



西安外国语大学编著

21[★]世纪英语专业

系列教材

英美概况

The U.K. & the U.S.A. — A Survey

主编 王九萍 张锦萍



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西安交通大学出版社
XI'AN JIAOTONG UNIVERSITY PRESS



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西安外国语大学“十一五”规划教材

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内容简介

本书是以国家教育部批准实施的《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》为导向,以拓宽学生相关知识面和相关学科知识为目的而组编的《英美概况》英语专业教材。书中每章的内容与英美国家社会与文化的知识紧密结合,以期提高学生对文化差异的敏感性,培养学生跨文化交际能力。

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郑 燕

新世纪之初,随着英语教育的快速发展,高等学校英语专业学生的入学英语水平在不断提高,这对英语专业教材的时效性和适用性是一种挑战。随着新世纪的到来,中国在文化和经济等领域变化巨大,国际交往越来越多,网络应用不断普及,知识更新周期不断缩短。社会的种种变化也对英语专业的教学与教材建设提出了新的任务。为了顺应时代的进步,满足不断发展的社会对英语人才知识结构的新要求,高等学校英语专业应在继承优秀教材编写传统的前提下,不断创新,推出能够反映新的教学理念、体现新的教学改革成果、富有时代气息和丰富内容、符合英语专业教学实际需要的新教材。基于以上思路,西安外国语大学英文学院将“21 世纪英语专业系列教材”列为“十一五”规划教材建设项目,统一策划并组织富有教学经验的教师参与编写。

“21 世纪英语专业系列教材”包括英语语音、口语、听力、阅读、写作、翻译、英美文学、语言学、英语国家社会与文化等英语专业必修课程和选修课程使用的教材。本系列教材的编写以高等学校英语专业教学大纲为依据,在全面分析我国中西部地区英语专业学生实际水平和需要的前提下,对每门课程的教材内容进行精心筛选,有针对性地对教材的编排体例进行合理设计。专业基础课程的教材做到有利于学生英语基本功的训练和语言技能的全面发展;相关专业知识课程的教材旨在拓宽学生的知识范围,提高他们的人文素养,培养分析问题、解决问题的能力。

“21 世纪英语专业系列教材”在选材方面依据知识性、科学性、时代性的总原则,力图反映该教材涉及学科新的教学与研究成果。专业基础课程的教材选取语言知识丰富、内容生动活泼、能够反映现当代社会特征、启迪思想并能够调动学习自觉性的材料。此类教材在内容安排上体现循序渐进、由浅入深、有利于教学活动组织和学生参与讨论交流的原



则。相关专业知识课程的教材在侧重学科基础知识传授的同时力图体现反映学科发展的新内容,注意专业知识的系统性介绍并体现相近专业课程之间的相互关联。此类教材在编写方面力图做到表述语言简明、信息量大且相对集中,在选材和内容安排方面考虑到有利于现代教育技术的应用。

教材建设是英语专业建设的一项重要工作。编写能够通过教学有效传授系统的专业基础知识和相关专业知识、反映各门课程涉及学科的发展、体现和推广英语专业教学改革成果和成功经验的教材,是高等学校英语专业建设的一项长期任务。西安外国语大学英文学院在英语专业本科教育方面已有 50 年的积淀,在长期的专业建设和发展中形成了自身的英语教育特色,编写了一批反响良好的本科教材。此次推出的“21 世纪英语专业系列教材”有的是在过去出版使用的基础上修订再版的,有的是使用数年的校内教材经编者重新改编修订的,有的是依据教学大纲要求、结合编者的研究成果和教学经验新编的。所有教材编写人员均有多年的专业教学经验和相关研究成果。他们熟悉英语专业本科教学的原理与规律,了解学生的难点所在和实际需要,将各自的课程教学经验积累融入编写的教材之中并体现在教材内容科学合理的编排方面。

“21 世纪英语专业系列教材”的编写出版丰富了英语专业教材的种类,为本科教学提供了更多的教材选择,从而使教学更符合学生需要、更有明确的针对性。限于编写水平,本系列教材不足之处在所难免。我们真诚地希望专家、同行提出宝贵意见,以帮助我们改进教材编写工作。

