

21世纪全国高职高专英语类规划教材

A Survey of 6 English-Speaking

英语6国概况

Countries

赵 起 编著



北京大学出版社
PEKING UNIVERSITY PRESS

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内 容 简 介

本书为“21 世纪全国高职高专英语类规划教材”之一,是为高等教育英语专业编写的新教材,是一门实用性强的百科性的文化知识课教材,内容包括:英国、爱尔兰、澳大利亚、新西兰、美国、加拿大这 6 个英语国家的地理、民族、历史、政治、司法、社会、经济、教育、军事、国际关系、对华关系、国情、文化、风俗等方面,对了解外部世界、知己知彼和扩大知识面,提供了重要信息,对扩大词汇量、提高口笔头表达能力和交际能力、学好有关专业课程都大有裨益。

本书可作为高职高专或本科相关英语专业的教材,也可以作为口笔译训练、外事、旅游、外贸等专业的学习用书和相关专业的从业人员的参考资料。

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

英语 6 国概况/赵起编著. —北京:北京大学出版社, 2008.1

(21 世纪全国高职高专英语类规划教材)

ISBN 978-7-301-12927-2

I. 英… II. 赵… III. ①英语—高等学校—教材 ②英语—国家—概况—高等学校—教材 IV. H31

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2007) 第 168892 号

书 名: 英语 6 国概况

著作责任者: 赵 起 编著

责任编辑: 郑 谧

标准书号: ISBN 978-7-301-12927-2/H · 1867

出 版 者: 北京大学出版社

地 址: 北京市海淀区成府路 205 号 100871

电 话: 邮购部 62752015 发行部 62750672 编辑部 62765013 出版部 62754962

网 址: <http://www.pup.cn>

电子信箱: xxjs@pup.pku.edu.cn

印 刷 者: 河北滦县鑫华书刊印刷厂

发 行 者: 北京大学出版社

经 销 者: 新华书店

787 毫米×980 毫米 16 开本 19.75 印张 430 千字

2008 年 1 月第 1 版 2008 年 1 月第 1 次印刷

定 价: 36.00 元

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举报电话: 010-62752024; 电子信箱: fd@pup.pku.edu.cn

前 言

这部教材是为高等教育英语专业开设的《英语国家概况》这门课程编写的新教材。

本课程是一门实用性很强的百科性的文化知识课,一方面通过用英语阅读、讲解和讨论这些国家的有关材料,了解外部世界,扩大知识面,知己知彼,另一方面通过学习文化知识,进行语言基本功训练,扩大词汇量,巩固和提高英语表达能力和全面系统的英语综合水平。本课程与诸如笔译、口译、口语、英美文学等课程的学习息息相关,为这些课程提供背景知识、线索和词汇量,是 20 世纪 90 年代之前的英语专业学生历来缺修的一门专业课程。设置本课程是为了使英语专业学生了解美国、英国、爱尔兰、澳大利亚、新西兰和加拿大这 6 个英语国家的地理、历史、社会、经济、政治、军事、法律、教育、对华关系、国际关系等方面的基本情况,了解文化传统、风俗习惯和社会生活的其它有关信息。

这部新教材是在总结这类教材实际使用的基础上编写的。首先确立了“减轻负担、概中之概、厚今薄古、英语通俗、纲目清楚、条理分明、文表并用、内容更新”的原则,把篇幅尽量控制在一定的范围之内,段前编码,段落表明主题,必要时适当划出提醒线。95 幅图表的简单使用,有利于学生掌握抽象内容,也是一种培养实际的思考和分析能力的方法。

本书包含大量的概念、世界及 6 国的大事件、时代背景、重要人物等内容。但是教学和学习基本上应以课本为根本。课本对“概况”的内容和难度的定位,是对英语专业学生的基本的也是足够的要求,过繁、过难、过细、过分专业化的内容,是驻外使馆人员和专门的研究人员或研究生的学习任务,因此,课堂一般不应随意引申、尽情发挥、大量补充、广征博引、大讲历史故事,也不可只划所谓的“重点”,而“非重点”内容学生则完全忽略,从而误导学生。也不要把这门课上成词汇课或泛读课,不要逐段逐句讲解。上课时应当指导学生全面系统地掌握尽可能多的知识点和一切可能的考试点。

在每章结尾列出“教学、学习与考试提纲”,作为教学、学习和考试的统一指导纲领,严格限制范围,限定难度,集中注意力攻关,把精华和要害充分掌握,融会贯通。一切教学、学习和考试活动均应以这个提纲为纲,抓住这个“概中之概”,从而以课本为本。但是本提纲不是考试题本身。考试以选择题、填空题、定义题、简答题、图表说明题、制表题、讨论题这类题型为准。

在学习过程中首先要熟悉课本,掌握课本中提纲所涉及的一切知识点以及可能的命题点,找出难点、疑点、奇点、比较点、对照点、亮点、精彩点,作为课前、课堂处理、讲解、提问与讨论的内容,也作为课后与考前的复习内容。同时作好读书笔记和讨论。阅读教材是理解课程内容的基础。部分内容如名词解释、事件的性质、后果、意义等可以下功

