

英语国家 上册 社会与文化

The Society and Culture of Major English-speaking Countries

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英国 · 澳大利亚 · 新西兰

高等学校英语专业教材·人文素质教育系列

英语国家社会与文化

(上册)

The Society and Culture of Major
English-speaking Countries

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前 言

《英语国家社会与文化》共两册，上册介绍英国、澳大利亚、新西兰，下册介绍美国、加拿大，供英语专业本科学生作为阅读教科书使用。

本册为英国、澳大利亚、新西兰部分。

书中对上述三个国家的国土和人口、历史、经济、文化、教育和社会福利、政府和政治制度等基本情况进行了较为详尽的介绍，每章开头有简要的中文概述，结尾对文中涉及的重要背景知识作了较详细的注释。

全书语言标准规范，风格清新流畅，信息来源翔实，知识准确可靠。读者在提高英语阅读水平的同时，也可以了解到英国、澳大利亚、新西兰三个国家的概况，这对英语专业学生来说十分有益和必要。

现代社会的发展日新月异，每个国家的情况都在不断发生变化，让读者了解处于现代社会中的英国、澳大利亚、新西兰三个国家的概况，是作者的基本目的。本书力求信息的准确和更新，尽管如此，疏漏之处在所难免，诚望广大读者批评指正。

编 者

2004年9月

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Chapter 1



Part One

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland



英国由英格兰、苏格兰、威尔士和北爱尔兰组成。它是一个君主立宪制国家，女王伊丽莎白二世是国家元首。英国是一个发达国家，拥有强大的经济实力和先进的科学技术。

英国是一个岛国，位于欧洲大陆的西北部。它的面积约为244,820平方公里。英国的人口约为6500万。英国是一个多元文化的国家，拥有来自世界各地的移民。

英国是一个议会制国家。它的议会由上议院和下议院组成。首相是国家的最高行政长官。英国是一个法治国家，拥有悠久的法律传统。

英国是一个世界大国。它在国际事务中发挥着重要的作用。英国是一个联合国安理会常任理事国。英国是一个核大国。英国是一个世界贸易组织成员。

英国是一个文化大国。它的文学、艺术和音乐对世界产生了深远的影响。英国是一个旅游大国。它的旅游业非常发达。英国是一个教育大国。它的教育水平很高。

英国是一个体育大国。它的足球、橄榄球和赛马运动非常受欢迎。英国是一个环保大国。它非常重视环境保护。英国是一个创新大国。它拥有许多世界领先的科技公司。

英国是一个友好大国。它与其他国家建立了广泛的友好关系。英国是一个和平大国。它致力于维护世界和平。英国是一个负责任大国。它积极参与国际事务。

英国是一个美丽的大国。它拥有美丽的自然风光和悠久的历史文化。英国是一个值得一游的大国。它的旅游资源非常丰富。英国是一个值得尊敬的大国。它的成就和贡献值得我们学习和借鉴。

Chapter 1

Land and People

国土和人口

英国是位于西北欧的岛国，由大不列颠（英格兰、苏格兰和威尔士）和北爱尔兰两部分组成，是欧盟成员国之一。其全称为“大不列颠及北爱尔兰联合王国”。

不列颠岛的地势分为高地和低地两大区。北部和西部地区主要为高地，包括威尔士、苏格兰和英格兰的部分地区。不列颠岛的东部和东南部大多由低地组成。低地气候温和，土壤适于耕作，人口密集。北爱尔兰的地势与苏格兰相近，多为高地。

英国河流众多。最长的河为塞文河，全长 355 公里。泰晤士河为英国第二大河流，也是英国最重要的河流，全长 336 公里。英国有许多湖泊，湖区是英国最吸引人的旅游名胜之一，15 个湖泊分布于全国各地，并以其广阔的原野和美丽的景色而闻名天下。英国最大的湖是北爱尔兰的内伊湖，面积为 396 平方公里。