编委会

2008 年 9 月

《英美概况》是一门主要介绍英国、美国两大主要英语国家的社会与文化的知识性课程。本课程旨在向英语专业的学生介绍英美国家的地理风貌、历史事件、政治体制、经济发展,教育趋势,以及社会,文化,风土人情等多方面的人文历史元素。

本书是以国家教育部批准实施的《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》为导向,以拓宽学生学习英美社会、文化知识层面和相关学科知识为目的,而组编的《英美概况》英语专业教材。书中每章的内容与英美国家社会与文化的知识紧密结合,以期提高学生对文化差异的敏感性,培养学生跨文化交际能力。

众所周知,英美等英语国家的政治、经济以及社会等方面的情况在近十年有了翻天覆地的变化。许多有关英语国家概况的教材如雨后春笋般涌现出来。然而,本教材在内容选材及注释部分力求引用最新的资料,力求地道的语言叙述、力求内容介绍详略得当,层次分明,重点突出。本教材在编排和设计上,不仅仅着眼于文化知识的传授,每章节所附的思考题还有助于学生的鉴赏批评能力、思维能力和创新能力的培养。

全书共分12章,各章节配有思考题,有助于提高学生的自学能力。全书图文并茂,寓学于乐,能够让学生带着浓厚的兴趣,去学习、理解、感悟英美两国的文化渊源和发展现状。

本书的美国篇,我们特别委托 Stan Sulkes 教授校阅了原稿。Dr. Sulkes 所给予的指教使本书记述的正确性得到保证。在此深表谢意。

最后,谨向西安交通大学出版社全体工作人员致以衷心的感谢,没有他们的辛勤劳动,此书不可能如期出版,他们热忱的工作态度令人感动。

编者

2009年1月

Part 1 The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Unit 1	Land and People	(1)
Unit 2	History	(22)
Unit 3	Government	(50)
Unit 4	Literature	(71)
Unit 5	Education	(95)
Unit 6	Culture and Society	(114)

Part 2 The United States of America

Unit 7	Land and People	(136)
Unit 8	Government and Economic Policies	(157)
Unit 9	Education	(178)
Unit 10	Culture and Society	(193)
Unit 11	Literature	(221)
Unit 12	History in Brief	(253)

Bibliography	(286)
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Part 1

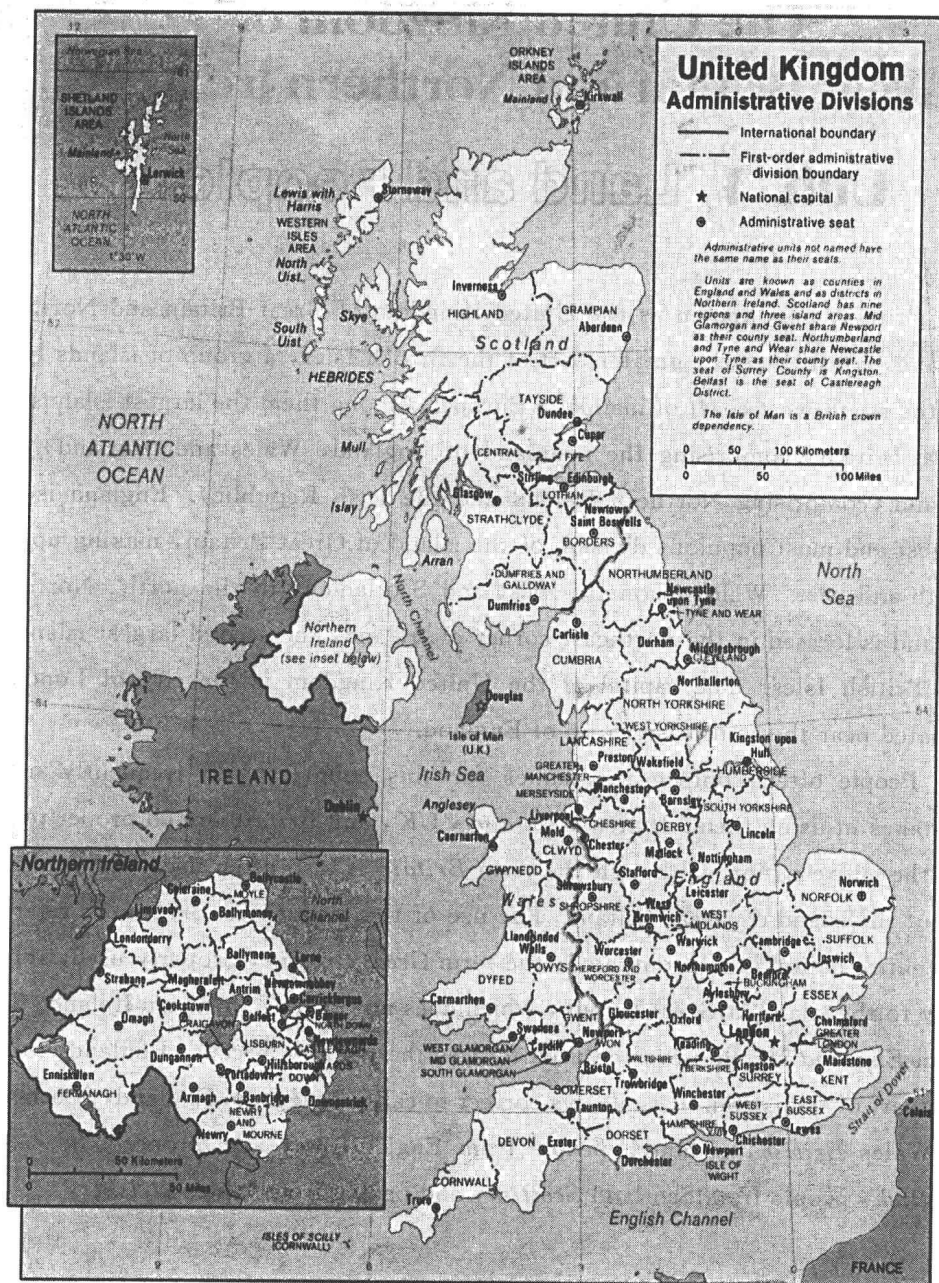
The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland



