

高等教育（矿业）“十二五”规划教材
研究生公共英语系列教材
中国矿业大学“211工程”三期创新人才培养项目

英语国家概况

A Survey of English-Speaking Countries

主编 王丽明 王克强

中国矿业大学出版社

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The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Chapter 1 Land and History

英国全称大不列颠及北爱尔兰联合王国,由英格兰、苏格兰、威尔士及北爱尔兰等构成,位于大西洋东部的不列颠群岛、是个岛屿国家,由大不列颠岛、爱尔兰岛北部和众多小岛组成。面积约 24.40 万平方千米,人口超过 6400 万(2013 年)。英国属于温带海洋气候,常年温和多雨,气候多变。受高纬度因素的影响,有类似极昼极夜的现象,冬季日短夜长,夏季日长夜短。

公元前 3000 年左右,伊比利亚人最先到达大不列颠岛。随后,比克利人、凯尔特人相继来到不列颠。公元前 55 年和前 54 年,罗马人两度入侵。欧洲北部的盎格鲁撒克逊人和以丹麦人为主体的斯堪的纳维亚人在罗马人撤离后,从 5 世纪中叶起陆续入侵大不列颠岛。1066 年,诺曼底公爵威廉征服了英格兰,英国的封建制度正式形成。1215 年,国王约翰被迫签订了大宪章。不久,议会制度形成,从此英国的王权被不断削弱和限制。1688 年,“光荣革命”爆发,确立了君主立宪制。18 世纪后期到 19 世纪前期,英国成为世界上第一个开始并完成工业革命的国家。19 世纪是英国发展的鼎盛时期,第一次世界大战以及第二次世界大战的爆发,导致英国的政治、经济势力大为削弱,逐渐失去了世界霸权的地位。

1. Location and the Four Nations

The full name of the UK is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and

Northern Ireland. It is made up of four nations: England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales. It is located to the northwest of continental Europe, separated by the English Channel. Geographically, it is an island country, covering an area of about 244,000 km², and consists of Great Britain and northeastern part of Ireland, together with many small islands of British Isles.

Great Britain accounts for over 90% of the country's total landmass. It is the largest island off the northwestern coast of mainland Europe with England, Scotland and Wales on it. Ireland is the second largest island of British Isles located to the northwest of Great Britain. It is divided into two parts: Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (an independent country).

England is the largest part of the UK and occupies most of the southern two thirds of Great Britain. The total area of England is 130,410 km² with a population of around 53.9 million (Mid-2013 estimated), which covers more than 84% of the total UK population. It is the most populous and highly urbanized part of the UK. London, the capital of the UK and England, as well as the seat of government, is located in its southeastern part.

Scotland is the second largest and most mountainous part of the UK in the north of Great Britain. Compared with that of England, the population density is quite low. There are only 5.3 million people with an area of 78,789 km². Edinburgh, its largest city, is the capital of Scotland. Scotland is famous for its beautiful natural scenery, such as Scottish Highlands^① and Loch Ness^②, as well as many historical places, like the Edinburgh Castles.

Wales is on the western side of central southern Great Britain. The total area of Wales is 20,779 km². It is also a mountainous part of Great Britain, particularly in the north and central regions. The southeast region is the most built up region of Wales, and the majority of its population live there and a large proportion of its industry is based there. Its capital city, Cardiff, is also in this region.

Northern Ireland lies in the northeast of the island of Ireland, covering

① Scottish Highlands: 苏格兰高地, 是对苏格兰高地边界断层以西和以北的山地的总称, 被认为是欧洲风景最优美的地区之一。人烟稀少, 有多座山脉, 包括英国境内最高峰本·尼维斯峰。

② Loch Ness: 尼斯湖, 位于苏格兰高原北部的大峡谷中, 面积并不大, 却很深, 平均深度达 200 米, 最深处有 300 米。该湖终年不结冰, 湖北端有河流与北海相通, 是英国内陆最大的淡水湖。

14,139 km². It is the smallest part among the four nations of the UK, as well as the second sparsely populated part after Scotland. The capital is Belfast, the largest city in Northern Ireland both in population and in area. It is the center for government, economy, arts, higher education, business, law of Northern Ireland. Additionally, it is the birthplace of Titanic, and voted one of the world's top destinations.