夫记熟，也可以结对、小组讨论，包括内容提要、考试题型、名词解释、问题解答、以图表说明、解释图表、学习心得、编写模拟试题，等等。有组织条件的班级或院系，可以组织概况知识竞赛，从而让学习拔尖、记忆力好、下了大力气的学生带领大家把概况内容演练得深入人心。

英语国家的概况，本身是一大堆和一系列动态的情况与信息，既是历史问题，但也有新的真相被历史学家们不断揭示出来。本书的数据一般更新到 1996 年前后，部分数字更新到 2006 年。因此，本书的编写只能就已经有了定论的事实和被普遍接受的观点简单介绍给学习者，把可能存在的争论留给专家学者们去进行。在本书的编写和修改过程中，参考了大量资料和中外书籍，恕编者在此不一一列举，对有关作者和前辈谨致深切的谢意！与此同时，也希望专家学者和教授们以及学习者批评指正，以便不断修改，不断更新完善。

编著者

2007 年 9 月

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Part 1 The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland



Chapter 1 British Geography

1.1 Terms about British Geography

What is the difference between the British Isles, Britain, Great Britain, England, Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom? Let's talk about these confusing terms first.

1. British Isles

Off the coast of mainland Western Europe lie two islands called the British Isles (i.e., island, especially used in poetry and proper names). The larger of the two, also lying nearest to the mainland Europe (a mere 34 kilometers at the closest point) is the island of Britain, or Great Britain, and the smaller island is known as Ireland. Surrounding Britain and Ireland are several thousand small islands, e.g., Channel Islands, Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands, Isle of Man, Island of Mull, Island of Lewis, etc.

2. Britain

Britain is divided into three parts: Scotland, Wales and England.

3. Northern Ireland

North-eastern corner of Ireland is made up of 6 counties, forming a province of the United Kingdom. Northern Ireland remained part of the UK rather than joining an independent Ireland because of the wishes of the Protestant majority.

4. The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom, or the UK, 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 north-eastern part. The rest of Ireland is the state that occupies most of Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, or Eire, which is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, and is an independent country. Therefore, the full title of the United Kingdom is "The United Kingdom of Great Britain

and Northern Ireland”.

5. England

England is the largest one of these 4 units which make up the United Kingdom, occupying the southern part of Great Britain with Scotland to its north and Wales to its west. It is the center of political and economic power from where the UK is under control. Centered on London, England rose from a national core area of the British Isles into the headquarters of a global empire. It is also the most populous, and the richest part. The English people take it too much for granted, and tend to use the words “England” and “English” when they mean “Britain” and “British”. Sometimes this annoys the Scots and the Welsh. The Scots are very proud of their nationality. The Welsh too do not regard themselves as English either, and have a culture and even a language of their own.

6. The British Language

England is nevertheless strongly connected with “Britain” as a whole. This is probably because English, not “British”, is the name of the official language that is common to all parts of the United Kingdom as well as to the British Isles as a whole, including the Republic of Ireland.

Type of name	Name	The geographical area	Political division	People	Individual	National adjective	
The geographical names	British Isles	Great Britain [Short forms: Britain; Great Britain (GB)] [people: the British/Britons]	England	the English	Englishman (-woman)	English	
			Scotland	the Scots	Scotsman (-woman)	Scottish	
			Wales	the Welsh	Welshman (-woman)	Welsh	
		Ireland	Northern Ireland (U.K.)	the Irish	Irishman (-woman)	(Northern) Irish	
			The Republic of Ireland [or Eire]		Irishman Irishwoman	Irish	
		Several thousand small islands			Channel Islands, Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands, Isle of Man, Island of Mull, Island of Lewis, etc		
		The official name of the political state	Full official name of the country	The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland		The capital of the country: London.	
Short forms of the country's names	the United Kingdom						
	UK; the UK; U. K.						
	Britain = Great Britain (GB)		England, Wales and Scotland				

1.2 British Physical Geography

1. Location

As an island country, the United Kingdom is located in northwestern Europe, lying off the northwest coast of mainland Europe, and occupying the major portion of the British Isles.

2. Boundaries

Atlantic Ocean lies to its northwest and west, while North Sea lies to its east; it is separated from France by the English Channel to the south; The Republic of Ireland lies to the west.

3. The English Channel

The English Channel, or simply called the Channel, is a stretch of water bounded north by England and south by France, leading in the west to the Atlantic Ocean, and in the east via the Strait of Dover (E) to the North Sea, 34 km wide at its narrowest point, 565 km long by 240 km wide at its widest point. It is also known as La Manche (French "the sleeve") from its shape. It separated the British Isles from Mainland Europe since the Ice Age and protected Britons against invasion since the Norman Conquest in 1066.

4. Chunnel

A tunnel is an artificial underground passage constructed for various purposes. As one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, work on the construction of the Channel Tunnel, called "Chunnel", a railroad link with twin rail tunnels, between Britain and France, running 50 km long, and 40 m beneath the seabed, began in 1986. It was open to traffic in May 1994, thus linking Britain with mainland Europe.