英国的气候属海洋性气候，湿润而温和。由于受大西洋湾流的影响，英国的气候比同一纬度的其他国家和地区更温和。英国全年都有降雨，每天天气变化无常，难以预测。

历史上，英国的矿产资源很丰富，但如今大多数矿产资源已枯竭或产量很小，所以英国不得不靠进口锌矿、铁矿等重要的矿产以满足工业生产的需要。同矿产资源相比，英国的能源要丰富得多。大量的石油和天然气资源对英国的经济发展起到了重要作用。

英国有许多重要的城市。首都伦敦历史悠久，名胜古迹繁多。其他主要城市包括威尔士首府加的夫、苏格兰首府爱丁堡、北爱尔兰首府贝尔法斯特、英国第二大城市伯明翰、机器制造和造船中心格拉斯哥、英格兰第二大城市利物浦和工业及商业中心曼彻斯特。

英国人口为 59 247 439（2000 年），其中 80% 是英格兰人，其他为苏格兰人、威尔士人和爱尔兰人。英格兰人是盎格鲁—撒克逊人，而苏格兰人、威尔士人和爱尔兰人是凯尔特人。此外，第二次世界大战以来，有大量的移民涌入英国。他们主要来自中国、印度、巴基斯坦、非洲和加勒比海地区。这些移民同英国本土人一样，为英国经济的繁荣和发展作出了重要贡献。



I. Location, Names and Components

The British Isles are two islands situated in the northwest of Europe. The larger of the two islands is known as Great Britain. The British state is made up of Great Britain (England, Wales, and Scotland) and Northern Ireland. It is one of the 15 member states of the European Union. Its full name is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

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*.

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 United Kingdom's only land border with another nation is between Northern Ireland and Ireland. The total area of the United Kingdom is 244,101 sq km (1997). Its coastline runs 12,429 km (1997), making it one of the countries with the longest coastline.

England is the largest and most southerly portion in Britain, with Wales to the west and Scotland to the north. It has an area of more than 130,000 square kilometers which takes up nearly 60 percent of the whole island. It is the most populous and richest section of the country, so people tend to use the words "England" and "English" when they mean "Britain" and "British". This sometimes annoys the Scots and the Welsh. England does, however, contain the capital of the United Kingdom, London, where the British government is, together with the headquarters of many national and commercial bodies.

Wales, on the western prominence between the Bristol Channel¹ and the Dee Estuary, was effectively united with England in the 14th century. The area of Wales is about 20,700 sq km which takes up less than 9 percent of the whole island.



Scotland, with an area of 77,167 sq km, occupies the northern portion of Great Britain. It retained its own parliament until 1707 when, by the Act of Union, Scotland and the kingdom of England and Wales were constitutionally joined as the kingdom of Great Britain. In matters of local government Scotland has much in common with England, but Scottish legal procedure remains different in many ways. A Celtic language, Gaelic, is spoken in parts of the Highlands. Just as Welsh, another Celtic tongue, is spoken in Northern and Central Wales.

Northern Ireland is composed of the six Irish counties that elected to remain in the union with Great Britain when the remaining 26 counties of Ireland obtained autonomy in 1921. Thereafter the name United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, which had been adopted in the Act of Union of 1801, was gradually replaced, quasi-officially, by the present name. Northern Ireland has its own Parliament but also remains members to the British Parliament. The area of Northern Ireland is 14,121 sq km. Its population of over 1.5 million is divided between a Protestant² majority and a Roman Catholic minority, the former being of English and Scottish origin and the latter of Celtic.

II. Topography

The island of Great Britain can be divided into two major natural regions — the



highland zone and the lowland zone. The north and west of Britain are mainly highlands. Wales, Scotland, and parts of England are located in the highland zone. The east and southeast are mostly lowlands. 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. England

The terrain of England is diversified. The northern and western portions are generally mountainous. The principal highland region, the Pennine Chain³ (or Pennines), extending down into northern England and into the southwestern peninsula, forms the backbone of England. The highest point of the Pennines is Cross Fell which is 893 meters high. The bulk of the Pennines is moorland. 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 District⁴, famous for its lakes and scenic beauty.

