

拓展

*A Guide to
English-Speaking Countries*

英语国家概况

主编 谢福之

高等学校英语拓展系列教程



语言技能类

语言应用类

语言文化类

专业英语类



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前 言

随着我国对外交往的日益频繁和涉外工作的需要,大学生不仅要学好英语,提高语言运用能力,还应加深对英语国家社会与文化生活基本情况的了解,从而在工作和生活中更好地进行跨文化交流。本书就是据此需要,根据《大学英语课程教学要求(试行)》为大学生编写的一本选修课教材。

《英语国家概况》共分18章,介绍了六个主要英语国家(英国、爱尔兰、美国、加拿大、澳大利亚和新西兰)的社会与文化,涵盖了地理、历史、政治、经济、教育和文学等方面内容。各个国家的介绍内容相对统一,但又根据各国的特点有所区别对待,对一些特别或典型内容做了重点介绍。

本书具有如下主要特点:

- 一、参考资料丰富。作者参考了众多国内外出版的报刊、杂志、教材、对外宣传材料及相关网站,对大量的信息进行筛选,力使编入本教材的内容权威、客观。
- 二、选材新,时效性强。编写过程中,我们尽量选用最新数据和材料,内容涵盖了20世纪末到本世纪初所发生的事件;对正在发生的事件,则力求介绍其最新进展情况。
- 三、适合课堂教学。18章内容供一个学期使用。每章一个主题,既自成一体,又紧密联系。教师可根据学生水平和具体课时选用本书内容进行课堂教学或要求学生自学。
- 四、语言难易适中,有利于自主学习。作者尽量选用常用词汇,便于学生自主阅读及学习。对部分较难的词汇和专有名词,在文中给出了中文释义,便于学

生阅读；对一些文化内容做了脚注，便于学生了解背景知识。

五 练习丰富。每章后均有四种练习，便于教师检查和学生自测。

六 附录全面。本书配有六个附录，便于学生查找相关内容，也可作为学习内容。

编写过程中，外语教学与研究出版社徐建中副社长给予了大力支持，编辑段长城和祝文杰提出了许多修改意见。Matthew Korean（英）和 Oliver Ross（美）、刘彬、胡永华和陈泳均等参加了部分编写工作。在此一并表示衷心感谢。

由于编者水平有限，本书难免有不足之处，敬请读者指正。

谢福之

2007年8月

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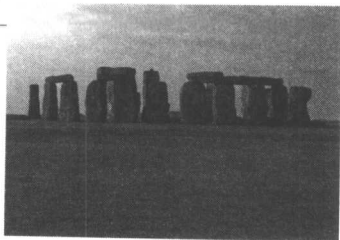
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The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland



Chapter 1

Geography, People and Language

I. Geography

1. Geographical Features

The full name of Britain is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. When people refer to the country, they often use different names such as Britain, Great Britain, England, the British Islands, the United Kingdom or the U.K. Located to the northwest of mainland Europe, it is made up of many of the islands collectively known as the **British Isles** (不列颠群岛), covering an area of about 242,910 square kilometers. Great Britain and Ireland are the two main islands of the British Isles. The island of Great Britain accounts for more than 90% of the country's landmass. That is why the country is also known as Great Britain. It is geographically and historically divided into three parts: England, Scotland, and Wales. The island of Ireland is divided into two parts: Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, while the Republic of Ireland is an independent country.

England is the largest part of Britain, located in the south of the island, with Wales to the west and Scotland to the north. It has an area of 130,410 square kilometers, and covers nearly 60% of the whole island. The River Thames, the second largest and the most important river in Britain, originates in southwestern England and flows through the Midlands of England to London and empties into the North Sea. England is the most populous and wealthiest part of the country, so people sometimes refer to the whole country as England, a name that people of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland do not like very much. It is highly urbanized, with 80% of the population living in cities, and only 2% of the population working in agriculture. London, the capital of both England and the United Kingdom, is located in southeastern England.

Scotland, with an area of 78,789 square kilometers, occupies the northern portion of Britain. It is the second largest of the four constituent parts of the United Kingdom, both



Map of the United Kingdom of Great Britain
and Northern Ireland^注

注：本书内所有地图均经过国家测绘局地图技术审查中心审核，审图号为：GS (2007) 771 号。

in population and in area. The **Clyde River** (克莱德河) is the most important river in Scotland. Scotland spent a substantial period in history as a unified state independent of Britain. **Edinburgh** (爱丁堡) is its capital. Tourism is one of Scotland's most important industries. Tourists from all over the world come to enjoy the beauty of Scottish scenery, to drink Scotch whisky and to see Scotsmen wearing **kilts** (苏格兰方格呢短裙) and playing **bagpipes** (风笛).

