



教育部高职高专规划教材

# 英语国家社会与文化 简明教程

A Concise Course to the Society and Culture of  
Major English-Speaking Countries

● 陈执义 王祖兴 主编



化学工业出版社  
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英语国家社会与文化简明教程

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主编 王守仁 副主编 王守仁



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## 出版说明

高职高专教材建设工作是整个高职高专教学工作中的重要组成部分。改革开放以来,在各级教育行政部门、有关学校和出版社的共同努力下,各地先后出版了一些高职高专教育教材。但从整体上看,具有高职高专教育特色的教材极其匮乏,不少院校尚在借用本科或中专教材,教材建设落后于高职高专教育的发展需要。为此,1999年教育部组织制定了《高职高专教育专门课程基本要求》(以下简称《基本要求》)和《高职高专教育专业人才培养目标及规格》(以下简称《培养规格》),通过推荐、招标及遴选,组织了一批学术水平高、教学经验丰富、实践能力强的教师,成立了“教育部高职高专规划教材”编写队伍,并在有关出版社的积极配合下,推出一批“教育部高职高专规划教材”。

“教育部高职高专规划教材”计划出版500种,用5年左右时间完成。这500种教材中,专门课(专业基础课、专业理论与专业能力课)教材将占很高的比例。专门课教材建设在很大程度上影响着高职高专教学质量。专门课教材是按照《培养规格》的要求,在对有关专业的人才培养模式和教学内容体系改革进行充分调查研究和论证的基础上,充分吸取高职、高专和成人高等学校在探索培养技术应用性专门人才方面取得的成功经验和教学成果编写而成的。这套教材充分体现了高等职业教育的应用特色和能力本位,调整了新世纪人才必须具备的文化基础和技术基础,突出了人才的创新素质和创新能力的培养。在有关课程开发委员会组织下,专门课教材建设得到了举办高职高专教育的广大院校的积极支持。我们计划先用2~3年的时间,在继承原有高职高专和成人高等学校教材建设成果的基础上,充分汲取近几年来各类学校在探索培养技术应用性专门人才方面取得的成功经验,解决新形势下高职高专教育教材的有无问题;然后再用2~3年的时间,在《新世纪高职高专教育人才培养模式和教学内容体系改革与建设项目计划》立项研究的基础上,通过研究、改革和建设,推出一大批教育部高职高专规划教材,从而形成优化配套的高职高专教育教材体系。

本套教材适用于各级各类举办高职高专教育的院校使用。希望各用书学校积极选用这批经过系统论证、严格审查、正式出版的规划教材,并组织本校教师以对事业的责任感对教材教学开展研究工作,不断推动规划教材建设工作的发展与提高。

教育部高等教育司

2001年4月3日

# 前 言

本书是面向高职高专英语专业的学生而编写的，全书共分 3 个部分，第一部分介绍英国，共 12 章；第二部分介绍美国，共 13 章；第三部分介绍加拿大、澳大利亚、新西兰，共 11 章。

本书简要介绍了上述 5 个国家的地理、历史、政治、经济、文学、教育、宗教信仰、风俗习惯、家庭生活、社会福利等基本情况，目的是帮助学生获得上述以英语为主要语言的国家的社会文化知识，增强学生对中西文化差异的敏感性，逐步形成跨文化交际意识，进而提高语言交际能力和文化修养。

本书的突出特点有两个方面：第一是“简”；第二是“新”。所谓“简”是指各部分内容突出重点，涉及的面尽量宽泛，但对各点的叙述尽量简单扼要。这样做一方面为了适应高职高专课时限制的需要；另一方面对学生的自学不会造成太多的困难。所谓“新”是指本书所选资料能够反映英美国家的最新变化，最新面貌。特别突出了这些国家文化的多元化特征。