2. Scotland

The terrain of Scotland is predominantly mountainous but may be divided into three distinct regions, from north to south: the Highlands, the Central Lowlands, and the Southern Uplands. The Highlands (over 1,200 m) are a wild, rocky, mountainous plateau with a coastline deeply indented, especially in the west. Ben Nevis⁵, the highest mountain in Britain (1,343 m) is located here. The western part of Highlands and the islands of Hebrides are a very beautiful region. Great sea-lochs, or fjords, alternate with wild and empty hills, and on some of the lochs there are farms which can only be reached by boat.

To the south of the Highlands lies the central Lowlands in the valleys of Clyde and the Forth⁶. This region is relatively flat. But even in the "Lowlands" much of the land is too high for easy cultivation, and most of the hillsides are covered with heather and bracken. Lowlands, however, is the most important region in Scotland, which contains most of the industry and population.

Still farther to the south bordering with England is the southern Uplands — a rolling moorland with some fertile river valleys. Cheviot Hills⁷, with the highest peak of 816 m, stretch over 50 km along the border between Scotland and England.

3. Wales

Most of Wales is mountainous: the hills rise steeply from the sea and are rather flat on top. 6 percent of Wales is covered with forest and much of the country is



pasture—land for sheep and cattle. Only 12 percent of the land is arable. Wales forms a massif with a lowland fringe widest along the English border and south coast. The massif is largely between 180 and 600 m, rocky in the north and coal bearing in the south. The principal range is the Cambrian Mountains, which extend north and south through central Wales. Snowdon⁸ (1,085 m) in the northwest is the highest mountain in Wales.

4. Northern Ireland

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 Neagh⁹, 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 Mountains¹⁰ in the southeast, which reach a maximum elevation of 852 m above sea level.

III. Rivers and Lakes

There are many rivers and lakes in the United Kingdom, but they are not very large. The longest river is the Severn River¹¹ which is only 355 kilometers long. It rises in northeast Wales and flows through central England to the Bristol Channel. It is famous for the great tidal bore, which at times may raise the water level at Chepstow as much as 18 meters.

The second largest and most important river in Britain is the Thames River¹². It is 338 kilometers long with a catchment area of about 10,000 square kilometers. It rises in southwest England and flows through the Midlands of England to London and out into the North Sea. Its source area being a place with an altitude of no more than 200 meters, the Thames River flows rather slowly, which is very favorable for water transportation. Ocean-going vessels can sail up it as far as London, and smaller craft can sail up it for a further 138 kilometers. Oxford is also on the Thames.

The Clyde River is the most important river in Scotland. It rises in Dumfries¹³ and enters the Firth of Clyde¹⁴. It is long famous for the industries that have developed on its banks and at its estuary, especially where it flows through Glasgow. Its length is about 170 kilometers.

Because Great Britain was subjected to considerable glaciation, the highlands, especially in northern Scotland, the Cumbrian Mountains, and North Wales, contain many deep valleys filled with long, ribbon-shaped lakes. These create regions of great attraction for tourists. Lake District is one of the popular touring spots in England, where there are 15 lakes radiating like the spokes of a wheel from a central

hub. Yet, the largest lake in the British Isles is the square Lough Neagh in Northern Ireland, which covers an area of 396 square kilometers.

IV. Climate

The British climate is moderated by the Atlantic Gulf Stream, and is much milder than that of many places in the same latitude. The climate of Great Britain is generally equable. Winters are especially mild on southwestern coasts, where severe frosts are rare. The seasonal variations in temperature increase eastward. Winter mean temperatures exceed 4°C in the west but are lower in the east. The July mean, on the other hand, is about 18°C in the southeast of England but falls to 13°C in northern Scotland. Since the prevailing winds are southwesterly, the Atlantic air streams often bring cloudiness and humidity, and the frequent passage of fronts and depressions ensures very changeable day-to-day conditions. Temperatures fall surprisingly rapidly with increased altitude.

