



英语国家知识

KNOWLEDGE ON MAIN ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

薛国民 邱明娟主编

中学版

江苏教育出版社

英语国家知识(中学版)
Highlights on Main English-speaking Countries
(Senior Edition)

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编者的话

新世纪伊始,全球面临知识经济的挑战,人们越来越认识到人文素质教育的重要性。知识、能力、素质三个方面的协调发展是新世纪人才的培养方向。语言是思想和信息的载体,它与所附着的文化内涵、思想信息密不可分。英语学习者只有在了解各有关国家的重要情况的发展变迁过程中,才能更有效地掌握和应用英语。在外语学习过程中,我们希望达到的境界是不断追求知识,不断完善自我,不断提高运用语言的能力。《英语国家知识》(中学版)一书力图在这方面进行一些探索和实践,并配合人教社的高中英语新教材(SEFC)的教学,让中学生对英语文化背景知识有较系统的了解,提高学生在阅读中分析问题、解决问题的能力。

本书编撰原则是——集学术性、知识性、趣味性、实用性于一体。全书共由五个部分组成:英国部分、美国部分、加拿大部分、澳大利亚部分、新西兰部分。内容涉及到历史文化、地理位置、语言发展、自然资源、工农业生产、风土人情、风俗习惯、政治体制(政治、政党、报纸、法律)、社会保障机制、教育和艺术、体育运动、太空研究、重大节日、主要历史人物(政治家、科学家、影星、作家)、重要城市等。

文章通俗易懂,语言地道,每章节由若干文化背景知识构成,词汇量符合我国基础教育阶段英语课程标准的要求,超大纲词汇和重大背景知识都附有注解,并在文章后配上阅读理解(反映文章的主题、细节、上下文的推断及词汇的理解等)、单词拼写、词义辨析、常用词归纳、缺词(完形)填空等练习,以检测学生对文章的理解,巩固学生对英语文化背景知识的认识。并且各部分内容有所侧重,自成一体,又相互呼应,形成整体。中学生或同等水平的英语学习者可根据自己的实际需要,结合课文单元灵活选择使用,也可当作接触、了解英语文化背景知识的教材使用。

在编写过程中,我们参阅了大量的英语背景材料,其主要参阅材料和作者姓名都附在书后,供读者查阅。编者在此对原作者一并致以诚挚的谢意。

现在,我们把该书真诚地奉献给读者,企盼它能给读者以启迪和帮助。由于编撰时间仓促,水平有限,疏漏或谬误之处在所难免,恳请读者和同行批评指正。

编者

2000年10月

序

语言与文化密不可分,语言是文化的载体,学语言必须了解与之相关的文化。如何通过外语教学提高学生的文化素养,如何利用文化知识促进外语教学,提高学生的语言理解、语言应用,尤其是语言交际能力,已经成为近二十年来语言教师研究的一个重要课题。薛国民(等)同志编著的《英语国家知识》(中学版)堪称这一课题研究的一项成果。纵观全书,《英语国家知识》有以下特点:

《英语国家知识》内容丰富,涵盖面广。对英国、美国、加拿大、澳大利亚、新西兰五个主要的英语国家均有介绍;历史地理、政治经济、文化教育、风俗习惯、体育运动、名人轶事,一应俱全。向读者提供了大量的知识与信息,有助于加深对英语国家的全面了解,对增加文化知识底蕴、提高可持续发展能力,大有裨益。

《英语国家知识》布局合理、结构严密。每章自成一体又与前后紧密相连,既保持其相对独立性又不失整体的系统性。书中文章通俗易懂、语言地道,对疑难词语和背景知识还附加了注释,便于读者理解,增加了文章的可读性。

《英语国家知识》的文章集知识性、趣味性、实用性于一体。全书的内容与人教社出版的高中英语教材内容相匹配,对该教材所涉及的英语国家的背景作了尽可能详尽的介绍,是学习高中英语教材的好帮手。每篇文章后均配以各类练习,既能检测阅读理解的程度,又能巩固新学的内容,培养良好的学习习惯,提高语言运用能力。

《英语国家知识》的作者(们)为中学英语教学第一线的教师,对中学英语教材的内容和学生的知识结构了如指掌,对学生的学习需求和知识空缺心中有数,因而对所选内容深度和广度的分寸把握准确。《英语国家知识》实乃作者多年教学丰富经验和教学科研成果的积累。

