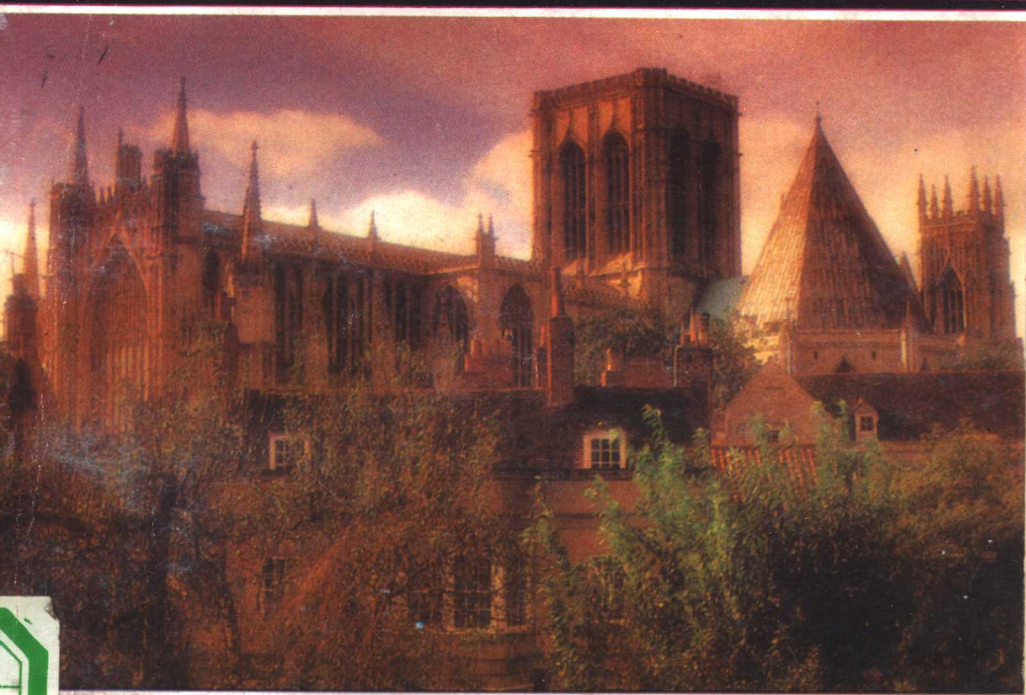


# 英美文化基础教程

*Essentials of British and  
American Cultures*



外语教学与研究出版社

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## 前 言

本书是为成人自学考试英语专业应试者、一般自学英语者及大专一二年级学生编写的教科书。

全书分英国文化和美国文化两大部分。英国部分十二章,美国部分十一章,分别介绍了英美两国的民族特点、地理环境、历史发展、政府制度、经济、文学、宗教信仰、风俗习惯、教育、家庭生活、福利制度、新闻媒介、节日活动、种族关系及社会问题等。

编著本书的主要目的是帮助英语读者掌握英美文化的基础知识,并通过用英语学习文化知识提高外语水平。为此,编者在选材时注意了下列两个方面:1. 知识性。尽量选用内容丰富、涉及面广的客观介绍文章,以扩大读者的知识面。2. 简易性。尽量选用语言简易的原著材料。对篇幅过长、叙述过细的文章,以及语言过难、观点纰缪的地方编者作了必要的删减和加工。尽管如此,原文作者对某些问题的看法和我们的认识相差尚远。望读者注意鉴别。

为了适应广大读者,尤其是成人自学考试应试者学习的需要,每章正文后都设有详细的指导性练习。词语部分包括本章出现的应予掌握的词汇和短语。注解以解决背景知识方面的困难为主,还增加了一些有助于理解课文的背景知识。解释题、填空题、选择题以及问答题是掌握课文的具体线索,也是成人自学考试试卷的题型。

