高校英语选修课规划教材

张亮平　李 鹏　编著

英美文化精粹

ESSENCE OF
BRITISH AND AMERICAN CULTURES

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内 容 提 要

本书吸收了国内外英美文化研究的最新成果，广泛而精炼地介绍了英美文化的方方面面，包括历史、地理、政治、语言、节日、价值观、重大事件、教育、文学、音乐、美术及《圣经》等，并从跨文化交际的角度对一些现象进行了理论阐述和解释。本书既可以作为高校英语文化素质培养的教材，也可以作为正在参与或将要参与跨文化交际人士的知识性读物。

前　言

众所周知，语言与文化互相影响、互相作用。语言是文化的一部分，并对文化起着重要作用，但语言又受文化的影响，反映文化。这就要求我们，不但要学好作为交际工具使用的英语语言，掌握语音、语法、词汇，而且还要深入了解英美文化，知道使用英语的人如何看待事物，如何观察世界；了解他们如何用语言来反映社会思想、习惯和行为；要懂得他们的“心灵之语言”，即了解他们社会的文化。如果不懂一个民族的文化，就不可能真正学懂这个民族的语言，更不懂这个民族的人民。没有对英美文化的深刻了解，就没有真正意义上英语语言和英美文学的掌握，更谈不上对英美社会的真正认识。这也是我们编写《英美文化精粹》的初衷。

《英美文化精粹》分别介绍了英美两国的民族特点、历史发展、地理环境、政府制度、宗教信仰、文学概要、教育模式、风俗习惯、节日活动、种族关系及社会事件等。本书内容丰富、涉及面广，对英美文化进行了较为系统的介绍。本书主要具有以下特点。

1. 结构明晰：本书采用专题的形式，对英美文化进行介绍。全书共分十二个专题，对英美文化的不同方面一一做了介绍，结构简单，清晰明了，基本涵盖了非英语人士对英美文化了解的基本需求。

2. 角度新颖：本书打破了以往英美文化书籍对文化的单纯介绍，力图从跨文化交际的角度，对英美文化进行介绍。对某一文化现象不仅有一般的内容介绍，还有其背后原因的简明理论阐述，力求使读者在阅读过程中不仅“知其然，还要知其所以然”。书中许多章节的编写采用了中西文化对比的方法，以利于读者更好的比较异同，体会文化间的差异，促使读者有所思考，以加深对英美文化的理解。

3. 选材新颖：本书选材兼顾传统英美文化介绍的同时，力求选取最新英美文化研究理论和成果，素材新颖。

本书不仅可以作为大学高年级学生、研究生的英美文化教材，还可以供企事业单位，特别是大型企业使用，用于培训员工，增强跨文化意识，提升跨文化交际能力。对于具有一定英语基础的英语爱好者也是一本快速了解英美文化的好书。

本书的编著主要由张亮平（Chapter3、5、6、7、8、12）、李鹏（Chapter1、2、4、9、10、11）完成，同时要感谢武汉工业学院外语系同仁的大力支持。

由于时间仓促，加之作者学术水平有限，书中难免有不足之处，还望读者及同行不吝赐教。

编　者

2009 年 9 月

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Chapter 1 UK & USA

1. UK

1.1 The History of England

The history of England did not begin until the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons, when the partition of Britain into several countries largely began. It was the history of Britain that began in the prehistoric during which time Stonehenge was erected. At the height of the Roman Empire, Britannia was under the rule of the Romans. Their rule lasted until about 410, at which time the Romano-British formed various independent kingdoms. The Anglo-Saxons gradually gained control of England and became the chief rulers of the land. Raids by the Vikings were frequent after about AD 800. In 1066, the Normans invaded and conquered England. There were many civil wars and battles with other nations throughout the Middle Ages. During the Renaissance, England was ruled by the Tudors. England had conquered Wales in the 12th century and was then united with Scotland in the early 18th century to form the Kingdom of Great Britain. Following the Industrial Revolution, Great Britain ruled a worldwide empire, of which, physically, little remains. However, its cultural impact is widespread and deep in many countries of the present day.

