

英语学习 背景知识 新编

A NEW BOOK ON CULTURAL

BACKGROUND

FOR ENGLISH

STUDY

英国澳大利亚部分

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内容简介

本书介绍英国和澳大利亚的历史、地理、政治以及文化、教育、宗教、生活习俗等人文背景方面的基本情况,尤其是英国的工会及其改革、英联邦、爱尔兰民族主义以及澳大利亚的社会福利、政治制度等方面的基本情况。对文中涉及的许多背景知识和语言难点,做了较详细的注解。全书语言流畅,标准规范,且风格各异。读者在提高英语阅读水平的同时,可以一览英国和澳大利亚两国的概况。

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《英语学习背景知识新编》分美国加拿大和英国澳大利亚两部分。

本书为英国澳大利亚部分。

本书在选材上注意语言流畅、规范。对原文中涉及的背景 知识和语言难点,尽可能做详细的注解。

本书在对作者 1984 年出版的《英语学习背景知识》进行 修改和扩大注释的基础上,增加了许多新内容,尤其是注意反 映带全局性的基本问题,如英国工会及其改革,英联邦、爱尔 兰民族主义等以及澳大利亚的福利情况和政治制度等。这些 问题的知识性极强。

自 1984 年《英语学习背景知识》出版以来近 10 年间,世界形势和格局发生了许多变化,越来越多的人们要求了解世界,尤其要了解以英语为主要语言的国家的种种情况,学习英语的人们也只有在了解各有关国家的重要情况的发展变迁过程中才能更有效地掌握和应用英语。适应这种需要就是我们今年出版《英语学习背景知识新编》的目的所在。

何 田 1993年2月

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PART ONE

the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

1. The People and the Land They Live in

What is the difference between the British Isles, Britain, the United Kingdom and England? These terms are so often confused that we had better start by distinguishing them.

The British Isles consists of two large islands; one is called Ireland and the other Britain.

Britain, or Great Britain, is the larger of these two islands, and it is divided into three parts: Scotland, Wales and England.

The United Kingdom is that part of the British Isles ruled over by the Queen. It consists of Scotland, Wales and England (i. e. the whole of Britain), and also about one-sixth of Ireland, the Northern part. The rest of Ireland is self-governing, as we shall see later. ^① The full title of the United Kingdom is therefore "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland".

England is the largest, most populous, and generally speaking[®] the richest section. The English people take this

① as we shall see later.这是as 引导的非限制性定语从句。as 为关系代词,在从句中作 shall see 的宾语。这类从句修饰的不是主句中某个名词,而是整个主句。在这儿它修饰 The rest of Irland is self-governing。这类从句可放在句首、句 屠或句子中间。

② generally speaking:一般说来,这是分词短语作独立成分,相当于一个状语从句"if one may speak in a general way"。

and "English" when they mean "Britain" and "British". This sometimes annoys the Scots and the Welsh. The Scots in particular are very proud of their separate nationality; they have their own legal system, and some of their internal affairs are managed by special Scottish departments, though they have no separate Parliament. The Welsh too do not regard themselves as English, and have a culture and even a language of their own. There is a Welsh Nationalist and a Scottish Nationalist party, demanding a measure of independence from England, but although they have held seats in the House of Commons, they are not very strong; and in general the Scots, the Welsh and the English feel sufficiently similar to each other to be quite content to form a combined Parliament in London.

With the Irish, the question is more complicated and much less happy. Ireland became part of the United Kingdom in 1801, but it soon grew discontented, and for forty years the "Irish Question" was the greatest headache of the British Parliament. At last, after much bloodshed, Ireland divided itself into two. Northern Ireland remained loyal to the Crown (though it has its own Parliament sitting in Belfast. for internal affairs), and in 1922 the rest of the

① take this...for granted:认为这种情况是理所当然的。

② when:连词。一般引导时间状语从句。但在这儿,相当于 although。

③ feel sufficiently similar...in London:认为彼此很相象,因而对于在伦敦组成一个联合国会也感到很满意了。不定式 to be quite content...in London 为结果状语。

Ireland divided itself into two=Ireland was divided into two

⑤ Belfast(贝尔法斯特):北爱尔兰首府,英国工业城市和海港,商业和运输业中心。

country broke away to form an Irish Free State, later called Eire (pronounced Aira) and now the Republic of Ireland.

The Republic of Ireland is almost entirely Roman Catholic; it does not regard itself as British, and is not now even a supporter of the Commonwealth[®]. Unlike the major Commonwealth countries it did not lift a finger to help Britain in the Second World War[®]. It is still discontented, as it resents the existence of Northern Ireland, and wants the whole of Ireland to be a republic.