原著作者是英美学者,他们的名字及原著书名都附在各章课文后,供读者查阅。编者在这里谨向这些学者致以谢意。

限于编者水平,编著时间仓促,本书定有不少不足之处,恳请读者指正。

朱永涛

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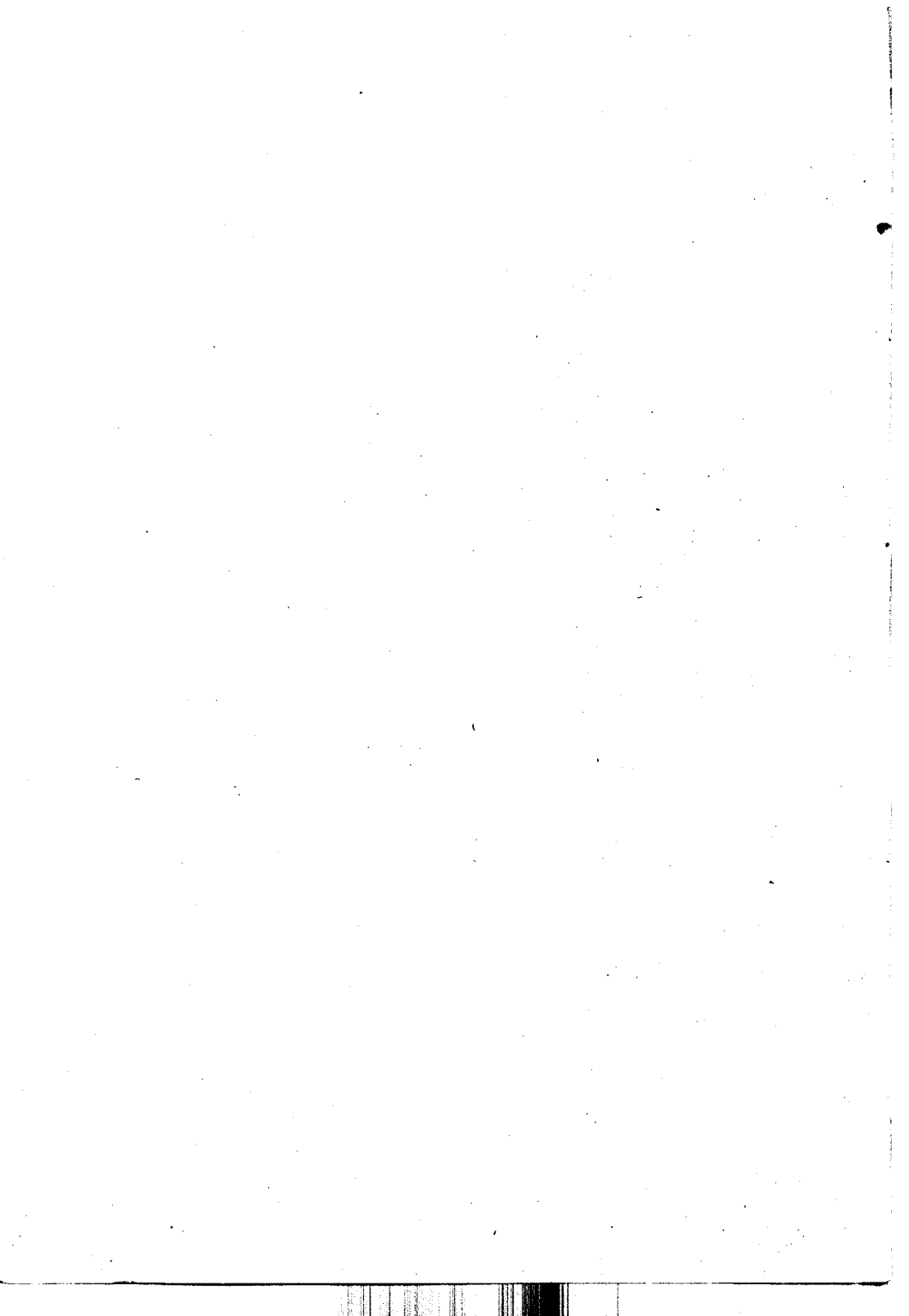
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**Part One**  
British Culture





# 1. Who Are the British?

Although the United Kingdom<sup>1</sup> covers only a small area of the earth's surface, it represents people of many different origins and cultures. Yet all of them are British. Indeed, it would be difficult to find anyone in modern Britain who could say with certainty that his ancestors had not come to the British Isles<sup>2</sup> from somewhere else. Who, then, are today's Britons<sup>3</sup> and what kind of people are they?