1.1.1 Prehistory and Roman Britain (Britannia)

Archaeological evidence indicates that what was later southern Britannia was colonized by humans long before the rest of the British Isles because of its more hospitable climate between and during the various ice ages of the distant past.

Julius Caesar invaded southern Britain in 55 BC and 54 BC. Until the Roman Conquest of Britain, Britain's British population was relatively stable, and by the time of Julius Caesar's first invasion, the British population of what was old Britain was speaking a Celtic language generally thought to be the forerunner of the modern Brythonic languages. After Julius Caesar abandoned Britain, it fell back into the hands of the Britons.

The Romans began their second conquest of Britain in 43 AD, during the reign of Claudius. They annexed the whole of modern England and Wales over the next forty years and periodically extended their control over much of lowland Scotland.

1.1.2 Anglo-Saxon Conquests and the Founding of England

In approximately 495, at the Battle of Mount Badon, Britons inflicted a severe defeat on an invading Anglo-Saxon army which halted the westward Anglo-Saxon advance for some decades. Anglo-Saxon expansion resumed in the sixth century, although the chronology of its progress is unclear. One of the few individual events which emerged with any clarity before the seventh century is the Battle of Deorham, in 577, a West Saxon victory which led to the capture of Cirencester, Gloucester and Bath, bringing the Anglo-Saxon advance to the Bristol Channel and dividing the Britons in the West Country from those in Wales. The Northumbrian victory at the Battle of Chester around 616 may have had a similar effect in dividing Wales from the Britons of Cumbria.

Gradual Saxon expansion through the West Country continued through the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries. Meanwhile, by the mid-seventh century the Angles had pushed the Britons back to the approximate borders of modern Wales in the west, the Tamar in the South west and expanded northward as far as the River Forth.

1.1.3 Viking Challenge and the Rise of Wessex

The arrival of the Vikings, in particular the Danish Great Heathen Army, upset the political and social geography of Britain and Ireland. Alfred the Great's victory at Edington in 878 stemmed the Danish attack; however, by then Northumbria had devolved into Bernicia and a Viking kingdom, Mercia had been split down the middle, and East Anglia ceased to exist as an Anglo-Saxon polity. The Vikings had similar effects on the various kingdoms of the Scots, Picts and (to a lesser extent) Welsh. Certainly in North Britain the Vikings were one reason behind the formation of the Kingdom of Alba, which eventually evolved into Scotland.

The conquest of Northumbria, north-western Mercia and East Anglia by the Danes led to widespread Danish settlement in these areas. In the early tenth century the Norwegian rulers of Dublin took over the Danish kingdom of York. Danish and Norwegian settlement made enough of an impact to leave significant traces in the English language; many fundamental words in modern English are derived from Old Norse, though of the 100 most used words in English the vast majority are Old English in origin. Similarly, many place names in areas of Danish and Norwegian settlement have Scandinavian roots.

By the end of Alfred's reign in 899 he was the only remaining English king, having reduced Mercia to a dependency of Wessex, governed by his son-in-law Ealdorman Aethelred. Cornwall (Kernow) was subject to West Saxon dominance, and the Welsh kingdoms recognised Alfred as their overlord.

1.1.4 England Under the Danes and the Norman Conquest

There were renewed Scandinavian attacks on England at the end of the 10th century. Aethelred ruled a long reign but ultimately lost his kingdom to Sweyn of Denmark, though he recovered it following the latter's death. However, Aethelred's son Edmund Ⅱ Ironside died shortly afterwards, allowing Canute, Sweyn's son, to become king of England. Under his rule the kingdom became the centre of government for an empire which also included Denmark and Norway.