本书是高等学校英语专业学生的一门必修课，是由 7 所院校的 12 位老师共同完成的。其中英国部分由张二旗编写第 5、6、7、9、10、11 章；李培娥编写第 1、2、3、4 章；李艳艳编写第 8、12 章。美国部分由周金洁编写第 4、5、10、11、12、13 章；龚淑梅编写第 6、7、8、9 章；刘俊红编写第 1、2、3 章。第三部分中的加拿大部分由段照炜和胡爱强共同编写；新西兰部分由聂鉴锋编写；澳大利亚部分由赵万哲编写。

本教材由河南大学外语学院博士生导师王宝童教授担任主审，王教授认真审阅了全书的内容，提出了许多宝贵意见，在此表示衷心感谢。

在本书编写过程中，我们参考了国内外许多名家专著，作者姓名及著作已列入参考书目之中，在此我们对所有作者表示诚挚的谢意。

开封大学的主管领导和教务处的领导同志，外语系的领导对本书的编写工作给予热情的关心和支持。开封大学外语系的王磊同志帮助整理打印了全部书稿和其他文字资料，在此，谨对他们的关心、支持和帮助表示衷心的感谢。

由于编者水平和掌握资料的限制，加之时间仓促，书中定有错误和不足之处，恳请使用本教材的师生和读者给予批评和指正。

编者

2003 年 6 月 22 日

# Contents

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## Part One The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

<b>Chapter One Geography</b> .....	1
1. Name, Size and Position .....	1
2. Territory and Administrative Areas .....	1
3. Weather .....	2
<b>Chapter Two People</b> .....	4
1. Origin of the Nation .....	4
2. The English Language .....	5
3. Religion .....	6
4. Character and Manners .....	8
<b>Chapter Three English History</b> .....	11
1. The Four Conquests of England .....	11
2. Old England in Change .....	12
3. The Industrial Revolution of the 18th Century .....	13
4. The Chartist Movement in England .....	14
5. The Rise and Fall of the British Empire .....	15
<b>Chapter Four Political System</b> .....	17
1. The Constitutional Monarchy .....	17
2. Parliament .....	18
3. Government .....	20
4. Political Parties .....	22
5. Election .....	23
<b>Chapter Five National Economy</b> .....	25
1. General Survey .....	25
2. Industry .....	25
3. Agriculture .....	27
4. Foreign Trade .....	29
5. Government Expenditure .....	29
6. Work, Money and Tax .....	29
<b>Chapter Six Science and Culture</b> .....	31

1. Developing Science .....	31
2. Outstanding Culture .....	33
<b>Chapter Seven Education .....</b>	<b>37</b>
1. General Survey .....	37
2. Change and Reform in Schools .....	38
3. Schools Today .....	39
4. Institutions of Higher Education .....	40
5. Further Education and Training .....	42
6. Health Education .....	42
<b>Chapter Eight British Literature .....</b>	<b>46</b>
1. Introduction .....	46
2. Early Writing .....	46
3. Elizabethan Drama .....	47
4. The Nineteenth Century Novel .....	48
5. The Twentieth Century Literature .....	50
<b>Chapter Nine British Diplomacy .....</b>	<b>54</b>
1. General Survey .....	54
2. Britain and America .....	55
3. Britain and China .....	56
<b>Chapter Ten Holidays and Festivals .....</b>	<b>58</b>
1. Religious Festivals .....	58
2. Non-religious Festivals and Holidays .....	59
3. Smaller Festivals and Holidays .....	59
4. Spending Holidays .....	59
<b>Chapter Eleven Mass Media .....</b>	<b>60</b>
1. Newspapers .....	60
2. Periodicals .....	61
3. Radio and Television .....	61
<b>Chapter Twelve Way of Life .....</b>	<b>62</b>
1. Family Life .....	62
2. Sports .....	65

## Part Two United States of America

<b>Chapter One Land and People .....</b>	<b>70</b>
1. Location .....	70
2. Size .....	70
3. Physiographic Regions .....	70
4. Rivers and Lakes .....	72
5. People .....	73