2. Climate

The overall climate in the UK is temperate maritime, which means that it is mild with temperatures neither much lower than 0°C in winter nor much higher 32°C in summer. Generally, the UK has warm summers and cool winters, with July and August as the warmest month, and January and February as the coldest. However, due to the influence of Gulf Stream^①, the summers are cooler than those in continent while the winters are milder. Normally, the temperature in summer is around 20°C, with the high rarely going above 30°C. The average temperature in winter is around 0°C and seldom goes below -10°C even in the most northern part of the country.

Meanwhile, since Britain is an island country and surrounded by the sea, the climate is considerably changeable compared with other countries. Since the variable climate changing day to day, it is hard for people to predict what the weather will be like the next day. Additionally, the unique geographical position is also the reason for the dampness of the climate. The rainfall is fairly distributed throughout the year. Although it does not rain every day. It is always advisable for people to bring an umbrella or waterproof clothing every day.

3. The Founding of the Nation

The recorded history of the UK begins with the Roman invasion in 55 B. C. In 55 and 54 B. C., Britain was twice invaded by Julius Caesar and his Roman troops. However, it was not until 43 A. D. that the Roman led by

① Gulf Stream:墨西哥暖流,简称湾流,是大西洋上重要的暖流。世界大洋中流势最强盛的暖流,起源于墨西哥湾,是英国温和气候的关键。如果没有墨西哥暖流,大不列颠群岛的气温将下降4至6摄氏度。

Claudius I finally successfully invaded and Britain became part of the Roman Empire. The native Celtic were driven to the mountain regions of Scotland and Wales, which remained unconquered by the Romans.

The Romans have great impact on many aspects of the British culture. The Roman civilization was introduced to Britain during this period. For example, Roman style temples were built, cities like London and towns were constructed, and the system of government was also introduced. With the decline of the Roman Empire, when the Germanic troops attacked Rome in 410 A. D. , the Romans had to withdraw in order to protect their own nation, which led to the end of Roman occupation.

After the leave of the Romans, three groups of Germanic tribes called the Jutes, the Angles and the Saxons came to Britain from the European continent in the mid-4th century. They conquered different regions of Britain; the Jutes settled in the south and southeast of the island, the Angles in the east, the middle and the north, and the Saxons in the south and midland. Therefore, during this period Britain was divided into the Seven Kingdoms of Northumbria, Mercia, Anglia, Wessex, Essexm, Sussex and Kent.

In the late 8th century, the Vikings from the Scandinavian countries of northern Europe, which is now Denmark and Norway, came across the North Sea and attacked the English coast. They conquered part of the country and drew the Saxons out. In order to resist the Vikings, the Saxon king of Wessex, Alfred the Great, unified the seven kingdoms and fought them in a great battle, but he failed to drive them out thoroughly because the Vikings were too strong. A compromise was made that allow the eastern part of England to be subject to Danish law called Danelaw in 878. However, the fight for territory was far from over. In the next over 130 years, the conflicts between the Saxons and the Vikings continued and the power shifted between them constantly. It was not until 1066 that this situation changed.

In 1066, William the Conquer, from Normandy in the northern France, crossed the



The Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms in 650 A. D.

English Channel with his formidable army and defeated King Harold, the last king of the Anglo-Saxons, in the Battle of Hastings. He, thereby, conquered Britain and crowned himself the King of England, which is the beginning of Norman Conquest. It is considered one of the most important historical events in Britain and marked the establishment of feudalism in England.

During this period, federal system in England was completely established, which is based on the ownership of land. According to the system, all the lands were owned by the king personally. William distributed the lands to the Norman lords and the church in order to secure his authority. The lord's land was then divided and given to the knights in turn of military services. The knights had serfs to work on their farms. The king had the power to call on the lords and knights to fight in times of trouble. On the contrary, all the lords had the right and duty to attend the King's Council^① and offer their advices.

4. The Decline of Feudalism and the Rise of the English Bourgeoisie

In this period of time, many historical events like wars and signing of important documents gradually influenced the development of British society. The British history experienced a period of the decline of feudalism and the rise of the bourgeois class.