Wales is very close to the most densely populated parts of central England. Its entire area is about 20,758 square kilometers and it covers less than 9% of the whole island. The capital of Wales is **Cardiff** (加的夫). The longest river of Britain, the **Severn River** (塞文河), which is 354 kilometers long, originates in mid-Wales and flows through western England to the **Bristol Channel** (布里斯托尔海峡). Wales has been dominated by England longer than the other parts of the union. However, it retains a powerful sense of its difference from England. Its own language, Welsh, is spoken by about 20% of the population, much more than those who speak **Gaelic** (盖尔语) in Scotland and Ireland.

Northern Ireland is the smallest of the four regions, both in population and in area. It has an area of 14,144 square kilometers and occupies the northern one sixth of the island of Ireland. The capital of Northern Ireland is **Belfast** (贝尔法斯特). **Lough Neagh** (讷湖), the largest lake in the United Kingdom, is located in Northern Ireland. It covers an area of 396 square kilometers. Although small, Northern Ireland is quite significant partly because of the political troubles there.

2. Climate

The climate of Britain is classified as temperate, with warm summers and cool winters and plentiful **precipitation** (降雨量) throughout the year. Although its **latitude** (纬度) is as far north as that of Alaska in the U.S. and Heilongjiang in China, its climate is generally mild and temperate due to its **proximity** (接近) to the Atlantic Ocean and the warming of the waters around the British Isles by the **Gulf Stream** (湾流). The summer temperature is usually around 20℃, with the high rarely going above 30℃. The average temperature in January is around 0℃ and seldom falls below -10℃, even in northern Scotland.

The climate in Britain has three principal features. The first is the frequent fog that

occurs in the winter, for which London is famous. The second is the large number of rainy days. The third is its instability or changeability. Indeed, during a hot day in July the temperature can be the same as a mild day in January.

3. Major Cities

London, the capital of both England and the United Kingdom, is the political, industrial, cultural and financial center of the country, and also a major port, 65 kilometers from the mouth of the River Thames. It is one of the world's leading banking and financial centers. **Guildhall** (市政厅) and **St. Paul's Cathedral** (圣保罗大教堂) are two of the city's landmarks.



Tower Bridge

The Port of London lies along the banks of the River Thames. The Tower Bridge of London over the River Thames has also become one of the symbols of the city. The West End of London includes many of the city's major tourist attractions, as well as business and administrative headquarters. Some examples of London's cultural institutions are the University of London, the British Museum, the National Gallery, the **Covent Garden** (考文特花园), the Royal Opera House and the Royal Festival Hall.

Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland, is famous for the University of Edinburgh, one of the largest universities in Britain. Located on a river, the city is stunningly beautiful and its architecture is renowned the world over. Edinburgh is Scotland's administrative, financial, legal, medical and insurance center.

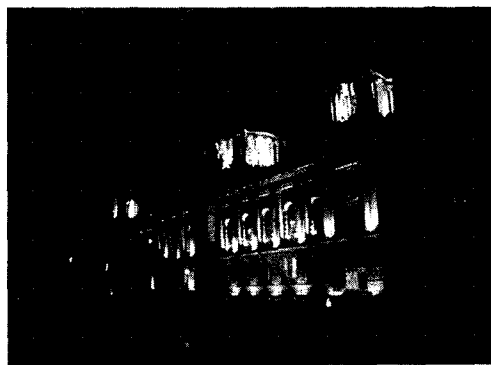


Edinburgh University

Cardiff is Europe's youngest capital city and has been the capital city of Wales since 1955. The city has undergone an

enormous amount of urban **regeneration** (重建) and restoration and has recently become one of the most fashionable cities in Britain. With modern shopping centers, historic Victorian shopping **arcades** (拱廊), an impressive selection of hotels, world-class restaurants and a trendy waterfront area, Cardiff has become a popular city attracting thousands of visitors each year from home and abroad.

Belfast is the largest city and the capital of Northern Ireland. As an important, historic city, it is crammed full of spectacular landmarks and monuments, most of which date back many hundreds of years and are in remarkable condition. In recent years this city has undergone a remarkable transformation. Many areas have been redeveloped, new restaurants and hotels have been opened, and impressive new shopping areas have been built.



Belfast City Hall

II. People

According to a 2005 estimate, Britain has a population of over 60 million. Its overall population density is one of the highest in the world. Almost a quarter of the population lives in England's prosperous and fertile southeast, with over seven million in the capital. The rest are distributed in Scotland (over five million), Wales (around three million), Northern Ireland (close to 1.7 million), etc.

The majority of the population are descendants of the Anglo-Saxons¹, a Germanic people from Europe who went to England between the 5th and 7th centuries. These people settled in England and drove the native Celtic people to the mountainous areas of Wales and Scotland. Their language became the official language of the country.

Most people in Wales and Scotland are descendants of the **Celtic people** (凯尔特人)

¹ **Anglo-Saxons**: 盎格鲁-撒克逊人, 属于日耳曼民族, 包括盎格鲁人 (the Angles)、撒克逊人 (the Saxons)、朱特人 (the Jutes) 等。

who were the earliest known inhabitants of Britain. The Irish people were also of Celtic origin.