Canute was succeeded by his sons, but in 1042 the native dynasty was restored with the accession of Edward the Confessor. Edward's failure to produce an heir caused a furious conflict over the succession on his death in 1066. His struggles for power against Godwin, Earl of Wessex, the claims of Canute's Scandinavian successors, and the ambitions of the Normans whom Edward introduced to English politics to bolster his own position caused each to vie for control Edward's reign. Harold Godwinson became king, in all likelihood appointed by Edward the Confessor on his deathbed and endorsed by the Witan. However, William of Normandy, Harald Ⅲ of Norway (aided by Harold Godwin's estranged brother Tostig) and Sweyn Ⅱ of Denmark all asserted claims to the throne. By far the strongest hereditary claim was that of Edgar the Atheling, but his youth and apparent lack of powerful supporters caused him to be passed over, and he did not play a major part in the struggles of 1066, though he was made

king for a short time by the Witan after the death of Harold Godwinson.

The English under Harold Godwinson defeated and killed the Harald of Norway and Tostig and the Danish force at the Battle of Stamford Bridge, but he fell in battle against William of Normandy at the Battle of Hastings. Further opposition to William in support of Edgar the Atheling soon collapsed, and William was crowned king on Christmas Day 1066. For the next five years he faced a series of English rebellions in various parts of the country and a half-hearted Danish invasion, but he was able to subdue all resistance and establish an enduring regime.

The Norman Conquest led to a sea change in the history of the English state. William ordered the compilation of the Domesday Book, a survey of the entire population and their lands and property for tax purposes, which reveals that within twenty years of the conquest the English ruling class had been almost entirely dispossessed and replaced by Norman landholders, who also monopolized all senior positions in the government and the Church. William and his nobles spoke and conducted court in Norman French, in England as well as in Normandy. The use of the Anglo-Norman language by the aristocracy endured for centuries and left an indelible mark in the development of modern English.

1.1.5 England Under the Plantagenets

The House of Plantagenet or First House of Anjou was a royal house founded by Henry Ⅱ of England, son of Geoffrey Ⅴ of Anjou. The Plantagenet kings first ruled the Kingdom of England in the 12th century.

In total, fifteen Plantagenet monarchs, including those belonging to cadet branches, ruled England from 1154 until 1485. The initial branch ruled from Henry Ⅱ of England until the deposition of Richard Ⅱ of England in 1399. After that, two Plantagenet branches named the House of Lancaster and the House of York clashed in a civil war known as the Wars of the Roses over control of the house. After three ruling Lancastrian monarchs, the crown returned to senior primogeniture with three ruling Yorkist monarchs; the last being Richard Ⅲ of England who was killed in a battle during 1485. The legitimate male line went extinct with the execution of Richard's nephew, Edward, Earl of Warwick, in 1499, although an illegitimate scion, Arthur Plantagenet, Viscount Lisle, was active at the court of Henry Ⅷ of England, and several illegitimate lines persist, including the Dukes of Beaufort.

The reign of Henry Ⅱ represents a reversion in power back from the barony to the monarchical state in England; it was also to see a similar redistribution of legislative power from the Church, again to the monarchical state. This period also presaged a properly constituted legislation and a radical shift away from feudalism. In his reign new Anglo-Angevin and Anglo-Aquitanian aristocracies developed, though not to the same point as the Anglo-Norman once did, and the Norman nobles interacted with their French peers.

1.1.6 Tudor England

The Tudor period is between 1485 and 1603, which coincides with the rule of the Tudor dynasty in England whose first monarch was Henry Ⅶ (1457—1509), then followed by the Elizabethan era.

1.1.7 Queen Elizabeth

The reign of Elizabeth restored a sort of order to the realm following the turbulence of the reigns of Edward and Mary when she came to the throne following the death of Mary in 1558. The religious issue which had divided the country since Henry Ⅷ was in a way put to rest by the Elizabethan Religious Settlement, which reestablished the Church of England. Much of Elizabeth's success was in balancing the interests of the Puritans and Catholics. She managed to offend neither to a large extent, although she clamped down on Catholics towards the end of her reign as war with Catholic Spain loomed.