Unit 1 Land and People

Britain, also known as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, constitutes the greater part of the British Isles, a group of islands lying off the north-west coast of mainland Europe. Among them the largest islands are Great Britain (comprising the mainland of England, Wales and Scotland) and Ireland (comprising Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic). England is the largest and most populous division of the island of Great Britain, making up the south and east. Wales is on the west and Scotland is to the north. Northern Ireland is located in the northeast corner of Ireland, the second largest island in the British Isles. The capital of the United Kingdom is the city of London, situated near the southeastern tip of England.

People often confuse the names for this country, and frequently make mistakes in using them. *United Kingdom*, *UK*, and *Britain* are all proper terms for the entire nation, although the term *Britain* is also often used when talking about the island of Great Britain. The use of the term *Great Britain* to refer to the entire nation is now outdated; the term *Great Britain*, properly used, refers only to the island of Great Britain, which does not include Northern Ireland. The term *England* should never be used to describe Britain, because England is only one part of the island. It is always correct to call people from England, Scotland, or Wales *British*, although people from England may also properly be called *English*, people from Scotland *Scottish*, and people from Wales *Welsh*.



1. Geographical Components and Borders

The United Kingdom is bordered on the south by the English Channel, which separates it from the continent of Europe. It is bordered on the east by the North Sea, and on the west by the Irish Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. The only land border of the United Kingdom with another nation is between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The United Kingdom is a small nation in physical size. England is the largest, most populous, and wealthiest division of the United Kingdom. It makes up 130,410 km² of the United Kingdom's roughly total 244,110 km². Scotland is an area of 78,790 km², Wales is an area of 20,760 km², and the Northern Ireland is area of 14,160 km². This means that England makes up 53.4% of the area of the United Kingdom, Scotland 32.3%, Wales 8.5%, and Northern Ireland 5.8%.

The United Kingdom contains a number of small islands. These include the Isle of Wight, which lies off England's southern coast; Anglesey, off the northwest coast of Wales; the Isles of Scilly in the English Channel; the Hebrides archipelago to the west of Scotland, consisting of the Inner and the Outer Hebrides; the Orkney Islands to the northeast of Scotland; and the Shetland Islands farther out into the North Sea from Scotland.