中学教师工作艰辛,为教书育人,每日起早贪黑,众所皆知。然而,在繁重的工作之余,作者坚持灯下笔耕,为提高《英语国家知识》的科学性和实用性,作者不厌其烦,几易其稿,终获此成果,感人至深。欣作此序。

曹亚民

2000年6月2日于南京

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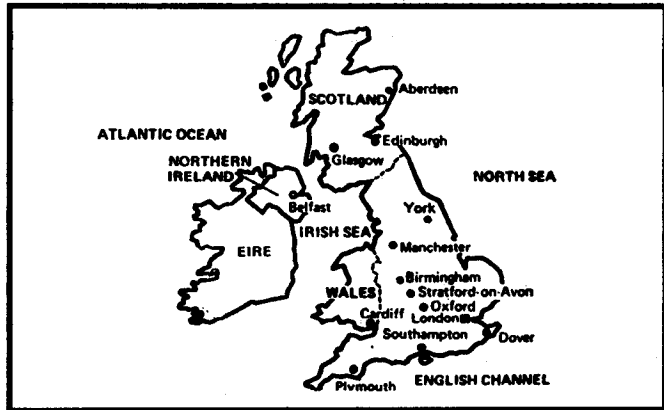
英国部分

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Unit 1 A Survey of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Location and Component (组成) Parts

Great Britain is an island that lies off the northwest coast of Europe. The nearest country is France while it is 20 miles away and from which Great Britain is separated by the English Channel. The island is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, to the west, and the North Sea, to the east. It comprises (包括) the mainlands of England, Wales and Scotland, that is, three countries. Scotland is in the north while Wales is in the west. Ireland, which is also an island, lies off the west coast of Great Britain. It consists of (由...构成) Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. Great Britain together with Northern Ireland constitutes (构成) the United Kingdom. Thus, the United Kingdom is (由...组成) four countries. (The largest of these is England which is divided into 43 counties. The capital city is London which is in Southeast England.)



The population of the UK is 56,488,000, which consists of the English, the Welsh, the Scottish and the Irish. English is the official language, but not all of the British people speak it. In Wales many people speak Celtic (凯尔特语)—their Gaelic (盖尔人的) language. Only when the national anthem (国歌) is being sung can we hear "God Save the Queen" in English.

The mountains in Great Britain are almost all in the north and the west. They are not very high, the highest ones are in Scotland. There are many low hills in some parts of the country, but not in the south and the east, where there are almost no hills. In summer there is no snow on any of the mountains or hills in Great Britain or Ireland.

Ireland became part of the United Kingdom in 1801, but it soon grew discontented. At last, Ireland divided itself into two: Northern Ireland remained loyal to the Crown (英国王室), and in 1922 the rest of the country broke away to

form an Irish Free State, now the Republic of Ireland. Northern Ireland is a very beautiful country. It rains very often there, but it is never very cold, and snow almost never falls.

Rivers and Lakes

There are many rivers in Great Britain, but they are not very long. The rivers which run to the east are longer than the ones which run to the west.

The Thames is one of the longest rivers in England. It is a very beautiful river. It is in the south of the country and runs to the east, into the North Sea. London is on the Thames.

London is a very old town. Today it is one of the largest towns in Europe. More than nine million people live there.

The port of London is one of the greatest ports in the world. Ships from all countries go up and down the Thames. They bring food to the people of Britain. Then they take British machines and other things back to the ports from which they came.

The west of England is a very beautiful part of the country. The lakes here are the most beautiful in England. There are trees, flowers and green grass round them.

The water is almost always very still, and you can see the green hills, the brown mountains and everything else round the lake upside down in the water. There are boats on all the large lakes, which take people from one side to the other. There are always a lot of boats on the lakes in summer.

There are large lakes in Scotland too with mountains round them. They are not like the English ones: there are not so many trees and flowers, and green hills round them, but they are beautiful too. The mountains here are higher, and they are grey and dark. In spite of the beauty, the Scottish Highlands are strange and lonely. Empty farmhouses dot the area. The mountains are covered with a cold fog. In the early morning, a thick fog sometimes blankets the area, seeming to settle on many beautiful lakes.