5. Land Area

Britain has a total land area of 0.24482 million square kilometers, which is small compared with Russia's 17.0755 million, Canada's 9.9701 million, China's 9.59696 million, and 9.3689 million of the USA. It is just under 1,000 km from the south coast of England to the extreme north of Scotland, and just under 500 km across the widest part. At no point are you ever more than 100 km from the sea. Comparative area: slightly smaller than the state of Oregon of the US. Land use: 29% arable land; 48% meadows and pastures; 9% forest and woodland; 14% other; includes 1% irrigated. Major cities: (1994 est.) London (capital) 6,976,500; Birmingham

1,008,400; Leeds 724,400; Glasgow 680,000; Sheffield 530,100. Sea routes extend far inland, providing cheap transportation.

6. Coastline

The British coast is long and has good, deep harbours. Its coastline runs as long as 12,429 kilometers.

7. Equation of Time

Britain uses Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), the time on the line of 0° longitude, which passes through Greenwich, a district of southeast London, used as a basis for calculating time throughout the world in different time zones. It is used in Britain from October to March, 8 hours later than our Beijing Time; for the rest of the year British Summer Time, one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, is used.

8. Physical Features

Britain's physical geography is varied. The most simple and the most meaningful division of Britain is into a lowland region and highland region. As largely a lowland country with no high mountains, Britain is slowly sloping with the Northwest slowly rising and the Southeast slowly sinking. Most of England, with the exception of the Pennine Mountains and the peninsular southwest, consist of Lowland Britain. The east and southeast are mostly lowlands. They are part of the Great European Plain, with its level land and fertile soil. There is much good farmland especially in the south and along the east coast of England. In this part of England, the relief is low, soils are generally good, rainfall is ample, and agricultural productivity is relatively high.

Highland Britain consists mainly of Scotland and Wales as well as Northern England (the Pennines and the Lake District).

(1) **England** England is the largest of the four countries that make up the United Kingdom, occupying the southern part of Great Britain with Scotland to its north and Wales to its west. It has a land area of more than 130,000 square kilometers, which amounts to nearly 60% of the whole island. The southwest and west are largely a plateau. The Pennines, a range of hills is the principal mountain chain. But the highest peak of England, Scafell (978 m), is in the Lake District in northwest England. The east of England is mainly an open cultivated plain.

England is nevertheless strongly connected with "Britain" as a whole. This is probably because English, not "British", is the name of the official language that is common to all parts of the United Kingdom as well as to the British Isles as a whole, including the Republic of Ireland.

(2) **Scotland** Scotland covers 78,760 square kilometers and has just 5.5 million inhabitants. It is the northernmost part of mainland Great Britain, bordered in south by England. Scotland is divided into three natural zones: the Highlands in the north, the central Lowlands, and the southern Uplands. The Highlands are a wild, rocky, mountainous plateau. Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in Britain (1,343 m) is in the central Highlands. Most valleys, coal and iron fields and dairy pasture are located in the central Lowlands. It 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. Along the narrow “waist” of River Clyde, Scotland possesses an extensive coalfield and a nearby ore deposit, and near Glasgow, an excellent port. This narrow lowland corridor has become this region’s core area, with industrial Glasgow at one end and the cultural focus Edinburgh, its capital, at the other. Scotland now finds itself fronting a North Sea that produces not only fish, but also oil and natural gas. A new age has dawned. There are about 800 islands in Scotland. Nevertheless, Scotland, like Wales, belongs to the most rough, remote highland territories of Great Britain. Scotland is the most thinly populated part of the UK. Although a part of the United Kingdom, Scotland has its own legal and educational system and its own banknotes. With its many moors, lakes, mountains, islands and ancient castles, Scotland is rightly regarded as a beautiful country, and is popular with English tourists, especially those who enjoy sporting facilities such as skiing in winter, which is not possible in England.

(3) **Wales** As a country of hills and mountains, Wales, with 2.9 million people, extends over 20,761 square kilometers in the west of Great Britain, accounting for less than 9% of the whole island. Here is Britain’s most stony, remote, highland territories. The highest mountain in Wales is Snowdonia (1,085 m). It is a national park in northwest Wales, famous for its picturesque mountain scenery. 6% of Wales is covered with forest and much of the country is pasture. Only 12% of the land is arable. The industrial revolution left Wales’s countryside ruined by mines, its people dislocated, its cities slum ridden. Many Welsh citizens have left their country for other parts of the world and new opportunities. Its capital is Cardiff.

(4) **Northern Ireland** As the smallest of the UK’s four units, Northern Ireland occupies the northeastern one-sixth of the island of Ireland. With a population of 1.7 million and a land area of 14,120 square kilometers, which make up 9% of the whole island, Northern Ireland is also the UK’s poorest area. It has a rocky and wild northern coastline. It is mostly rural, with low hills and a beautiful lake district. The land is well-watered and fertile, with an ancient small-field pattern of agriculture. In the northeast lie the uplands, while the mountains in the southeast gradually give way to the central lowlands. Belfast is its capital.