Several dependencies and dependent territories are associated with the United Kingdom. The dependencies, located close to Britain, are the Isle of Man^① in the Irish Sea and the Channel Islands^② off the northern coast of France. These dependencies, while not technically part of the United Kingdom, maintain a special relationship with it. The Channel Islands were once part of the Duchy of Normandy and retain much of their original French culture. The Isle of Man, controlled by Norway during the Middle Ages, came under English rule in the 14th century. Both dependencies are largely self-governing and have their own legislative assemblies and systems of law. Britain is responsible for their international relations and defense.

Britain's dependent territories are scattered throughout the world and are the remains of the former British Empire. They are generally small in area and without many resources. Once considered colonies, they have opted to remain



under British control for a variety of reasons. Today Britain assists the territories economically, with the understanding that they may become independent when they wish. Most are locally self-governing, although the queen appoints a governor for each territory who is responsible for external affairs and internal security, including the police and public service. The ultimate responsibility for their government rests with the foreign and commonwealth secretary, a minister in the British Cabinet. The United Kingdom has experienced difficulties with some of its territories—Argentina has made claims to the Falkland Islands[®] and Spain has made claims to Gibraltar[®]. China's claim to the former dependent territory of Hong Kong was satisfied in July 1997 when Britain's lease ran out and China assumed control of the area.

2. Natural Regions and Topography

The island of Great Britain can be divided into two major natural regions—the highland zone and the lowland zone. The highland zone is an area of high hills and mountains in the north and west. The lowland zone in the south and east consists mostly of rolling plains. The zones are divided by an imaginary line running through England from the River Exe on the southwest coast to the mouth of the River Tees on the northeast coast. The lowland zone has a milder climate and better soils for farming. Historically, most people in Britain have lived in the lowland zone rather than in the harsher highland zone.

(1) The Highland Zone

The highland zone contains what is often called rough country, consisting to a large extent of rugged hills, mountains, and eroded areas frequently broken by valleys and plains. The highest elevations in the British Isles are in the highland zone; the highest point is Ben Nevis at 1,343 m, located in the Highlands of Scotland. The highland zone is cooler than the lowland zone, and receives more rainfall and less sunlight. In many places farming is impossible. Even where it is feasible, the soil is often thin and stony, with a hard rock formation below. Rainwater often cannot escape readily, so many areas tend to be waterlogged.

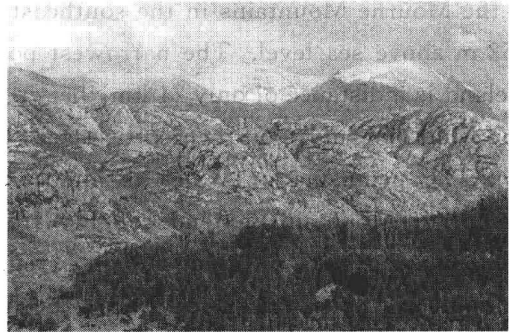
Wales, Scotland, and parts of England are located in the highland zone. The parts of England in the highland zone include the Pennine Chain of mountains, extending down into northern England and into the southwestern peninsula. The

Unit 1 Land and People

Pennine Chain is sometimes called the backbone of England. It is a massive upland area extending 260 km from north to south, starting at the Cheviot Hills on England's border with Scotland and ending in the Midlands of central England. It is made up of several broad, rolling, windswept moorlands separated by deep river valleys. Many of England's major industrial areas lie on the flanks of the Pennine Chain, where there are many coalfields. To the west of the northern Pennines are the Cumbrian Mountains, a mountainous dome of ancient rocks deeply eroded by glaciers. This region contains the Lake District[®], famous for its lakes and scenic beauty.



Ben Nevis, Scotland



Scottish Highlands

The part of the highland zone in England's southwest peninsula is often referred to as the West Country. This peninsula, which juts out into the Atlantic Ocean, contains the counties of Devon and Cornwall. It features hilly, rough areas, the moorland plateaus of Dartmoor and Exmoor, and many picturesque valleys. Its sheltered areas are noted for their mild climate.

North of the Cheviot Hills, in Scotland, are the Southern Uplands, an area of rounded hills and broad valleys. The maximum elevation here is 850 m, and much of the area consists of moorlands used for grazing sheep. North of the Uplands is a broad valley known variously as the Central Lowlands, the Scottish Lowlands, or the Midland Valley. This valley is sandwiched between two areas of uplands and contains most of Scotland's urban centers, industries, and mines.