Are the British people Europeans? This may seem a strange question to Africans and Asians, who tend to think of all white men as Europeans. But the British, when they are in Britain, [®] do not regard themselves as Europeans. The Europeans, to them, are those rather excitable foreigners from the other side of the English Channel, who have never learnt how to speak English. Europe is "the Continent": a place full of interest for British tourists, but also the source of almost all the wars in which Britain has ever been involved. Thus, although geographically speaking Britain is a part of Europe, yet the fact that it is a separate island has made its people feel very, very insular. They feel, and in many ways

① the Commonwealth = the (British) Commonwealth of Nations:英联邦 简称。英联邦是由英国和已经独立的前英帝国殖民地或附属国组成,是英国用来维持它对联邦其它成员国在政治、军事、经济和文化上的控制和影响的工具。英国从 1931 年起正式用"英联邦国家"称呼那些独立的前英帝国"自治领地"国家。(见 8)

② it did not... in the Second World War,在第二次世界大战中,它丝毫没有帮助英国。

③ when they are in Britain: 当他们在英国时(如果他们不在英国而在外国时,他们就不这样想了)。

④ insular:与世隔绝的;偏狭的。

are, different from the rest of Europe, ¹ and they sometimes annoy continental nations by failing to support them, or even to understand them, in time of need.

Where did the British people come from? This is an extraordinarily interesting question, since they are a mixture of many different races, and all these races invaded Britain at various times from Europe. Nobody knows very much about Britain before the Romans came during the first century B. C., but there had been at least three invasions before that. The first of these was by a dark-haired Mediterranean race

Invaders (in chronological order	Contribution
Iberians	?
$Celts \begin{cases} Gaels \\ \overline{Britons} \end{cases}$	Scottish and Irish race and culture Welsh race and culture
Romans	Latin alphabet and civilisation
Anglo-Saxons	English race and language
Danes	Some peculiarities of dialect in North and East England.
Normans (French-speaking)	Final unification of England. Great administrative progress. English civilisation permanently linked to France rather than to Scandinavia. Foundation of aristocracy.

Fig. 1 Origins of the British people; table of invasions

① They feel,...are, different from the rest of Europe:他们觉得与其余欧洲人不同,而且在许多方面也确实如此。系动词 feel 和 are 共用一个表语 different... Europe。

called the Iberians. The other two were by Celtic tribes: first the Gaels, whose descendants are the modern Scots and Irish, some of whom still speak the Gaelic language; and secondly the Britons, who gave their name to the whole island of Britain. These were the people whom the Romans conquered. The Romans gave the Britons a good deal of their civilisation, but they never settled in Britain in very large numbers, so the British race survived until the over throw of the Roman Empire by the "barbarians", i. e. the numerous Germanic tribes which overran the whole of Western Europe.

There were three great Germanic tribes which invaded Britain; the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes; and together they form the basis of the modern English race. The Britons, as a race, disappeared except in Wales and Cornwall. Many Welsh people still speak their "British", i. e. Celtic tongue, which is called Welsh. In Cornwall the language has died out, though it can still be recognised in some proper names. The Angles were so numerous that the country was called Angle-land, i. e. England, and the Anglo-Saxon language was Old English; in other words, modern English has descended directly from it.

So far^① then, we have noted the Iberians, two kinds of Celts, the Romans, and the Germanic peoples, which^② we shall call collectively the Saxons; but the story is by no means ended. A few hundred years later a further invasion

① So far:到目前为止。这是修饰句子的状语。

② which: 在这儿等于 which peoples。 which 代表 the Germanic。如果先行词没有 the Germanic, 只是 peoples, 那末,关系代词不能用 which, 只能用 whom。

took place from the North-East, that Of the Danes, and the whole North-Eastern half of England became for a long time Danish territory. Finally, and even more important, there came the great Norman invasion[®]. The Normans were "North-men", and like the Danes had come originally from Scandinavia in the North-East; but they had settled in part of Northern France, still known as Normandy, and adopted the French language. In the year 1066. Duke William of Normandy claimed the English throne, and after defeating and killing the Saxon king Harold at the Battle of Hastings, he went on to conquer the whole country, and to merit the name of ® William the Conqueror. He was crowned William I of England, and the present Queen is one of his descendants. The Saxons became a subject people, and all the most important noblemen were Normans. English was the language of the common people and Norman French was the language of the aristocracy, including the King and his court. Even today, many French expressions occur in traditional ceremonial language, and a few English people feel proud if they can prove that their ancestors were Normans. Eventually, however, the speech of the common people prevailed, and the use of French died out; but the common people had already absorbed some of it, and many everyday expressions in English have a French origin.

There has never been another invasion of Britain in the

① that:代表前面的 invasion,并构成 invasion 的同位语。

② there came the great Norman invasion;这是一个倒装句,动词 came 在 主语 invasion 之前。当 there, here, now, then 等副词放在句首时,语序一般倒装。

③ and to merit the name of...:并赢得……称号。

① subject:形容词,意为臣属的,隶属的。

900 years since William the Conqueror, so that all the various elements have had time to settle down and form one people. As a whole, the British are proud of their diversity, and like to think that it has given them a diversity of qualities which has turned out to their advantage.