The history of human habitation and settlement in Britain goes back to the Stone Age hunters and gatherers<sup>4</sup> who arrived from the European continent about 10 000 years ago. The Neolithic peoples<sup>5</sup> who followed them were settled agriculturalists who kept domestic animals and knew how to make simple pottery. Around 2000 BC these Stone Age people started to erect huge monuments, or henges, of giant rock slabs, possibly for religious purposes. Work on the henges continued intermittently into the Bronze Age<sup>6</sup>, until about 1500 BC. The most imposing and mysterious of these ancient monuments is Stonehenge<sup>7</sup>, on windswept Salisbury plain in south-west England.

Easy communication between the islands and the continental mainland must have existed and, from earliest times, this encouraged migration. By the end of the Bronze Age, around 700 BC, Celtic peoples<sup>8</sup> had arrived from north-western Europe bringing

with them a revolutionary new skill; iron-working. Celts continued to come and settle in Britain for about 500 years and, by the time the Romans first landed in 55 BC<sup>9</sup>, the Celtic culture was well established. The earliest written records of Britain's inhabitants come from the Romans who eventually conquered the various Celtic kingdoms then flourishing in England, Wales and the Scottish Lowlands.

### The Scots

The Scots, particularly the Highlanders from the mountainous north, try to maintain their separate identity<sup>10</sup>. Like the Welsh, they object to being called 'English'. Their earliest known ancestors were the Picts<sup>11</sup> and the Celts and the Gaelic language, still spoken in remote parts, comes from the ancient language of the Celtic tribes.

The Scottish Highlander considers himself the 'true' Scot and he wears his national dress, the kilt, with pride. Kilts, pleated skirts made of material with a squared, coloured design called a tartan, probably derive from the costume of the Roman conquerors. Each Scottish clan (a Gaelic word for 'tribe' or 'family') has its own tartan with specific colours and design and only members of that clan are entitled to wear it. There are tartans for all the famous Scottish names<sup>12</sup> like Campbell, MacLeod, Fraser, Gordon, Stuart and Macdonald ('Mac' or 'Mc', found in many Scottish names, means 'son of').

The Highlanders are a proud, independent and hardy people who mainly live by farming sheep in the mountain areas; others, on the coasts and islands, are fishermen. But most Scots are Lowlan-

ders, concentrated in the densely-populated towns and cities of southern Scotland. These urban areas are heavily industrialized, with coal-mining, iron, steel, ship-building and textiles. Since the mid-1800s, there has been a constant flow of young men from the Highlands and country districts to Lowland industrial centres where work opportunities are greater. In the last few years, however, the reverse has taken place; there has been a migration of labour back to the north-eastern coastal areas to well-paid jobs in the North Sea oil industry.

The Scots have a reputation for being inventive, hardworking, serious-minded and cautious with money. In the past, they were pioneer settlers and empire builders<sup>13</sup> in places like America, Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand. They have also provided the British Army with some of its most famous regiments. Over the centuries, enemy troops have often been terrified at the sight and sound of Highlanders in kilts marching into battle accompanied by the blood-curdling music of the bagpipes<sup>14</sup>. Some even nicknamed the Scottish soldiers 'devils in skirts' and 'ladies from hell'.

Since the 1960s there has been considerable scottish nationalist agitation for a separate parliament or assembly which would give the Scots a greater say in the planning and running of their own affairs. In response, the British government held a referendum in Scotland at the beginning of 1979 to find out if the people really wanted their own assembly. The government promised that if 40 per cent of Scots eligible to vote did so, and if 60 per cent or more of that vote was in favour of a separate Scottish assembly, then such an assembly would be set up. But results showed less than 40 per cent in favour so no further action was taken.

Apart from their very distinctive national dress the Scots can

be recognized by their particular style of speech and accent. Also, their vocabulary contains many words and expressions, often of ancient origin, which are unique to Scotland. Remember that they like to be called 'Scots' or 'Scottish' and not 'Scotch'. Scotch refers to the most famous of Scottish exports, whisky; the word 'whisky' is derived from the Gaelic and means 'water of life'. The history and atmosphere of Scotland as well as the character of its people have been expertly portrayed by such famous Scottish writers as Robert Burns (1759—96), Sir Walter Scott (1771—1832) and Robert Louis Stevenson (1850—94)<sup>15</sup>.