6. Climate and Weather .....	76
7. Washington, D. C. and New York .....	77
<b>Chapter Two History</b> .....	79
1. Discovering a New World .....	79
2. The Founding of the 13 Colonies .....	80
3. The War of Independence .....	80
4. The Civil War .....	82
5. Establishing a New Government .....	83
<b>Chapter Three Political System</b> .....	86
1. General Principles .....	86
2. The Three Branches .....	87
3. Two Party System .....	90
<b>Chapter Four Religions</b> .....	94
1. Religion and the U. S. Government .....	94
2. Protestants in the U. S. A. ....	95
3. Catholics in the U. S. A. ....	96
4. Jewish in the U. S. A. ....	97
5. Three Faiths in the U. S. A. ....	97
6. American Character of Religion .....	98
<b>Chapter Five American Literature</b> .....	99
1. The Age of Romanticism .....	99
2. The Age of Realism .....	101
3. Modern American Literature .....	102
<b>Chapter Six Education and Media</b> .....	105
1. Education .....	105
2. The Media .....	110
<b>Chapter Seven National Economy</b> .....	112
1. General Survey .....	112
2. How American Economy Works .....	113
3. Manufacturing Industries .....	114
4. Agriculture .....	115
5. Money System .....	116
<b>Chapter Eight Relations with China</b> .....	118
1. Pragmatic Policy toward China .....	118
2. Historic Events .....	119
3. The Common Interests for China and the U. S. in the 21st Century .....	120
<b>Chapter Nine Scenic Spots</b> .....	121
1. The Grand Canyon National Park .....	122
2. The Yellowstone National Park .....	122
3. Hollywood and Disneyland .....	123

4. Niagara Falls and Hawaii .....	125
5. Miami and Las Vegas .....	126
<b>Chapter Ten The American Character .....</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>Chapter Eleven American Way of Life .....</b>	<b>132</b>
1. Marriage .....	132
2. Family Life .....	134
3. Eating the American Way .....	138
4. American Etiquette .....	142
<b>Chapter Twelve American Holidays .....</b>	<b>147</b>
1. New Year's Day (January 1) .....	147
2. Martin Luther King Day (Third Monday in January) .....	148
3. Abraham Lincoln's Birthday (February 12) .....	149
4. George Washington's Birthday (February 22) .....	151
5. Valentine's Day (February 14) .....	152
6. Easter Sunday (A Sunday in March or April) .....	153
7. April Fools' Day (April 1) .....	155
8. Mother's Day and Father's Day .....	155
9. Memorial Day (Last Monday in May) .....	156
10. Independence Day (July 4) .....	157
11. Halloween (October 31) .....	157
12. Thanksgiving Day (Fourth Thursday in November) .....	158
13. Merry Christmas (December 25) .....	160
<b>Chapter Thirteen Domestic Problems .....</b>	<b>161</b>
1. Racial Discrimination .....	162
2. The Gap between the Poor and the Rich .....	167
3. Health Care .....	169
4. Drug Abuse .....	170
5. Violent Crime and Juvenile Delinquency .....	171
6. Traffic Accidents .....	172
7. Teen Pregnancy and Abortion .....	173

### **Part Three Canada, Australia and New Zealand**

<b>Canada .....</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>Chapter One An Overall View .....</b>	<b>175</b>
1. Location and Size .....	175
2. Regions .....	176
3. People .....	184
4. The History of Canada .....	186
5. Official Language .....	190

<b>Chapter Two Central Canada</b>	191
1. Ontario	192
2. Quebec	194
<b>Chapter Three Political System</b>	196
1. General Survey	196
2. System of Government	198
3. Parliament	202
4. Major Political Parties	204
<b>Chapter Four Education and Literature</b>	204
1. Education	204
2. Literature	207
<b>Chapter Five International Relations</b>	213
1. General Survey	213
2. Overseas Development Programs of Canada	217
<b>Australia</b>	218
<b>Chapter One An Outline</b>	218
1. Size and Location	218
2. Population and an Urbanized Country	220
3. National Flag , National Anthem and National Day	220
4. A Multicultural Society	221
<b>Chapter Two Political System</b>	223
1. The Three Tiers of Government of the Australian Federation	223
2. Political Parties	225
<b>Chapter Three Foreign Relations</b>	225
1. Australia and the United Nation	226
2. Australia in the Asia—Pacific Regions	226
3. Australia and China	228
4. Australia and the Western Countries	228
<b>New Zealand</b>	230
<b>Chapter One An Outline</b>	230
1. Size and Location	230
2. People and Society	231
3. National Flag and National Day	233
4. A Brief History	233
5. Culture and Arts	235
6. Nature	236
<b>Chapter Two Political System</b>	239
1. System of Government	239
2. Parliament	241
3. Major Political Parties	241

