisions. With an area of more than 130,000 square kilometers, it takes up nearly 60% of the whole island. The southwest and west except for the Seven valley and the Cheshire-Lancashire plain (round Liverpool) are largely a plateau, with rolling plains. The Pennines, a range of hills running from North Midlands to the Scottish border, are the principal mountain chain. But the highest peak of England, Scafell (978m), is in the Lake District in northwest England. The east of England is mainly an open cultivated plain, narrowing in North Yorkshire to a passage between coastal moors and the Pennines, and in Northumberland to a coastal strip.

2. Scotland

Scotland is the second largest both in area and population with an area of 78,760 square kilometers. It is in the north of Great Britain with many mountains, lakes and islands. There are three natural zones: the Highlands in the north, the central Lowlands, and the southern Uplands. The Highlands (300-over 1,200m) are a wild, rocky, mountainous plateau with a coastline deeply indented, especially in the west. Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in Britain (1,343m) is located here. The western part of Highlands and the islands of Hebrides are a very beautiful region. The lowlands in the center comprise mostly the Forth and Clyde valleys, coal and iron fields and dairy pasture. This is the most important area in Scotland which contains most of the industry and population. The southern Uplands, a rolling moorland, are cut by small fertile river valleys. Scotland has about 800 islands and hundreds of lakes. Edinburgh is the capital of Scotland.

3. Wales

Wales, the smallest of the three, is in the west of Great Britain with an area of 20,761 square kilometers which take up less than 9% of the whole island. Most of Wales is mountainous; the hills rise steeply from the sea and are rather flat on top. Six percent of Wales is covered with forest and much of the country is pasture—land for sheep and cattle. Only twelve percent of the land is arable. Wales forms a massif with a lowland fringe widest along the English border and south coast. The massif is largely between 180 and 600m, rocky in the north and coal bearing in the south. Snowdonia (1,085m) in the northwest is the highest mountain in Wales. The capital of Wales is Cardiff.

4. Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is often called “Ulster” after an ancient Irish

king. As a fourth region of the United Kingdom, it takes up the northern fifth of Ireland and has an area of 14,147 square kilometers. It has a rocky and wild northern coastline, with several deep indentations. In the northeast lie the uplands of County Antrim, while the mountains in the southeast gradually give way to the central lowlands of the Lough Neagh basin. Belfast is the capital of Northern Ireland.

Though Northern Ireland is small it is significant because of the political troubles there. The problem of Northern Ireland can be divided two. The first is the ownership. The Republic of Ireland and some people in Northern Ireland consider that Northern Ireland is part of Ireland and should join the Republic of Ireland. The other is which religious group is to hold power within Northern Ireland: the Roman Catholic or the Protestant Church.

III. Rivers and Lakes

Being short and swift, few rivers in Britain are navigable. The most important river in Britain is the Thames River (338 kilometers long), which rises in Cotswold Hills and flows through the capital city London and empties into the English Channel. The river is navigable for larger ships to London. The longest river is the Severn River which is only 354 kilometers long. It rises in central Wales and flows in a semicircle through West Central England to the Bristol Channel, where the ports of Cardiff and Bristol are located. River Clyde is the most important river in Scotland. It rises in Dumfries and runs 171 kilometers, passing through Glasgow, and enters the Firth of Clyde. It is an important commercial waterway. The Mersey River (110 kilometers in length) flows between Lancashire and Cheshire into the Irish Sea. Its estuary, navigable for ocean vessels, is linked to Manchester by a ship canal, with the port Liverpool on its mouth.

There are many lakes in Britain especially in northern Scotland, the Lake District in northwest England and North Wales. However,

the largest lake in Britain is the Lough Neagh in Northern Ireland which covers an area of 396 square kilometers. The Lake District is one of the popular tourist attractions in Britain. It is well known for its wild and beautiful scenery and 15 lakes. The largest ones are Windermere, Ullswater, Derwentwater and Coniston Water. It was also the home of the Lake poets William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey of the 19th century Britain.

IV. Climate

1. A Maritime Type of Climate

Britain has a temperate, maritime climate, which is damp and warm all the year round and generally does not run to extremes. As the prevailing southwesterly winds are warmed by the Gulf Stream and made moist by the Atlantic Ocean, the climate in Britain is much milder than that of many places in the same latitude. During a normal summer, the temperature occasionally rises about 27 degrees C in the south; winter temperatures below -7 degrees C are rare. The annual air temperature is about 10 degrees C, varying from around 5 degrees C in the coldest month (January) to 17 degrees C in the warmest month (July) on average.