### **The Welsh**

The Welsh have been united with England since the 1535 Act of Union<sup>16</sup>, but they are still very conscious of their separate Celtic heritage. Although the number of people who actually speak the Welsh language is declining (only 20 per cent in 1980), cultural pride in Wales is very strong. The Welsh are famous for their love of music and poetry and they have developed choral singing to a national art. They also have a great feeling for the music of words;<sup>17</sup> examples of their outstanding skill with language are found in the poetry of Dylan Thomas (1914—53)<sup>18</sup> and in the political speeches of David Lloyd George (1863—1945)<sup>19</sup>.

Officially Welsh (an ancient Celtic language, but different to Gaelic) has equal status with English in Wales, but in practice it is a minority language. The Welsh National Party, which has members in the Westminster parliament<sup>20</sup>, together with various pressure groups<sup>21</sup> want more Welsh language and culture in schools, the media and in public life generally. But in spite of such nationalist

tendencies, when the people of Wales voted in 1979 on the question of a separate Welsh assembly, very few were in favour. So, as in Scotland, the matter was dropped.

The Welsh, like the Scots, fall into two groups: those—mostly sheep farmers—from the mountainous regions of the centre and north; and those (two-thirds of the population) who live and work in the highly industrialized south where coal mining and steel manufacture are the main economic activities. At the beginning of this century, the South Wales coal fields were notorious for their low wages and appalling working and living conditions. But in 1946, the coal industry was nationalized; the mines were then modernized and conditions were improved. Today, the miners of South Wales are among the highest-paid workers in Britain.

From the hard-working lives of these people, two very different passions have emerged: rugby football<sup>22</sup> and choral singing. The occasion when the two come together most effectively is any international rugby match involving Wales<sup>23</sup>. Before the match starts, it is traditional for the crowd of Welsh supporters to sing — always in perfect harmony — ‘Land of My Fathers’, an old song that has almost become a national anthem for Wales.

Every year there are many festivals of music and verse in Wales. The most famous is the National Eisteddfod (the Welsh word for ‘sitting’) which takes place each August and lasts for about a week. The highlight of the Eisteddfod is a competition for the best epic poem about Wales written and read in Welsh; the winner is crowned Bard<sup>24</sup>, considered the supreme honour in Wales.

A Welshman can often be recognized by his name; it might be Jones, Williams, Thomas, Evans, Lloyd, Llewellyn, or begin with ‘P’ like Pritchard, Probert or Pryse (these are contractions of

Ap Richard, Ap Robert and Ap Rys; 'ap' is Welsh for 'son of'). The Welsh are also easily identified by the soft lilting, almost singing, way in which they speak English. Welsh life, attitude and character have been vividly illustrated in the works of such writers as Dylan Thomas, Gwyn Thomas (born 1913) and Richard Llewellyn (born 1907)<sup>25</sup>.

### The Irish

The Irish, a mainly Celtic people, have maintained their ancient Gaelic language but English is spoken by everyone. Like the Welsh, they have a rich literary heritage which is apparent in their love of words. Many great names of English literature were, in fact, Irish or had an Irish background, like Jonathan Swift (1667—1745), Oscar Wilde (1854—1900) and George Bernard Shaw (1856—1950). Writers and playwrights like John Millington Synge (1871—1909), James Joyce (1882—1941) and Sean O'Casey (1880—1964)<sup>26</sup> have given deep insights into the Irish character and portrayed their fellow countrymen as introspective dreamers and poets, as well as argumentative and aggressive—especially after a drinking session.

To understand the present situation in Northern Ireland (Ulster)<sup>27</sup> a basic knowledge of the island's long and violent history is essential. The whole of Ireland was colonized by England in 1169 and from that time onwards there were constant uprisings. The situation worsened in the sixteenth century when the Irish refused to accept the Protestant Reformation<sup>28</sup>; they remained stubbornly true to their Catholic faith despite many cruel persecutions by the English. A hundred years later Oliver Cromwell<sup>29</sup>, Lord Protector of

Britain after the execution of King Charles I<sup>30</sup>, crushed various rebellions in Ireland, and settled English and Scottish Protestants there by giving them land. The main duty of the new immigrants was to put down any anti-British revolt by the native Irish. Eventually these Protestant settlers became a powerful force in the country although numerically they formed a minority, except in the six counties of Ulster.