Elizabeth maintained relative government stability apart from the Revolt of the Northern Earls in 1569; she was effective in reducing the power of the old nobility and expanding the power of her government. One of the most famous events in English martial history occurred in 1588 when the Spanish Armada was repelled by the English navy commanded by Sir Francis Drake, but the war that followed was very costly for England and only ended after Elizabeth's death. Elizabeth's government did much to consolidate the work begun under Thomas Cromwell in the reign of Henry Ⅷ, that is, expanding the role of the government and effecting common law and administration throughout England. During the reign of Elizabeth and shortly afterward, the population grew significantly: from three million in 1564 to nearly five million in 1616.

In all, the Tudor period is seen as a decisive one which set up many important questions which would have to be answered in the next century and during the English Civil War. These were questions of the relative power of the monarch and Parliament and to what extent one should control the other. Some historians think that Thomas Cromwell affected a "Tudor Revolution" in government, and it is certain that Parliament became more important during his chancellorship. Other historians say the "Tudor Revolution" really extended to the end of Elizabeth's reign, when the work was all consolidated. Although the Privy Council declined after the death of Elizabeth, while she was alive it was very effective.

1.1.8 England in the 17th Century

(1) Union of the Crowns

Elizabeth died in 1603 without leaving any direct heirs. Her closest male Protestant relative was the King of Scots, James Ⅵ, of the House of Stuart, who became King James Ⅰ of England in a Union of the Crowns. King James Ⅰ & Ⅵ as he was styled became the first king of the entire island of Great Britain, though he continued to rule the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland separately. Several assassination attempts were made on James, notably the Main Plot and Bye Plots of 1603, and most famously, on 5 November 1605, the Gunpowder Plot, by a group of Catholic conspirators, led by Guy Fawkes, which caused more antipathy in England towards the Catholic faith.

(2) Colonial England

In 1607 England built an establishment at Jamestown in North America. This was the beginning of English colonization. Many English settled then in North America for religious or economic reasons. The English merchants holding plantations in the warm southern parts of America then resorted rather quickly to the slavery of Native Americans and imported Africans in order to cultivate their plantations and sell raw materials (particularly cotton and tobacco) in

Europe. The English merchants involved in colonization accrued fortunes equal to those of great aristocratic landowners in England, and their money, which fuelled the rise of the middle class, permanently altered the balance of political power.

(3) English Civil War

The First English Civil War broke out in 1642, largely as a result of an ongoing series of conflicts between James' son, Charles I, and Parliament. The defeat of the Royalist army by the New Model Army of Parliament at the Battle of Naseby in June 1645 effectively destroyed the king's forces. Charles surrendered to the Scottish army at Newark. He was eventually handed over to the English Parliament in early 1647. He escaped, and the Second English Civil War began, although it was a short conflict, with the New Model Army quickly securing the country. The capture and subsequent trial of Charles led to his beheading in January 1649 at Whitehall Gate in London, making England a republic. The New Model Army, under the command of Oliver Cromwell, then scored decisive victories against Royalist armies in Ireland and Scotland. Cromwell was given the title Lord Protector in 1653, making him "king in all but name" to his critics. After he died in 1658, his son Richard Cromwell succeeded him in the office but he was forced to abdicate within a year. For a while it looked as if a new civil war would begin as the New Model Army split into factions. Troops stationed in Scotland under the command of George Monck eventually marched on London to restore order.

(4) Restoration of the monarchy

The monarchy was restored in 1660, with King Charles Ⅱ returning to London. In 1665, London was swept by a visitation of the plague, and then, in 1666, the capital was swept by the Great Fire, which raged for 5 days, destroying approximately 15 000 buildings.

After the death of Charles Ⅱ in 1685, his Catholic brother King James Ⅱ & Ⅶ were crowned. England with a Catholic king on the throne was too much for both people and parliament, and in 1689 the Dutch Protestant Prince William of Orange was invited to replace King James Ⅱ in what became known as the Glorious Revolution. Despite attempts to secure his reign by force, James was finally defeated by William at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. However, in parts of Scotland and Ireland Catholics loyal to James remained determined to see him restored to the throne, and there followed a series of bloody though unsuccessful uprisings. As a result of these, any failure to pledge loyalty to the victorious King William was severely dealt with. The most infamous example of this policy was the Massacre of Glencoe in 1692. Jacobite rebellions continued on into the mid-18th century until the son of the last Catholic claimant to the throne, (James Ⅲ & Ⅷ), mounted a final campaign in 1745. The Jacobite forces of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, the"Bonnie Prince Charlie"of legend, were defeated at the Battle of Culloden in 1746.