2. Factors Influencing the Climate in Britain

Britain is an island country which lies between latitude 50 to 60 degrees north. It lies farther north than even the northernmost part of Heilongjiang Province of China. Compared with other countries of the same latitudes, it has a more moderate climate, which is influenced mainly by three factors:

(a) The surrounding waters tend to balance the seasonal differences by heating up the land in winter and cooling it off in summer. As the sea heats up and cools off relatively slowly it brings warm air

in winter and cool air in summer.

(b) The prevailing southwest winds or the Westerlies blow over the country all the year round bringing warm and wet air in winter and keeping the temperatures moderate.

(c) The North Atlantic Drift, which is a warm current, passes the western coast of the British Isles and warms them.

Since Britain's climate is of the maritime type, it is characterized by cool temperatures, frequent cloudy days and rainstorms. It changes from day to day, and this makes it difficult to forecast.

3. Rainfall

Britain has a steady reliable rainfall throughout the whole year. The average annual rainfall in Britain is over 1,000mm. It has 750mm-1,250mm of rainfall along the coast in the east and south except a small area in the southeastern corner of the country which receives less than 750mm. In the west there is as much as 1,250mm to 2,000mm of rainfall and in some areas in the northwest it is over 2,000mm. The Westerlies blows over Britain all the year round bringing warm and wet air from the Atlantic Ocean. It rises, climbs the highlands and the mountains in the west, becomes colder and then causes heavy rainfall.

4. Natural Calamities

Generally speaking the climate in Britain is favorable and equable. Extremes of heat or cold, or of drought or prolonged rainfall are rarely experienced. It is estimated that on average about 3-6 cubic meters of rain per person per day fall over Britain. This is far more than is needed, but problems, still remain. Sometimes there are several months of drought, and at other times too much rain causes flooding. Fog, smog, frost and severe gales are not uncommon and often cause great damage to crops and to people's life. In 1952 the

sulphur dioxide in the four-day London smog, an unhealthy atmosphere formed by mixing smoke and dirt with fog, left 4,000 people dead or dying. Since then most cities in Britain have introduced “clean air zones” whereby factories and households are only allowed to burn smokeless fuel.

V. The People

According to the 2001 census, the total population of Britain is about 58.78 million. The 2009 estimate is 61,612,300. Britain is the third largest country in population in Europe, only next to Russia and Germany. So it is a densely populated country with an average of 240 people per square kilometer and it is very unevenly distributed. Ninety percent of the population is urban and only ten percent is rural. On the other hand, there are some quite large tracts of barren, hilly country, especially in Northern Scotland, which are almost uninhabited. The population of Britain is made up mainly of the English (81.5%), the Scottish (9.6%), the Welsh (1.9%), the Irish (2.4%), the Northern Irish (1.8%) and other people (2.8%).

Today British people move about the country more than they used to. Northerners come to live in the south and Southerners and East Anglians go to the north. Lots of Scottish, Welsh and Irish come and live in England. They take on each other's way of life. However, differences in regional character and speech can still be seen and heard. In fact in some regions people are doing all they can to preserve their own language and culture.

1. The English

The English are Anglo-Saxons in origin, but the Welsh, Scots, and Irish are Celts, descendants of the ancient people who came from Europe to the British Isles centuries before the Roman invasion. The Celts came to Britain after 700BC. When they came, one group was

called Britons and from this group the people of Britain grew. Later they were conquered by the Romans. During the fifth century when the Roman Empire fell, the Germanic Angles and Saxons invaded and conquered Britain. The Germanic conquerors gave England its name "Angle" land. During the ninth century Britain was invaded by the Danes or Vikings and in 1066 by the Norman French. It was from the union of Norman conquerors and the defeated Anglo-Saxons that the English people and the English language were born. Today the names of most English name "Smith" come from the German name "Schmidt" and some English families have Norman French names such as Beaufort and Beauchamp. The English have many differences in regional speech. Generally speaking southerners speak the type of English closer to BBC English. Regional speech is usually "broader" in northern England than that of southern England.

2. The Welsh

The ancestors of the Welsh were the ancient Britons who escaped from the invading Angles and Saxons and found shelter in the wild mountains of Wales. The Celts of Wales defended their freedom for 1,000 years and were not conquered by the English until 1536.

Now less than three million Welsh people live in Wales, although there are many others living and working in England and abroad. But a Welshman can usually be recognized by his accent, as well as by his name. Today about 26 percent of the population of Wales can speak Welsh. The Welsh are very musical, and many of their singers have become world famous. An annual cultural festival of music, literature and drama is held alternately in North and South Wales during the first week in August. It is called the "Eisteddfod", which developed from the gathering of the poets held in the 12th century.