Ireland was then an agricultural society (and, in the main, still is). The people's livelihood depended on what they could grow, which was often totally inadequate, and by the middle of the nineteenth century famine conditions prevailed. The desperate state of the economy caused many Irish people to emigrate, particularly to the United States of America. Between 1840 and 1900 the Irish population dropped from 8.5 million to 4.5 million. Those who remained soon began to demand some kind of autonomy and Irish members of the Westminster parliament, like Charles Stewart Parnell<sup>31</sup>, called persistently for 'home rule' — control of internal affairs by an assembly in Dublin<sup>32</sup>. The home rule question led to even more disturbances and riots as the Ulster Protestants (60 per cent of the population in that area) feared that an autonomous Ireland would be dominated by Catholics.

Eventually, in 1922, Ireland was partitioned. The 26 counties of southern Ireland became the Irish Free State, later re-named the Republic of Eire. The six counties of Ulster, in the north, remained part of the United Kingdom with their own parliament, Stormont, responsible for internal affairs.

Between the two World Wars, Ulster developed a prosperous industrial economy and many southern Irish moved to the north to find jobs and a higher standard of living. After the Second World

War the migration continued and within towns and cities specific Catholic districts developed. Because of an agreement between the United Kingdom and Eire, the newcomers were not treated as foreigners or aliens and were entitled to all the benefits of the British Welfare State; unemployment pay, family allowance, free education (including university education), free medical treatment, retirement pension, etc.; these advantages were not available in Eire. But despite the large numbers of Catholic Irish now in the north, the Protestants maintained an exclusive hold on all areas of life. The Ulster Unionists, the ruling Protestant party, had complete control of Stormont, local councils, the police force and all public services. They did this by making sure that no Catholic—no matter how well qualified or how long resident in Ulster—could obtain a job in any public service; on all application forms, candidates were required to state their religion. Also, it is quite easy to distinguish the Catholic Irish by their names; those beginning with 'Mac' or 'Mc' like the highland Scots, or with 'Mul', 'Mil' or 'O' as in Mc-Manamee, Macnamara, Muldoon, Milligan, O'Connor and O'Sullivan; and also names of Celtic origin like Flynn, Connolly, Kennedy and Nolan. Protestant names are usually indistinguishable from those of the English and Lowland Scots.

The Catholics complained of discrimination against them in employment, education, housing and voting rights. On 12 August 1969, the resentment caused by this lack of civil rights flared into violence on the streets of Belfast and Londonderry. The date, 12 August, was significant. Each year on that day Protestants commemorate the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 when the Protestant King William III (William of Orange)<sup>33</sup> crushed a Catholic rebellion in Londonderry. The Orange Day celebrations<sup>34</sup>—noisy marches with



drums beating and flags waving and the Protestant marchers wearing the colours of the 'Orange Order'<sup>35</sup> — were always aggressively provocative and in 1969 fighting broke out between Protestant marchers and Catholic bystanders. Acts of violence have continued on both sides ever since, although reforms have now been introduced.

Violence on the Catholic side is encouraged and carried out by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) with its terrorist wing, the Provisional IRA<sup>36</sup>. The IRA, illegal in both Eire and Ulster, is fanatically dedicated to the unification of all Ireland as one country under one government; Ulster, of course, would belong to the new Ireland and no longer be a part of the United Kingdom. To draw attention to their cause, to destroy existing social and political structures and to break down law and order, the IRA activists launched a campaign of savage shootings, brutal murders and indiscriminate bombings in Northern Ireland. From time to time IRA violence — mostly bombs — has spread to other parts of Britain, particularly London.

For their part, the Ulster Unionists, or Loyalists<sup>37</sup>, are equally fanatical. They insist they remain part of Britain and refuse to accept any reform that might make way for Catholic participation in political and public life in the province. Loyalist extremists, partly in retaliation for IRA brutality and partly to emphasize their demands, also carry out murders and other terrorist activities.

In the meantime, responsibility for Northern Ireland ~~has been~~ the central government in Westminster (Stormont was dissolved in 1972 because of the crisis situation) and British troops patrol the streets of Ulster, trying to keep the hostile populations apart yet becoming targets for bullets and bombs themselves.