Farther north are the Scottish Highlands, a rugged area of mountain ranges, bleak moorlands, and deep, narrow valleys known as glens. The Highlands contain sparsely populated areas of moors. These tracts of wasteland are mostly

*The U. K. & the U. S. A.—A Survey*

covered with coarse, low, bushy plants, including varieties of heath and heather, hardy evergreen shrubs most often found in cooler climates. The Grampian Mountains are the chief range in the Highlands, reaching as high as 1,343m above sea level. The western portion of the Highlands contains most of Scotland's famous lochs, or large lakes.

Northern Ireland consists of hilly highlands similar to those of Scotland. Most of Northern Ireland is situated in a large valley formed from an old lava plateau. In the center of the valley is Lough Neagh, the largest lake in the British Isles, which is 29 km long and 18 km wide. The highest part of Northern Ireland is the Mourne Mountains in the southeast, which reach a maximum elevation of 852 m above sea level. The narrowest point between the islands of Britain and Ireland is a distance of only 21 km, between Tor on the coast of Northern Ireland and Mull of Kintyre on the Scottish coast.

The peninsula of Wales is almost entirely covered by mountains. The Cambrian Mountains extend roughly from northeast to southeast across the peninsula, forming an area of high, craggy peaks and bleak moorlands. They contain the highest peak in Wales, the huge mountain called Snowdon, which rises to 1,085 m above sea level. In southern Wales lower and less rugged mountains, the Brecon Beacons, extend in a roughly east-west direction. A thin ribbon of lowland rims much of the Welsh coast, broadening out in the northwest to include the offshore island of Anglesey. It also broadens out in the southwest and southeast. Sometimes the lowland region of southeastern Wales is considered an extension of the lowland zone of Britain. This region contains the largest cities and industrial establishments in Wales. Coal mines in the mountains just to the north of this southern lowland were of great importance to the Welsh economy for many years. Hills running along the Welsh border with England continue into parts of a few English counties.

(2) The Lowland Zone

In general the lowland zone is a great plain with a gentle, undulating surface and extensive areas of almost-level ground. It receives less rain and more sunshine than the highland zone and much of the soil in the zone is fertile. Most of the lowland region is less than 150 m above sea level, and the hills rarely reach more than 300 m above sea level. It has been extensively inhabited, farmed, and

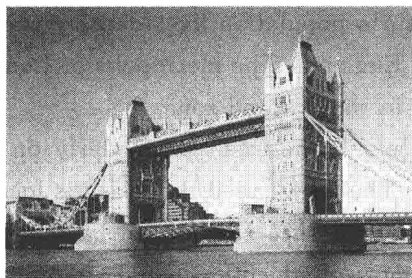
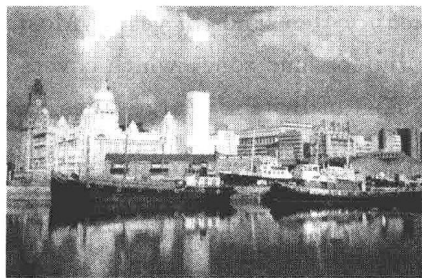
grazed for thousands of years. Most of Britain's population lives densely packed into the lowland zone, which covers most of England. The metropolis of London and most of Britain's large cities are located in the lowland zone.

The flattest lands in the lowland zone are in the east, particularly on the large, hump-shaped area called East Anglia. The inlet called the Wash is located off East Anglia's northern coast. The Wash was once surrounded by the flat, swampy areas of the Fenlands, or the Fens, most of which has now been drained. The broad, rolling Midland Plain is south of the Pennine Chain. Northwest of this plain, on the western side of the Pennines, is the Lancashire-Cheshire plain. Another plain extends from the eastern slope of the Pennines to the sea. It is broken in the north by the Yorkshire Moors, a high wasteland overgrown with coarse plants.

Several chains of low hills break up the lowland plain. They are sometimes called scarplands or escarpments, meaning that they tend to drop steeply on one side and slope gently downward on the other side. One of these upland ridges, the South Downs, runs along the southern coast eastward from the Salisbury Plain. Running parallel to this ridge, south of the Thames valley, are the North Downs. In between the North Downs and the South Downs is a region called the Weald, an area of scenic, gentle hills. Another elevated chain is the Chiltern Hills, which stretch southwest from the central part of the lowland plain. The Cotswold Hills lie to the west near Wales. The Cotswolds and the plain's northern hills have a limestone base, while the Downs have a chalk base.