1.1.9 England in the 18th and 19th Centuries

(1) Formation of the United Kingdom

The Acts of Union between the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland in 1707 caused the dissolution of both the Parliament of England and Parliament of Scotland in order to create a unified Kingdom of Great Britain governed by a unified Parliament of Great Britain.

The Act of Union of 1800 formally assimilated Ireland within the British political process

and from 1 January 1801 created a new state called the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, which united the Kingdom of Great Britain with the Kingdom of Ireland to form a single political entity. The English capital of London was adopted as the capital of the Union.

(2) Industrial Revolution

During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, there was considerable social upheaval as a largely agrarian society was transformed by technological advances and increasing mechanization, which was the Industrial Revolution. Much of the agricultural workforce was uprooted from the countryside and moved into large urban centers of production, as the steam-based production factories could undercut the traditional cottage industries, because of economies of scale and the increased output per worker made possible by the new technologies. The consequent overcrowding into areas with little supporting infrastructure saw dramatic increases in the rate of infant mortality (to the extent that many Sunday schools for pre-working age children (5 or 6) had funeral clubs to pay for each other funeral arrangements), crime, and social deprivation.

The transition to industrialization was not wholly seamless for workers, many of whom saw their livelihoods threatened by the process. Of these, some frequently sabotaged or attempted to sabotage factories. These saboteurs were known as "Luddites".

1.1.10 England in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Following years of political and military agitation for "Home Rule" for Ireland, the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921 established the Irish Free State (now the Republic of Ireland) as a separate state, leaving Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom. The official name of the UK thus became "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland".

England, as part of the UK, joined the European Economic Community in 1973, which became European Union in 1993.

Demands for constitutional change in Scotland resulted in a referendum being held in 1997 on the issue of re-establishing a Scottish Parliament, though within the United Kingdom. Following a huge "Yes" vote, the Scotland Act 1998 was passed and the devolved parliament was elected and took powers in May, 1999. Following the Scottish elections in 2007, a minority SNP government took power, under the leadership of First Minister, Alex Salmond who is determined to move Scotland towards independence. The response of the main unionist parties has been to propose a constitutional commission to look at transferring more powers to the Scottish Parliament.

1.2 English People

The British people are mostly white people. But their forefathers were of different origins and came from different lands in Europe. When the British claim that theirs is a society of variety, they mean, in part present-day British people are a mixture of ethnic groups. Foreigners often say the "English people" when they mean the "British people". But there are some people in Britain who refuse to consider themselves the English. It is true that people of English origin make up the majority of the nation, but there are also the Scottish people, the Irish people, the Welsh people,and some other minority groups. They all use English as their official language,but some of them retain their local dialects and accents. It is said that there

are as many dialects as there are counties in England, and the King's English one of them, though it is considered as official and standard English.

In its narrow and historical sense, the term "English people" refers to the descendents of the English-speaking Anglo-Saxons who conquered the native Celts in England in the 5th century. The native Celtic inhabitants in England either intermingled with the Anglo-Saxon invaders or fled into the mountains of Wales and Scotland, giving rise to regional differences. The following invasions by the Danes and Normans, in the eighth and eleventh centuries respectively, added not only to the population but also the variety of characteristics. In spite of their different historical backgrounds, today the British people are well mixed for a national state and in this sense the three terms, the English people, the British people, and Britons are interchangeable.

Despite traditional as well as present diversity, the English people have their common characteristics conservatism and deference. Conservatism consists of an acceptance of things which are familiar and an inclination to be suspicious of anything that is strange or foreign. There are many examples which bespeak the influence of English conservatism. The monarchy and the Upper House have been retained. The national song is still the old God Save the King (or Queen). English judges still wear long wigs in law courts. Though the feudal class is no longer in power, the monarchy continues to confer noble titles on distinguished persons. While there is criticism of the royal family for its large expenditure, the costly royal pageantry is still popular as a reminder of the past.