Cultural Notes

1. **The Difference between the British Isles, Britain, the United Kingdom and England:** *The British Isles is made up of two large islands. One is called Ireland and the other Britain. Britain, or Great Britain, is the larger of these two islands, and it is divided into three parts: Scotland, Wales and England. The United Kingdom (UK) is short for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It is made up of Scotland, Wales, England and also about one-sixth of Ireland, the northern part. England is the largest, most populous, and generally speaking, the richest section. English people often use the words "England" and "English" when they mean "Britain" and "British."*

2. **Celtic:** *Language of the Celts. Celts are members of an ancient West European people, some of whom settled in Britain before the coming of the Romans. Now most of them live in Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Cornwall and Brittany.*

I . Choose the best answer for each of the following statements:

1. Great Britain is separated from _____ by the English Channel.
A. the North Sea B. France
C. Ireland D. Scotland
2. The United Kingdom is composed of _____.
A. England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland
B. England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland
C. Great Britain and Ireland
D. Great Britain and the Irish Republic
3. When "God Save the Queen" is heard singing, you may immediately realize that _____.
A. the Queen has been saved by God
B. the Queen believes in God
C. it is the name of the national anthem of the UK
D. they are the words of the national anthem
4. Where do the highest mountains in Great Britain lie?
A. England. B. Scotland. C. Wales. D. Ireland.
5. Which of the following statements is NOT true?
A. The Thames is one of the largest rivers in Wales.
B. In summer there is no snow on any of the hills in Ireland.
C. London is one of the largest cities in Europe.
D. There are three regions in Great Britain.

II . Write out the words according to the Chinese given in brackets:

1. The island is separated (分开) by the sea.
2. Macao is close to the mainland (大陆) of China.
3. France is the nearest (最近的) country to Great Britain.
4. English is the official (官方的) language in England but not in Wales.
5. London has one of the greatest ports (港口) in the world.
6. The village is surrounded (包围) by a large sea, so the weather is not hot.
7. There are large lakes and high mountains in Scotland (苏格兰).
8. The Irish Republic (共和国) is an independent country.

Unit 2 What Is the Weather Like in England?

When two English people meet, their first words will be "How do you do?" and "How are you?" After the reply "How do you do? Very well, thank you; how are you?" they often speak about the weather.

If the day is fine, the sky is cloudless, the sun is shining brightly, one of them will say, "It is a lovely day, isn't it?" or "It is warm today, isn't it?" The other person will reply, "Yes, it is. It is as warm today as it was yesterday!" or "It's wonderful weather we are having. I hope it will keep fine." or simply "Yes, isn't it!"

If the day isn't fine and it looks like rain, one of them will say, "It isn't warm today, is it?" The other person will reply, "No, it isn't. I think we are going to have some more rain." They never keep silent when they meet each other. Weather is the topic for their chat.

What is the weather like in England?

The weather in England is milder than that of other countries. The winters are warmer and the summers are cooler than those on the continent. It is never too cold or too hot there. The changes in temperature are not very great in England. That's why weather forecasts do not give the temperature of the air.

The weather forecasts that you see below show you what kind of weather they have in England in spring, summer, autumn and winter.

In spring: Mild, dry and sunny. Rain, cloudy and warm.

In summer: Dry, cloudy and cool. Rain and showers.

In autumn: Dry. Sunny periods. Fog early and late.

In winter: Strong winds, heavy rain. Snow, cold.

The best seasons in England are spring and summer. The nearer the summer, the warmer the sun shines. But the summer in England is not so hot as it is on the continent.

The nearer the winter, the colder the days. In winter they have all sorts of weather. Sometimes it rains and sometimes it snows heavily, and they also have fog and frost.

The two worst months in England are January and February. They get many cold, wet days one after another.

The coldest weather, when it freezes night after night and remains cold during the day, is much more pleasant than the wet weather. Nothing is more wonderful than a quick walk on such a day! The winters are never cold enough to freeze the rivers. As the ice is rather thin, they seldom skate on the rivers in England. It may snow any time from November to March. But in England in winter it rains more often than it snows. That's why some English people do not wear heavy overcoats but only warm raincoats.