Rainfall occurs throughout the year, there being no marked dry season. In the highland west it may exceed 254 cm per year, but in the eastern lowlands it is only 64 to 76 cm. Sunshine hours in Britain are fewer than in more southerly climates — averaging between 3 and 4 hours a day and between 4 and 6 from June to August. On high ground, winters are more severe and snow may lie for 30 days on the Pennines and as long as 50 days in the Scottish Highlands.

All over the world Britain is notorious for its fogs. The ordinary damp mists which afflict all parts of the country from time to time are no worse than similar mists in many other countries. Much of the smoke-fog was caused by the burning of coal in fireplaces in private houses, though smoke from factories contributes a great deal to the trouble. A Clean Air Act was passed by Parliament in 1956, giving local councils power to control smoke in designated areas; the effects of this excellent plan have been very noticeable.

V. Natural Resources

1. Soils

Britain's soil quality varies greatly. In northern areas the soils are thin, lying right above rock formations, while the south possesses areas of rich loam and heavy clay soils. When handled carefully, the soils of eastern and south central England are very productive. 77 percent of the land in Britain is used for agriculture, only 26 percent of this land is used to grow crops; and the rest is used as grazing land.



2. Forests and Woodlands

Trees grow well and quickly in the heavy soils of England, and for a long time prehistoric settlers did not have tools strong enough to cut down the heavy oak forests. Over the centuries the expanding human population cut back the forests, so that today only 9.9 percent of the United Kingdom is forested, roughly 2 million hectares (6 million acres). In contrast, 25 percent of Europe is forested. Only 8 percent of England is covered by forest, 15 percent of Scotland, 12 percent of Wales, and 6 percent of Northern Ireland. Britain's forests produce about 15 percent of the total wood the country consumes, and Britain imports substantial amounts of wood and wood products. Efforts have been made in Britain to grow more trees and expand the managed forest areas. Local authorities have the power to protect trees and woodlands. It is an offense to cut down trees without permission, and when trees protected by the government die they must be replaced.

3. Mineral Resources

Britain's mineral resources were historically important, but today most of these resources are either exhausted or produced in small quantities. Britain currently relies upon imports from larger, cheaper foreign supplies. Before and during the Roman occupation, about 2000 years ago, Britain was noted for its tin mines, which were concentrated in Cornwall¹⁵. The tin was mixed with copper to produce bronze, an important material in ancient times used for weapons and jewelry. Today nearly every tin mine in Britain has been exhausted and shut down.

Britain's small deposits of iron ore were critically important to the Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries, particularly because iron ore deposits were located close to rich deposits of coal. When iron ore and coal are heated together, they produce iron alloys, such as wrought iron. When iron ore is heated at high temperatures with coke, a derivative of coal, it produces pig iron, a cheaper, softer iron that is more easily purified into the iron and steel essential for constructing machines and railroads. During the Industrial Revolution towns and cities sprang up close to these resources, and they remain among Britain's leading urban areas. Today Britain imports iron, along with most other minerals used for industrial production, although small amounts of iron, zinc, and copper are still produced.

Raw materials for construction, particularly aggregates (minerals mechanically separated from ores), are still important, and many quarries continue to operate profitably. Limestone, sand, gravel, rock, sandstone, clay, chalk, salt, silica sands, gypsum, potash, and fluorspar are all quarried.