After the death of William the Conquer, the conflicts between the king and the lords began to occur. In order to consolidate the royal power and limit the power of the nobles, Henry II, the grandson of William, carried out a series of reforms in administrative and judicial system. The major achievements of Henry II's reform were his introduction of jury system and institutionalization of common law, which greatly consolidated the British feudalism and enabled the country to enjoy a period of security and prosperity.

However, in the reign of King John, Britain was defeated by France and lost its territory in northern France in 1204. In order to avenge himself on France, John demanded more feudal taxes and army service, which led to great

^① King's Council: 英国国王枢密院, 又称元老院或国王法庭, 主要由权贵、教士和重要官员组成, 分别就立法、行政和司法事务向君主提供意见。

dissatisfaction among the nobles. Therefore, the nobles forced John to sign a long document in 1215, which is known as the Great Charter (or Magna Carta). The Great Charter covered a wide field of law and feudal rights but the most important clauses were: No extra taxes should be imposed on nobles without the permission of the Great Council; no free man should be arrested or penalized or banished in any way unless convicted by a jury; merchants would be allowed to move about freely; in addition, the nobles should be entitled to declare war against the King if the King seriously violates the provisions of the Great Charter.

The Great Charter was of progressive significance and considered as an important turning point of English history. It granted to the townspeople freedom of trade and self-government. The merchants and craftsmen appeared for the first time as a political force in the British history. It also lays a foundation for the British constitutional monarchy and provides basic principles for the protection of civil rights in the Western World.

After King John died, Henry III succeeded the throne in 1216. However, the king's failed campaigns in France (1230 and 1242), his choice of friends and advisers, together with the cost of his scheme to conquest Sicily, Italy, and his obedience to the Pope, led to further disputes with the barons. Then, at the meeting of Parliament at Oxford in 1258 the barons stated their dissatisfaction with Henry III, and tried to force him to accept a set of conditions called the Provisions of Oxford. These radical proposals called for regular meetings of Parliament three times a year to limit the power of the king. It also requested that 12 non-noble representatives chosen from the counties should be involved in the meetings as well.

Henry III refused to agree to the provisions and a war broke out between him and the leader of the barons, Simon de Montfort, who won the war initially in 1264. In January 1265, de Montfort called the Great Council, which was attended by the knights and representatives as well as nobles and clergymen from each county and from the cities and towns. This is the earliest forerunner of the modern parliament, because it is for the first time common people without noble titles to take part in discussion. In the 14th century, parliament developed into regular meetings comprising three bodies: Lords, Commons and Monarch.

Then a series of wars from 1337 to 1453, called the Hundred Years' War, broke out. They were fought between England and France over territory, trade, and the throne. At the beginning of the war, the English army achieved numerous victories and gained many territories in France. By 1360 Britain controlled over a quarter of France. However, with the use of guns and gunpowder in France, and the resistance of the French peasants under the leadership of Joan of Arc^①, Britain lost its superiority and was defeated by France. By the time the war ended, they had lost almost all the territories in France gained during the war.

The Hundred Years' War had a great impact on the English society. On the one hand, the war witnessed a considerable rise in the importance and frequency of parliaments, and in the influence of the Commons. The position of bourgeois class increased dramatically both in the society and in politics. On the other hand, the military reserve and loss of continental territory greatly weakened British feudal reign. Additionally, in the early stage of the war, the nobles secured great profits, but the long-lasting war made the common people in Britain suffered an increased taxation, military service, and higher inflation, which led significant social conflicts between the two classes. All these factors led to the decline of feudalism in Britain.

The Wars of Roses followed up with the Hundred Years' War two years later in 1455. It was a series of dynastic civil wars between the two royal families, the House of York and the House of Lancaster, for the English throne. The wars were named because of the badge of the two houses: The white rose of York and the red rose of Lancaster. The war lasted for 30 years. The final victory went to the House of Lancaster led by Henry Tudor, who later succeeded the throne of England as Henry VII, and therefore, began the rule of House of Tudor. The war started from two families, however, at the end of the war, almost all the nobles were involved. They suffered great losses of life and property, which led to the decline of feudal nobles and paved the way for the development of the bourgeoisie (资产阶级).