<b>Chapter Three Foreign Relations</b> .....	242
1. New Zealand and the United Nations .....	243
2. New Zealand in the Asia-Pacific Region .....	243
3. New Zealand and China .....	244
4. New Zealand and EU .....	245
5. New Zealand and the United States .....	246
<b>References</b> .....	248

## Part One

# The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

## Chapter One Geography

### 1. Name, Size and Position

Britain, Great Britain, the United Kingdom, England, the British Isles<sup>1</sup>—these different names are sometimes used to mean the same thing, and they are frequently used wrongly. Strictly speaking, England, Great Britain and the British Isles ought only to be used as geographical names, since England is only a part of Great Britain; Great Britain does not include Northern Ireland, but the British Isles include Great Britain and the whole of Ireland, that is both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, which is self-governing.

The United Kingdom is the official name, in full, this is the “United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland”, and UK for short. The UK is made up of four countries: Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland (one-sixth of Ireland). England is the largest, and wealthiest division of the United Kingdom. It has an area of 130 410km<sup>2</sup> (50 350 sq mi) of the United Kingdom’s 244 110km<sup>2</sup> (94 250 sq mi). The area of Scotland is 78 790km<sup>2</sup> (30 420 sq mi), the area of Wales is 20 760km<sup>2</sup> (8020 sq mi), and the area of Northern Ireland is 14 160km<sup>2</sup> (5470 sq mi).

The United Kingdom is situated in Western Europe. It 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 lies between the British Isles and America. The United Kingdom’s only land border with another nation is between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It lies between 50° and 60° north latitude, and roughly between 2° east and 8° west longitude. The prime meridian of 0° just passes through the old observatory at Greenwich.

### 2. Territory and Administrative Areas

The UK has a territory of 94 250 square miles (244 110km<sup>2</sup>) accounting for less than 2% of the land area of the world and ranking about the 75th in size among countries in the world. This is remarkably small when you consider its population and its importance in world affairs. Britain is just under 500 km (some 300 miles) across in the widest part and

under 1000km (some 600 miles) in a straight line from the south coast to the extreme north of Scotland. Its coastline runs about ten thousand kilometers, making it one of the countries with a long coastline in the world. On this land there are altogether 69 administrative areas, respectively 46 in England, 9 in Scotland, 8 in Wales, 6 in Northern Ireland.

England, the largest country in Britain, is predominantly a lowland country in the southeast. It is the most populous, and generally speaking, the richest section. The greatest concentrations of population are in London and northeast industrial cities. London, both the capital of England and of the UK, is a very old city. Today it is one of the largest cities in Europe. The port of London is one of the greatest ports in the world. Ships from all countries go up and down the Thames.

In the north is Scotland, with its capital Edinburgh. Scotland, as is called the Scotland Highland, has the majority of Britain's highest mountains and also many lakes, and is famous for its beautiful countryside. Tourism is one of Scotland's most important industries. Tourists from all over the world come to enjoy the beauty of Scottish scenery — to walk among Scottish heather, to visit ancient, historical castles, to eat Scottish salmon and to drink Scotch whisky. They also come to see Scotsmen in kilts playing bagpipes, although only a few Scots wear kilts<sup>2</sup> (the national costume) these days.