The wide influence of conservatism can also be found in daily life. Many rooms in England, for example, are heated by gas or electric fire, but their owners still spend money keeping dummy fireplaces which are of no use value. Britain was the first country to start the industrial revolution, but it was not until 1971 that its old and troublesome currency became decimalized after a century-old battle for reform.

Adherence to traditions and familiar things easily leads to public suspicion of new plans of the government, causing numerous protests in the country. Many English people took part in the protests against the construction of nuclear power stations, the new flat rate poll taxes, and even the Concorde aero plane project. Today many English people are still suspicious of the European integration plan. In the realm of legal affairs, their conservatism helped to prepare the soil for the application of the English common law. It also relieved the government of the trouble to work out a single document known as the written constitution.

English conservatism does not imply a high degree of conformity in attitudes, rather it is a kind of nostalgia of the past. As a matter of fact, most English people attach great importance to local and individual characters. Cities, schools, corporations and societies have different traditions and customs which they are reluctant to change. They like to think of their own ways of doing things as distinctions between them and the rest of the world. The same is true with individual persons. They tend to wear clothes of different styles, go to different clubs, have different styles of houses, and even speak different words with different accents. Many of them, knowingly or unknowingly, believe the saying that a person is like a tree in a forest: He is side by side with others but he should have his own character. In this sense we say English

conservatism has something to do with English history.

Another English characteristic is what people call deference. English society used to be rigidly stratified and status-conscious. Everyone was told to be deferential towards those who were superior to him in wealth, status and power. The line from a famous English poem "Yours is not why but how" was a reflection of the demand for deference. Deference was once considered as the basis of social stability and good manners. But a new demand is definitely on the rise—the demand for equality. Many occurrences in England after World War Ⅱ were due to the demand for reform and equality. As a result of its influence, the Queen is no longer exempted from income taxes. It also caused what has been known as the generation gap. The safe conclusion is that more and more English people have come to accept those doctrines which advocate equality, freedom and openness.

The British, and in particular of the English, is "reserved." A reserved person is one who does not talk very much to strangers, does not show much emotion, and seldom gets excited. It is difficult to get to know a reserved person: he never tells you anything about himself, and you may work with him for years without even knowing where he lives, how many children he has, and what his interests are. English people tend to be like that. They hate small talk and refuse to express their mind freely. When they speak, they carefully choose the words appropriate to the occasion and their status. It's a point of honour with English people to behave well. They hate any attempt to make a window into the soul or poke into other people's private business. Many topics for small talk in other countries are under taboo in England. It is extremely impolite to ask an English woman how old she is and whether she has got married. To an Englishman, one's employment, marriage, family, income, and many other things concerning private life are not topics for casual talk. Gossips behind the back of others are considered as a sign of low breeding and back-biters are unpopular. To avoid the trouble of greeting each other, many people would just read books or newspapers while travelling on the train or in buses. The old golden rule for English children—to be seen, but not heard—was a reflection of the old social requirement. It was this, in part, that made some people say that English society was filled with suffocating hypocrisy. A foreign diplomat said that he lived in London for 15 consecutive years but he failed to learn how to behave like an Englishman. This is an example of cultural difference, not just the way of doing things. But the young generation who demands more openness is less bound by the traditional values. They tend to show their feelings more freely.

English people are also known for their sense of humor. Its starting-point is self-dispraise, and its great enemy is conceit. Its object is the ability to laugh at oneself—at one's own faults, one's own failure, even at one's own ideals. The criticism, "He has no sense of humor" is very commonly heard in Britain, where humor is highly prized. A sense of humor is an attitude to life rather than the mere ability to laugh at jokes. This attitude is never cruel or disrespectful or malicious. The English do not laugh at a cripple of a madman, or a tragedy or an honorable failure.