^① Joan of Arc: 圣女贞德, 法国民族英雄, 在对抗英国的战斗中取得转折性的胜利。后被法国贵族出卖, 死于 1431 年。

5. Transition to the Modern Age

Beginning with the English Reformation, this period of British history witnessed the end of feudalism and the establishment of constitutional Monarchy system. Then the fast-growing economy and national capability as well as the rise of bourgeois class contributed the Industrial Revolution. Consequently, these great changes in the British society accelerated its transition to the Modern Age.

The English Reformation was a series of events in 16th century by which the Church of England broke away from the authority of the Roman Pope and the Catholic Church.

There were many factors contributed to the process: The growing resentment among the people towards the power of Pope and the church because of the burden of taxation placed by the Catholic Church, the decline of feudalism and the rise of nationalism. However, the direct cause of the religious reformation is King Henry VIII's divorce with his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, the princess of Spain. Divorces at that time could only be granted by the Pope, but considering the power of Spain, the Pope refused Henry VIII's divorce. Therefore, Henry VIII started a large scale of reformation by declaring the Church of England's break from Rome. In 1534, he issued the *Act of Supremacy*, which recognized that the king was "the only supreme head of the Church of England".



Henry VIII



Elizabeth I

After the accession of Edward VI in 1547, the reform moved in a more Protestant direction. However, when Edward died in 1553, Mary I, a devout Catholic, succeeded the throne and brought a Catholic reaction. Many Protestants were burnt to death as heretics, including children and women. It was not until Elizabeth I's reign that the bloody religious prosecution came to the end, and the Church of England was in the charge of the British monarch again. Although she made a compromise between the Catholics and the Protestants, she still defended the fruit of religious reformation and consolidated the Church of England.

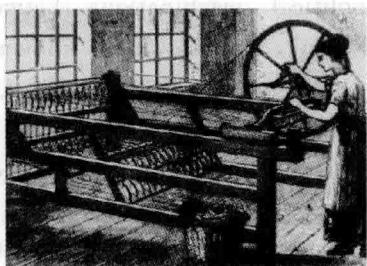
In the 17th century, the English Civil War (1642–1651) broke out. It was a series of armed conflicts and political machinations between Parliamentarians, also known as the “Roundheads”, and Royalists, known as “Cavaliers”, in the Kingdom of England over the manner of its government. It was the result of the rising bourgeoisie, because the British feudalism hindered their further development. In the reign of Charles I, the relationship between the king and the parliament became worse. In order to support the war against Spain and France, Charles I tried to raise a large amount of money, but encountered great refusal from the parliament. Dissatisfied with the parliament, he dismissed the parliament in 1629. Therefore, supported by the peasants, the parliament, which represented the bourgeoisie and new aristocrats, waged a fight with the king. However, being afraid to lose their lands and privilege in the country, the landowners and old aristocrats supported King Charles in the fight.

In 1649, King Charles was executed and the monarchy was abolished. Oliver Cromwell, the leader of Parliamentarians, began to rule the country as the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth. However, Cromwell's conservation in social reform and high taxes policies soon led to the resentment of the Parliament. In 1660, Charles II, the son of Charles I, was crowned the king. Consequently, the short period of Commonwealth in British history ended then.

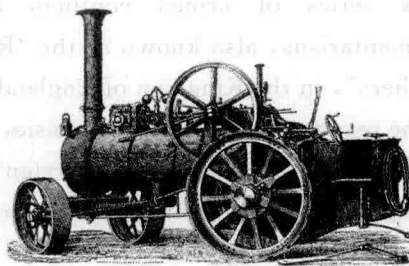
In the wake of Charles II's death, James II ascended the reign, but since he was a strict Catholic, soon after his succession, he started a series of reforms to reestablish Catholicism in the country. Then in 1688 there followed the “Bloodless Revolution” known in British history as the “Glorious Revolution”. The Parliament declared William and his wife Mary, James II's

daughter, as the joint sovereigns. In the following year, William and Mary signed the *Bill of Rights* passed by the Parliament, which guaranteed the authority of Parliament and limited the power of the monarch. Therefore, the Glorious Revolution was complete and the ruling monarch was removed. Since then the constitutional monarchy was established and became the system of government in the country.