Wales lies to the west of England. Its capital is Cardiff, where the international rugby<sup>3</sup> match is held. Wales is divided geographically into the industrial south, the central plateaux and lakes, and the mountainous north of the farmers and tourists. About half the population is crowded into the south, where there used to be a lot of coal mines, but many of them have been closed, or are about to be closed. Welsh coal is of very good quality and used to be exported all over the world. North Wales has beautiful wild scenery, its main industry today is tourism.

The central part of Northern Ireland is made up of plains surrounded by such highlands and mountains as Antrim, Sperrin and Mourne.

### **3. Weather**

The climate of the United Kingdom is much milder than that of many places in the same latitude, Alaska in the U. S. A. , Kanchaka in Russia, and Heilongjiang in China. Its climate is generally mild and temperate. Prevailing winds are southwesterly and the weather from day to day is mainly influenced by depressions moving eastwards across the Atlantic.

Generally, the weather in Britain is neither too cold in winter nor too hot in summer. The annual temperature is about 10°C, varying from around 5°C in the coldest month to 17°C in the warmest month on an average. In winter the temperature falls steadily. There are rarely extremes of cold or heat in Britain and when temperatures drop below 0°C or rise above 32°C nobody is prepared.

There is usually more rain in the west than in the east. In all parts of Britain it rains ev-

ery month of the year; there is no “dry season”, and more snow in the north than in the south. So it is colder in the north, warmer in the south, drier in the east and wetter in the west. Ireland is especially wet. Snow falls in Scotland every winter, and sometimes in England and Wales too. Falls of snow in Ireland are most unusual. But thanks to the Gulf Stream, the Western Isles of Scotland sometimes have milder winter days than the south of France.

There are three main features about the climate in Britain. The first feature is more fog; London used to have fog and smog in winter. The second is more rainy days and less sunny weather, sunny days are rare. In some places there are over 260 rainy days, often only showers and drizzles. That’s why English people often have their umbrellas with them when they go out. The foreigner may laugh when he sees the Englishman setting forth on a brilliantly sunny morning wearing a raincoat or carrying an umbrella, but he may well regret his laughter later in the day! The third is its instability or changeability. All the seasons are very variable; there is no part of the year at which it is possible to expect with any degree of assurance the weather. It is an insular country with an insular climate. And Englishmen describe this peculiar meteorological conditions of their country as “other countries have a climate; in England we have weather”.

It is a well-known fact that the English have an obsession with their weather and that, given half a chance, they will talk about it at length. Some people argue that it is because English weather defies forecast and hence is a source of interest to everyone. This may be so. Certainly Englishmen cannot have much faith in the meteorological experts—the weathermen who, after promising glorious, sunny weather for the following day, are often proved wrong when an anticyclone over the Atlantic brings rainy weather to all districts! In Britain, very often conventional greetings are replaced by comments on the weather. Although the foreigner may consider this exaggerated and comic, it is worthwhile pointing out that it could be used to its advantage. If he wants to start a conversation with an Englishman (or woman) but is at a loss to know where to begin, he could do well to mention the state of the weather. It is a safe subject which will encourage even the most reserved of Englishmen to enter into a discussion.

#### Questions for discussion

1. What is the official name of Great Britain and what are the shortened names?
2. What is Great Britain?
3. What is the weather like? Why so the English people like to talk about weather?

#### Notes

- 1 the British Isles: 不列颠群岛, 包括大不列颠和爱尔兰两个主要岛屿及许多小岛。
- 2 kilt: 苏格兰高地男子穿的褶叠短围裙。围裙上不同的花格图案 (tartan) 表示不同的家族 (clan)。
- 3 rugby: 英式橄榄球, 因起源于英国中部一个叫 Rugby 市一所中学而得名。橄榄球比赛规则介于足球与美式足球。

## Chapter Two People

### 1. Origin of the Nation

#### (1) Main Nations

The main nations in Britain are the English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish.