English people are careful with their manners. Well-bred persons must be appropriately dressed for dinner and interviews. They are supposed to keep quiet and take good care of the tableware. Polite table-talk is necessary, but loud voices and wild laughs are considered as ill-

breeding. According to the English rule, people should put their forks and spoons in place before leaving the table. They don't shake hands often, but they say "Thank you very much" instead of "Many thanks".

1.3 Geography of UK

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, or UK, is in Northern Europe or Western Europe. It comprises the island of Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) and the northeastern one-sixth of the island of Ireland (Northern Ireland), together with many smaller islands.

The total area of the United Kingdom is approximately 245 000 square kilometers (94 600 sqmi). England is the largest country of the United Kingdom, at 130 410 square kilometers (50 350 sqmi) accounting for just over half the total area of the UK. Scotland at 78 772 square kilometers (30 410 sqmi), is the second largest, accounting for about a third of the area of the UK. Wales and Northern Ireland are much smaller, covering 20 758 square kilometers (8 010 sqmi) and 14 160 square kilometers (5 470 sqmi) respectively.

1.3.1 United Kingdom Topography

The United Kingdom features a long, rugged coastline, heavily indented with many inlets, bays, and river mouths. Headlands and cliffs may be found along some parts of the coast, especially in Scotland where wide firths and deep, narrow lochs abound.

The topography of England features hilly regions in the north, west, and southwest as well as rolling downs and low coastal plains in the east and southeast. The Cheviot Hills run

from east to west on the Scottish border in the north. The Pennines run north and south from near Scotland to central England's Derbyshire region. Fertile agricultural lands, moors, and plains comprise much of the remaining countryside. The east and west Midlands region, with its rolling hills and dales, lies to the south of the Pennine Range. England's highest point is Scafell Pike, in the northwest Lake District, which rises to 978.4 meters (3 210 feet) above sea level. The Severn and Thames rivers of southern England are the longest, at 337.97 kilometers (210 miles) and 321.9 kilometers (200 miles), respectively.

Scotland features three topographical areas. The Northern Highlands occupy the northern half of Scotland and include Ben Nevis, the highest point in the UK; the Central Lowlands average about152.4 meters (500 feet) in elevation and contain the Tay, Clyde, and Forth river valleys as well as Scotland's largest lake, Loch Lomond; the Southern Uplands feature the Scottish moor lands with their many rivers and dells.

Wales is a hilly, pastoral region occupied largely by the Cambrian Mountains. The highest point in Wales is Mount Snowdon, which rises to 1 086 meters (3 563 feet) above sea level. There are small lowlands in the north and narrow plains along the south and west coasts.

Most of Northern Ireland's topography is low-lying hills and plateaus, usually no more than 152.4 meters (500 feet) high, although the Mourne Mountains of the southeast rise to 852 meters (2 796 feet) at Slieve Donard. The largest lake in the UK is Lough Neagh, which is located in central Northern Ireland.

1.3.2 Climate and Weather

The British people don't like to talk of personal affairs such as money, wage, age, or wealth, but they are fond of discussing the weather. Sometimes they even argue heatedly over what the weather is going to be like. Perhaps it is nothing more than a habit. But the habit has something to do with the variability of the English weather, for people generally show more interest in what is uncertain.

England has a changeable weather. Even the most reliable of English weather experts find it hard to give a correct and reliable weather forecast. As a result of curiosity and partly out of practical need, people like to join in a discussion of the weather whenever there is the chance. It's guess-work, but it's interesting and unoffending to anyone.

Another feature of the English climate is its mild or "strange" temperature. We call it "strange" because it is "incompatible" with the latitude: in winter "too high", in summer, "too low" as we will see later on.

Some English people argue that they have no climate but weather in England. Their argument is based on the variability of their weather and the small differences between the seasons. In spite of all this, there are still discernible seasons in England.

Broadly speaking, the English summer consists of June, July and August. In summer the days are long. The sun rises before 4:00 a. m. and it does not set until after 8:00, with unusually long twilight. The temperature in summer is not very high, only about 20℃ for most time, seldom over 32℃.

Winter includes December, January and February, January being the coldest month. Even in this coldest month, however, the average temperature is seldom below 3℃ while the