The country they live in, that is, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, has an area of about 93,000 square miles. This is remarkably small when you consider its population and its importance in world affairs.

The population of the United Kingdom is about 55,500,000. It is a very large population for such a small area, and yet it is very unevenly distributed. About 8,000,000 people are crowded into the London area alone, and most of the rest live in a few densely populated industrial areas. On the other hand, there are some quite large tracts of barren, hilly country, especially in Northern Scotland, which are almost uninhabited. The reason for this unevenness is that Britain is mainly an industrial country, and most of the people live in large towns. Apart from London, there are two towns containing over a million people each (Birmingham and Glasgow), four with half-a-million or more, and over forty others with more than a hundred thousand people each.

① which has turned out to their advantage; which 的先行词是 diversity。 has turned out,(结果)变成。to their advantage,对他们(英国人)有利的事。

2. The Weather

"Other countries have a climate; in England we have weather." This Statement, often made by Englishmen to describe the peculiar meteorological conditions of their country, is both revealing and true. It is revealing because in it we see the Englishman insisting once again that what happens in England is not the same as what happens elsewhere; its truth can be ascertained by any foreigner who stays in the country for longer than a few days.

In no country other than England, it has been said, can one experience four seasons in the course of a single day! ^(a) Day may break as a balmy spring morning; an hour or so later black clouds may have appeared from nowhere ^(b) and the rain may be pouring down. At midday conditions may be re-

① revealing:很能说明问题。这是形容词。

② in it:it 指 this statement。

③ its truth(这一看法的真实性):其中的 it 指上文"what happens...elsewhere"(在英国发生的情况和其他地方发生的情况不一样)这种看法,its 为其所有格。

④ In no country other than England, it has been said, can one experience...day: 有人说只有在英国人们才能在一天之中经历四个季节的变化。其中:(1)no...other than:只有;(2)it has been said:有人说,据说,插入语;(3)can one experience: 情态动词 can 置于主语 one 之前,为部分倒装,这是由于句首有否定词 In no country,

⑤ from nowhere:不知从哪儿; 暮地。nowhere 在这儿是名词,做 from 的宾语。

ally wintry with the temperature down by D about eight degrees or more centigrade. And then, in the late afternoon the sky will clear, the sun will begin to shine, and for an hour or two before darkness falls, it will be summer.

In England one can experience almost every kind of weather except the most extreme. (Some foreigners, incidentally, seem to be under the impression[®] that for ten months of the year the country is covered by a dense blanket of fog; this is not true.) The snag is that[®] we never can be sure when the different types of weather will occur[®]. Not only do we get several different sorts of weather in one day, but we may very well get a spell of winter in summer and vice-versa. [®]

This uncertainty about the weather has had a definite effect upon the Englishman's character; it tends to make him cautious, for example. The foreigner may laugh when he sees the Englishman setting forth on a brilliantly sunny morning wearing a raincoat and carrying an umbrella, but

① with the temperature down by....温度下降……。这个短语等于"with the temperature going down", by 开头的短语表示下降多少度。

② seem to be under the impression:似乎有这样的印象;似乎认为。

③ The snag is that...;问题(或困难)在于……。snag 一般指"隐伏或意想不到的困难、障碍"。

① we never can be sure...occur:这儿 when 引导的从句相当于宾语从句, be sure 的作用相当于及物动词。

⑤ Not only...vice-versa:我们不仅在一天当中遇到几种不同的天气,而且很可能在夏天遇到一阵冬天的天气,或者反过来,在冬天里遇到一阵夏天的天气。(1)由于含有否定意义的 not only 在句首,所以句子部分倒装,主语 we 之前加助动词 do。(2)may very well:在这儿是"很可能"的意思。(3)a spell:一阵子。(4)vice-versa 原为拉丁语,在英语中已普遍应用,其词义是"反过来也一样"。

[®] and:连接 wearing 和 carrying 两个分词短语。这两个分词短语用作补充说明的状语。

he may well regret[®] his laughter later in the day! The English weather has also helped to make the Englishman adaptable. It has been said that one of the reasons why the English colonized so much of the world was that, whatever the weather conditions they met abroad, they had already experienced something like them at home!

And, of course, the weather's variety provides a constant topic of conversation. Even the most taciturn of Englishmen[®] is always prepared to discuss the weather. And, though he sometimes complains bitterly of it, he would not, even if he could, exchange it for the more predictable *climate* of other lands[®].

① he may well regret:他很可能要后悔。

② the most taciturn of Englishmen;;英国人中最沉默寡言的人。taciturn 是形容词。

③ he would not,...other lands,他即使能够,也不会愿意拿它换成其他地方比较可以预测的气候。句中的 would 和 could 都是表示虚拟语气的助动词。主句中的 would 表示意愿;让步状语从句中的 could 表示可能,但这种可能只是一种假设,不可能实现。