The English people are the descendants of English-speaking Anglo-Saxon<sup>1</sup> who conquered the native Celts<sup>2</sup> in England in the fifth century. The native Celtic inhabitants in England either intermingled with the Anglo-Saxon invaders or fled into the mountains of Wales and Scotland. Next a substantial number of Scandinavians, the Viking Danes<sup>3</sup>, raided and settled in England during the ninth and tenth centuries. In that time England was divided almost in half between the Danes in the east and northeast and the Saxons in the west. By the end of the tenth century, however, the Saxons controlled most of the country.

In 1066, the Normans, French-speaking invaders of north origin, under William of Normandy (William the Conqueror<sup>4</sup>), conquered England. William and his followers set up a strong central government which brought a new unified discipline and control to the country. The conquerors made French the official language and firmly established the feudal system. At that time, the Norman kings still had territories in France and, as a result, there were numerous contacts between the two countries. French influence grew so strong that many aspects of England's social and cultural life became totally French.

After England became a Protestant country in the sixteenth century, waves of foreigners and refugees have immigrated to England for religious, political, and economic reasons, and their specific skills, as well as their languages, have enriched the English economy and culture.

#### (2) Population

According to mid-1990 estimates, the population of the United Kingdom is 57.4 million. It ranks sixteen in the world in term of population. This is a very large population for such a small area. The population density is about 237 inhabitants per sq km, which is well above the European community average of about 145 per sq km., and yet it is very unevenly distributed. Of the four lands, England is the most densely populated with 367 people per sq km, mostly in the London area and industrial areas. Scotland is the least densely populated with 66 people per sq km, there are large tracts of barren, hilly country, some places are almost uninhabited. Wales and Northern Ireland have 139 and 113 people per sq km respectively.

Britain's population is overwhelmingly urban, with 89.4% living in urban areas and 10.6% living in rural areas. The Industrial Revolution built up major urban areas, and most of Britain's people live in and around them to this day.



## 2. The English Language

### (1) The English Language

The English language has more than 360 000 000 native speakers and is far more widespread than Chinese. It is spoken throughout the continent of North America, the British Isles, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, and is also the most important of language of colonization in Asia, Africa and Oceania. In addition it is the language of commerce and the second language of many countries which formerly had French or German in that position.

English is descended from the language of the Germanic people—the Anglo-Saxons who invaded the British Isles in the fifth century. Their language is called Old English. The earliest written records of English all date from the closing years of the 7th century and consist in the main of charters in Latin but containing personal and places names in English. In the development of Old English, the greatest number of words was borrowed from Latin.

Middle English (1150~1550) began after the Norman Conquest in the 11th century. Numerous French words were borrowed, though these had begun to appear before the Conquest. French-loan words became numerous by the 14th century. But there is not the slightest evidence to show that the Conquest had any effect on the accidence or the phonology. The language of the Low Countries—Dutch and Low German (in the west and the north of Germany), formed another important source of loanwords during the Middle English period, due to the constant and close relations between these countries and England.

By the second half of the 15th century London English had been accepted as the standard literary language in most parts of the country. One of the important influences in establishing London English as the standard library language was the introduction of printing in 1476. Because London was the chief commercial center, the center of government, and near the great universities, London was the center of book publishing in England and books were written in London dialect. Thus, the London dialect was disseminated throughout England. Modern English has been developed and there is now a single accepted pronunciation for the vast majority of words in ordinary polite use, deviation from which is regarded either as a provincialism or as a vulgarism.

### (2) The Language in the UK

It isn't always easy these days to distinguish between people from different parts of Britain. That's because British people move about the country more than they used to. Northerners come and live in the south. Southerners and East Anglians go to the north, and lots of Scots Welsh and Irish come and live in England. More people settle in London and the south than in any other region. That is why many southerners do not really have a special accent that is usually learnt by foreign students—except the Cockneys<sup>5</sup> from the East End of London. A cockney is a Londoner who is born within the sound of Bow bells—the bells of St Mary-le-Bow in east London. Cockneys don't pronounce their "h", e. g. "house" is pronounced "ouse", they pronounce "plate", "late" as "plite", "lite".