Since then Britain had experienced a period of continuous development in every aspects of the society. By the middle 19th century, the Industrial Revolution was accomplished in Britain. It is the first country to start and complete this great revolution in industry.



Spinning Jenny



Steam Locomotive

There are several reasons that contributed to the Industrial Revolution in Britain. First, Britain had a huge market. After the Glorious Revolution, the Britain formed a single largest domestic market in Europe. Meanwhile, with its expansion in the world, it occupied a large number of colonies in the world and became the most powerful colonial country. The colonies provided it with enormous wealth, raw materials and a large market for its industrial development. Second, the Enclosure Movement^① deprived the small landowners of their property and forced them to move to the cities and towns to make a living. The landless laborer, therefore, became a large number of free labors in the industrial market and promoted the economic development in Britain. Third, with the rapid development of economy and industry, higher productivity became necessary in order to meet the higher demand for manufactured goods in the market. The entrepreneurs began to seek new ways

① Enclosure Movement: 圈地运动。

to promote productivity.

A series of important inventions in the textile industry, such as the Spinning Jenny, the water frame, the spinning mule and the power loom, marked the beginning of Industrial Revolution. These inventions promoted the mechanization of the textile industry and motivated the development of Industrial Revolution in other areas. For example, the dig of canals, the completion of the first railway and invention of steam engine and steam locomotive in the transportation industry. By the middle of the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution was accomplished in Britain.

The Industrial Revolution accelerated the process of modernization and the economic development of Britain, and also had a significant impact on the British society. Firstly, the industrial productivity was dramatically increased because of the inventions of machines. Secondly, it promoted the process of urbanization in Britain. With numerous free labors moving into cities and towns, many new cities such as Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and Sheffield sprang up and became Britain's industrial centers. Thirdly, it also brought with some changes in class structure. The capitalist class replaced the old aristocrats and became the most important force in the country.

6. The Rise and Fall of British Empire

The British Empire started from the reign of Queen Elizabeth I with colonization of New-found-land in 1583. Britain defeated the Spanish fleet in 1588 and Holland in the 17th century, which contributed to the establishment of its superiority in the sea power. It kept expanding in the following hundreds of years. The Empire acquired a lot of colonies and seized countless wealth through foreign expansion. The colonies were turned into its sources of raw materials and important markets for its products.

By the time Queen Victoria started to reign the country, it had occupied many overseas colonies, such as the colonies in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India and many small states in the West Indies. Then the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century accelerated its colonization in the world. On the Eve of World War I in 1914, the total area of the British colonies had reached 33,500,000 km², that is, over 130 times more than its native land, with a colonial population 9 times more than that of its natives. It has developed into

the largest colonial empire in the world, which occupied nearly 1/4 of the world land area, and became “a country on which the sun never sets”.

However, the two world wars in the earlier 20th century gradually weakened Britain's power and led to the decline of the British Empire. Britain lost a great number of people, the sea supremacy in the world and was into huge national debt in order to support the wars. Additionally, after the world wars, a wave of national liberation and a movement of national independence swept the world. In 1921, 26 counties on the island of Ireland became independent from the United Kingdom and formed the Republic of Ireland. In 1931, Australia, New Zealand and Canada became independent countries in the British Commonwealth. In the 1960s, the independence movement swept the entire British Empire, including its colonies in Asia, Africa and South America. More than 20 Britain's colonies won their independence. Consequently, the British Empire completely fell apart in the late 1960s.

The Empire had been replaced by the British Commonwealth of Nations^①, which is an intergovernmental organization. It is not a political union, but a loosely organized community of former British colonies. All but two of these countries are formerly part of British Empire. Though the British Monarch is still considered as the head of Commonwealth, its members have full autonomy to manage their own internal and external affairs. The primary goal of the Commonwealth is to encourage and promote the cooperation and mutual assistance among member states.

VCR Activities

Search and watch the video clip of *The British Empire* and finish the tasks that follow.

Task 1: Story-retelling

Now, work in groups (3-4 members) on the clip and retell what you have seen. Then each group sends one representative to tell the whole class your interpretation of the British Empire.

^① British Commonwealth: 英联邦, 是一个以英国为主导的国家联合体, 由 50 多个主权国家(含属地)所组成, 成员大多为前大英帝国的殖民地或附属国。