I . Choose the best answer for each of the following statements:

1. After two English people greet each other, they often talk about _____.
A. the day B. their hope C. the weather D. the rain
2. What is the weather like in England?
A. It is mild, never too cold or too hot.
B. It is warm in winter.
C. It is cool in summer.
D. The temperature doesn't change at all.
3. What do the weather forecasts not give?
A. Rain. B. Snow. C. Fog. D. Temperature.
4. People in England seldom skate on rivers because _____.
A. the ice is rather thin
B. it rains often
C. they don't wear heavy overcoats
D. they wear only warm raincoats
5. The English people keep on talking about the weather because _____.
A. the weather is changeable
B. people won't tell their private life
C. there is a gap between them
D. the weather forecast is not correct

II . Fill in each blank with the correct form of the word **freeze**:

1. The smile of the boss _____ when he saw the million-pound note.
2. The passengers would be _____ cold if they stayed in the bus.
3. In the _____ weather a basin of water will soon be turned into ice.
4. Water _____ when the temperature falls below 0°C .
5. A lot of Red Army men were _____ to death during the Long March.
6. It was very difficult for the bus to drive on the _____ road.

III . Fill in each blank with a proper word according to the text:

English people often 1 _____ about the weather 2 _____ they greet each other. In 3 _____ the weather in England is 4 _____. The winters are 5 _____ and the summers are cooler than 6 _____ on the continent. The 7 _____ seasons in England are spring 8 _____ summer. But the worst months are January and 9 _____. It is cold and wet. It rains 10 _____ often than it snows.

Unit 3 The Sign Language

Ways of Communication

You speak, write a letter, make a telephone call. Your words carry a message. People communicate with words. When you want to tell other people what you think, you can do it not only with the help of words, but also in many other ways. A smile on your face shows you are happy and friendly. Tears in your eyes tell others that you are sad. When you raise your hands in class, the teacher knows you want to say something or ask questions. You sometimes move your heads up and down when you want to say "Yes," and you move your heads from side to side when you want to say "No."

Other things can also carry messages. For example, a sign at the bus-stop helps you know which bus to take. A sign on the door tells you where to go in or out. Have you ever noticed that there are a lot of signs around you and that you receive messages from them all the time? An artist can use his drawing to tell about beautiful mountains, about the blue sea and many other things. Books are written to tell about all the wonderful things in the world and also about people and their ideas. Books, magazines, TV, radios and films all help us communicate with others. They all help us to know what is going on in the world and what other people are thinking about.

People who can neither hear nor talk to each other can communicate with the help of their gestures. People who don't understand each other's language have to do the same. The following story shows how they sometimes do it.

How to Ask for Food by Sign Language

An Englishman who couldn't speak Italian was once travelling in Italy. One day he entered a restaurant and sat at a table. When the waiter came, the Englishman opened his mouth, put his fingers in it, took them out again and moved his lips. In this way, he meant to say, "Bring me something to eat." The waiter soon brought him a cup of tea. The Englishman shook his head and the waiter understood that he didn't want tea, so he took it away and brought him some coffee. The Englishman was very hungry at this time and looked very sad. He was just going to leave the restaurant when another traveller came in. When this man saw the waiter, he put his hands on the stomach. That was enough. After a few minutes there was a large plate of bread and meat on the table for him.

Indian Sign Language

Long ago, when Indians of one tribe met Indians of another tribe, they had to make signs with their hands to understand each other. There are some of the signs they made. Maybe you can make them, too.

When you are hungry, you move your right hand back and forth across your stomach.

When you mean "Let's eat," you cup your right hand and move it up and down

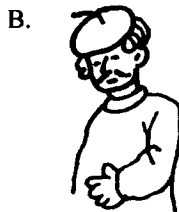
in front of your mouth.

When you have had enough to eat, you spread your thumb(拇指) and first finger(食指) apart, and move your hand from your chest to your chin(下巴).

If you have a stomachache, you put both hands on your stomach, and move them back and forth.