3. Rivers and Lakes

Since Britain has a moist climate with much rainfall, rivers and lakes are numerous. Rivers in central and eastern Britain tend to flow slowly and steadily all year long because they are fed by the frequent rain. Many have been navigable, and from the earliest times they have served people interested in either commerce or invasion. The Highlands act as a divide and determine whether rivers flow west to the Irish Sea or east to the North Sea. Rivers and streams moving westward down from the Highlands tend to be swift and turbulent; rivers flowing eastward tend to be long, graceful, and gentle, with slowly moving waters.

*The U. K. & the U. S. A.—A Survey**London's Tower Bridge**Mersey at Liverpool*

The Thames and the Severn are the longest rivers in Britain and are almost equal in length. The Severn flows south out of the mountains of central Wales to the Bristol Channel at Bristol. It is 354 km long. The Thames, 338 km long, flows eastward out of the Cotswold Hills and weaves through the metropolis of London. The Thames provides water to the city of London and is used to carry commercial freight. Other important rivers in England are the Mersey, which enters the Irish Sea at Liverpool; the river Humber on the east coast, into which the Trent River and several other rivers flow; and the Tyne River in northern England, which flows past Newcastle upon Tyne to the North Sea.

In Scotland the important rivers are the Clyde and the Forth, which are joined by a canal. The River Clyde flows northwest, past Glasgow, and empties into the Atlantic at the Firth of Clyde. The River Forth flows eastward into the Firth of Forth, where Edinburgh rises on its south bank. The most important rivers in Northern Ireland are the Lagan, the Bann, and the Foyle.

Most of the large lakes in the United Kingdom are located in the upland areas of Scotland and northern England, although Lough Neagh in Northern Ireland is the largest lake in the United Kingdom.

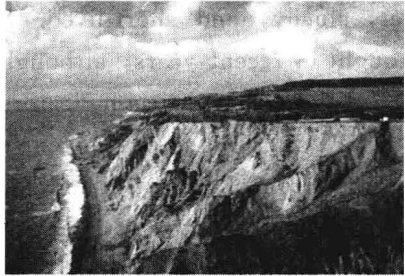
Loch Lomond, on the southwestern edge of the Highlands of Scotland, is the largest on the island of Great Britain, measuring 37 km long and from 1.6 to 8 km wide. Lake Windermere is the largest of the 15 major lakes in the famous Lake District of northwestern England. It is about 1.6 km wide and more than 16 km long.

*View of the Lake District*

4. Coastline

Great Britain's coastline is highly irregular, with many bays and inlets that provide harbors and shelters for ships and boats. Coastal trade involving ships sailing along the coast has been carried on since ancient times. The coastline is about 8,000 km long and affords some of the best scenery in Britain. The western coast is characterized by cliffs and rocky headlands, especially where the Highlands meet the sea in northwestern Scotland. On the more gentle southern and eastern coasts there are many sand or pebble beaches as well as tall limestone or chalk cliffs, the most famous of which are the White Cliffs of Dover in the southeast.

A few islands lie just off Britain's coast. The Hebrides, an archipelago of about 500 islands, cover a considerable area along the coast of western Scotland; the isle of Anglesey lies just off the coast of northwestern Wales; and the Isle of Wight is off England's southern coast. Northern Ireland has a beautiful and rugged coastline and is the location of the famous and unique Giant's Causeway, an expansive and curious formation of rocks shaped like giant cylinders.



Alum Bay, Isle of Wight

5. Climate

The Atlantic Ocean has a significant effect on Britain's climate. Although the British Isles are as far north in latitude as Labrador in Canada, they have a mild climate throughout the year. This is due to the Gulf Stream, a current of warm water that flows up from the Caribbean past Britain. Prevailing southwesterly winds moving across this warmer water bring moisture and moderating temperatures to the British Isles. The surrounding waters moderate temperatures year-round, making the UK warmer in winter and cooler in summer than other areas at the same latitude. Great Britain's western coast tends to be warmer than the eastern coast, and the southern regions tend to be warmer than the northern regions. The mean annual temperature in the far north of Scotland is