4. Energy Resources

Britain has the richest energy sources in the European Union (EU)¹⁶, and its abundant resources of oil and natural gas are of vital importance to the British economy. Until the 1970s small amounts of oil were produced from onshore wells, but this amount was far less than Britain needed. In 1969 large supplies of oil and natural gas were discovered in the North Sea off the eastern coast of Britain, particularly off the coast of Scotland. Oil and natural gas production soared after supplies were brought ashore in 1975. Today Britain is the world's eighth largest producer of crude oil and natural gas liquids, with more than 60 offshore fields. Refined oil products are one of Britain's major exports today, most of which are sold to European nations.

For many years coal was mined extensively, providing the primary source of energy in Britain. It was also exported. Coal production reached its peak in 1913, when more than 300 million tons were mined. Today production is less than a sixth of that figure and coal is far less important to the British economy. Britain imports much more coal than it exports.

Britain also has a number of nuclear energy facilities. Britain meets 28 percent of its energy needs through nuclear energy. Recently much research has been devoted to developing biofuels — energy from wastes, landfill gas, and crops — as well as to developing solar energy, wind power, and waterpower.

VI. Environmental Issues

Environmental protection is an important issue in the United Kingdom because as a highly populated and technologically advanced nation grows the environment suffers. The United Kingdom, along with other prospering nations, has contributed funds and expertise toward global efforts to preserve the environment. As the world's first industrialized society, Britain has a long history of dealing with environmental problems. In recent decades, however, the large increase in the number of motor vehicles has erased many of the gains achieved by the Clean Air Act. River pollution has been more difficult to deal with. This is partly because local sewerage authorities, which were among the worst polluters, were represented on the boards regulating pollution in the rivers. In 1989 a National Rivers Authority was created that has no connection with potential polluters, and Britain's rivers are slowly improving.

Since the 1940s one of the most serious environmental problems has been disposal of radioactive waste, including the dismantling of nuclear power stations after they become obsolete. Another serious environmental issue is the pressure to



develop more land. To maintain productive agricultural land and viable agricultural communities, Britain has severely restricted urban and suburban development in some areas. As a result, land prices are extremely high.

VII. Cities

1. London

London is the capital of England and of Great Britain, the political center of the Commonwealth, and a major port, 65 km from the mouth of the River Thames. Administratively it consists of: (1) the City of London (area 2.5 sq km, pop. 5,400), the original nucleus, retaining a medieval system of government of courts of aldermen and an elected lord mayor. (2) Greater London, a metropolitan county (pop. 7,111,500), made up of 12 Inner London boroughs (area 303 sq km, pop. 2,809,100) and 20 Outer London boroughs (area 570 sq km, pop. 4,302,400).

London has many famous buildings. Westminster Abbey¹⁷ and St. Paul's Cathedral¹⁸ (110 meters high) are among the most well-known of their kinds. The former is the traditional place where English kings and queens are crowned. It is also known for its Poets' Corner, burial ground for famous English poets with Chaucer¹⁹ as the first occupant. The Tower of London²⁰, standing beside the river, was built as a military fortress by William the Conqueror in the 11th century and it was then used as a prison. As a prison, it witnessed the death of many of the king's enemies. Now it has been converted into a public museum of arms and royal treasures. Over the Thames River, there are several bridges. One of the oldest is London Bridge which is directly to the south of the City of London.

Along the west bank of Thames, for the river bends to the north and then flows east again, are the magnificent Houses of Parliament²¹ beside which stands a high clock tower capped with the famous Big Ben²². Not far away from the Houses are the buildings of New Scotland Yard²³ which often appears in English detective stories. It is the headquarters of the London police. Near the Parliament Building there is a small but famous street, Whitehall.²⁴ The street is lined with office buildings of the most important ministries of the English Government. In the press Whitehall is often used to mean the English Government. Branching off from Whitehall is another small street, Downing Street.²⁵ No.10 Downing Street, is an ordinary but famous building as the English Prime Minister's official residence. Mass media often use it to mean the Prime Minister. To the west of these two streets is Buckingham Palace²⁶, the London residence of the royal family.

A few minutes' walk from the Palace will take visitors to the world-famous