I . Choose the best answer for each of the following statements:

1. Communication is important because it can help people to _____.
A. understand the world and other people better
B. know what other people are thinking about
C. learn what is happening in the world more quickly
D. all of the above
2. How do people who don't understand each other's language usually express themselves?
A. Look for the help of words. B. Move their hands.
C. Use body language. D. Move their fingers from side to side.
3. When a foreigner wants something to eat in an Italian restaurant, he may _____.
A. put his hands on his stomach B. pat his stomach
C. put his fingers in his stomach D. both A and B
4. In what situation would sign language be used?
A. When the Indians met each other long ago.
B. When people don't understand each other's language.
C. When people who don't share the same language want to make themselves understood.
D. When people do not make much noise.
5. Which of the following pictures shows that the Indian was full?



6. The writer wrote this article to tell us _____.
A. how to express "Yes" and "No"
B. how to get food in a restaurant
C. how to use sign language
D. where we can get food

II . Match the expressions in Column A with the words in Column B:

A

B

1. a piece of

a. letters

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| 2. a pile of | b. paper |
| 3. a jar of | c. cigarettes |
| 4. a loaf of | d. honey |
| 5. a pack of | e. bread |
| 6. a bag of | f. ink |
| 7. a drop of | g. flour |
| 8. an ear(穗)of | h. wheat |

III. Rewrite the following sentences with "comparative degree + than + any other":

Example: John is the tallest boy in the class.

John is taller than any other boy in the class.

1. Jim studies hardest of all in our class.
2. Taiwan is the largest island in our country.
3. That building with a clock tower at the top is the highest of all in the city.
4. Richard is the oldest in the school.
5. George did the most of all.

IV. Fill in each blank with a proper preposition:

A conversation often depends 1 questions to keep it going 2 the direction you want it to go. The one who asks the questions 3 a conversation usually controls the conversation. Various techniques(技巧) may be necessary 4 you to get different sorts 5 information 6 different people. Most people are very polite 7 the way they ask a stranger 8 something. If you are more direct, you may appear to be very rude 9 others. Anyway, personal questions have to be expressed tactfully(策略地) instead 10 directly.

Unit 4 The Hurricane

England usually has plenty of rain every month of the year. And Scotland sometimes has very strong winds, especially in winter. On Friday October 16th, 1987, a hurricane struck the southeast of England. Between the hours of midnight and 6:00 am the hurricane crossed the southeast corner of England with winds of up to 160 kph. That night was the worst one in history. Nineteen people lost their lives. It had been raining heavily for two days and the ground was very wet. Also it was autumn and therefore the trees still had their leaves on. For these reasons the strong winds pushed over the trees very easily.

Here is a story in the hurricane. The early hours of October 16th were not a good time for travelling. But Mr and Mrs Bell did not have any choice, they had to travel. They live in a village in the southeast of England. In the middle of the night Mrs Bell, who was expecting a baby, told her husband that the baby was on its way. Immediately they got into their car and set off for the hospital. On their way to the hospital they found that the road was blocked by a fallen tree. Before they could turn the car round, another tree fell onto the road behind them. At three in the morning they left their car and walked home in the storm. They had to climb over fallen trees and small branches were falling on them as they walked. They finally reached home. Fortunately the telephone was still working and they were able to call a doctor. The doctor finally reached their house. He had driven part of the way but had to walk the final part of his journey because the road was blocked. The story ended happily. A baby girl was born at 11:00 am.

Scientists are making a careful study of the hurricane, trying to find out how the hurricane is formed so that they can gather the information for the weathermen to give a correct weather report, predicting when the hurricane is coming.

Here is another story about how humans take challenge of (向...挑战) the hurricane. Not many people can fly a plane through a big storm. But that is what Lowell Genzlinger can do. He is a pilot who looks for a hurricane. He can let people know when a hurricane might be coming.

A hurricane is a huge storm with a big eye. There is a strong wind around this eye. But in the eye of a hurricane, the air is quiet.

A hurricane is very strong. The strong wind of a hurricane can snap (折断) a tree in two or turn over a big boat. There may be a flood with a hurricane. Last summer, Lowell saw a hurricane flood a city in just one hour.

On this night, pictures from satellites in the sky show some strange clouds over the ocean. Could they be a hurricane? Lowell is asked to pilot his plane through the clouds. At first, Lowell can see the stars in the sky. Then, slowly, black clouds move around his plane. He can not see at all. The wind is roaring (呼啸) now. Lowell must get to the eye of this hurricane. He calls to land on the radio. "I can't fly in a line through the storm. The wind is too strong. I have to fly