Besides these early groups from Europe, Britain has a considerable number of Italians, Greeks, Australians, and New Zealanders who have settled in the country as permanent residents. In addition, there is a large number of immigrants from Africa and Asia. Most of them come from the former colonies of the British Empire, such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Caribbean Islands, and a number of African countries. All these immigrants have made Britain one of the most culturally diverse countries in Europe. In London, for instance, it is estimated that about 160 languages and dialects are spoken, including the languages spoken by international students who come to London not as residents but for the purpose of academic study.

III. The English Language

English is a member of the **Indo-European family of languages** (印欧语系). This broad family includes most of the European languages spoken today. English is in the Germanic group of this family. This group began as a common language about 3,000 years ago. Around the 2nd century BC, this common Germanic language split into three distinct sub-groups: East Germanic, North Germanic and West Germanic. English evolved from the West Germanic group.

The development of the English language can be divided into three periods: Old English, Middle English, and Modern English.

1. Old English

The Angles, Saxons and Jutes began populating the British Isles in the 5th and 6th centuries. They spoke a mutually intelligible language, similar to modern **Frisian** (弗里西语)—the language of northeastern region of the Netherlands—that is now called Old English. They drove the original Celtic-speaking inhabitants out of what is now England into Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, leaving a few Celtic words behind. These Celtic languages survive today in the Gaelic language of Scotland and Ireland, and in Welsh in Wales.

Old English was strongly influenced by old **Norse** (挪威语) spoken by the **Vikings** (北欧海盗) and was closely related to the German and Dutch languages. The introduction of Christianity added the first wave of Latin and Greek words to the language. Some Danish words also came into the English vocabulary. The Old English period ended with the Norman Conquest¹, when the language was influenced, to an even greater extent, by the French-speaking Normans.

2. Middle English

William the Conqueror (征服者威廉), the Duke of **Normandy** (诺曼底), invaded and conquered England and the Anglo-Saxons in 1066.

In the early part of this period, French, spoken by the Normans, replaced English as the official language in England, while English was only used by the lower class. Numerous French words came into the English vocabulary. One interesting phenomenon was that the animals began to



have different names from their meat because they were raised by servants who spoke English, and so kept the English names. The meat gained a French name when it was served to the French-speaking masters. For example, “pig” became “pork”, “sheep” became “mutton” and “cattle” became “beef”.

In 1204, King John lost the province of Normandy to the King of France. Norman nobles of England began to estrange from their French cousins and to adopt a modified English as their native tongue. After the Black Death² (1349-1350), the laboring and merchant classes grew in economic and social importance, and along with them English increased in importance compared to French. English evolved gradually into what is now referred to as Middle English.

3. Modern English

From the late 15th century onward, the English language changed further into what

¹ **Norman Conquest:** 诺曼征服, 指诺曼底公爵 1066 年对英格兰的军事征服。

² **Black Death:** 黑死病, 14 世纪蔓延于欧亚两洲的鼠疫。

is now described as Modern English. The printing press was introduced to England in 1476 by William Caxton, who brought standardization to English. The dialect of London became the standard. Spelling and grammar became fixed. The first English dictionary was published in 1604. Samuel Johnson's dictionary, published in 1755, was influential in establishing a standard form of spelling.

English continued to assimilate foreign words, especially from Latin and Greek, throughout the **Renaissance** (文艺复兴). Despite some differences in vocabulary, the written material from the early 17th century, such as the works of William Shakespeare and the **King James Bible** (英王詹姆士钦定版《圣经》), is considered to be in Modern English.

The Industrial Revolution and the rise of technology necessitated the introduction of new words in modern English for things and ideas that had not previously existed. Words like oxygen, protein, nuclear, and vaccine were created using Latin and Greek roots. English roots were used for such terms as horsepower, airplane, and typewriter. This **proliferation** (增殖) of **neologisms** (新语) continues today, perhaps most visible in the field of electronics and computers. Byte, cyber-, hard drive, and **microchip** (微芯片) are good examples.

What is more, the rise of the British Empire or the Commonwealth of Nations and the growth of global trade led to the assimilation of words from many other languages. **Hindi** (印地语), and the other languages of the **Indian subcontinent** (印度次大陆), provided many words, such as **pundit** (梵文学家), shampoo, pajamas, and **juggernaut** (神像). Virtually every language on Earth has made a contribution to the development of English, whether slight, as in the case of the Finnish word **sauna** (桑拿浴) and the Japanese word **tycoon** (大亨), or vast, as with French and Latin.

4. Standard English

Standard English is based on the speech of the upper class of southeastern England, adopted as a broadcasting standard in the British media. It is used as much in printed materials, and is normally taught in schools and to non-native speakers learning the language. It is also called Queen's English or BBC English, and has become the one preferred by the educated. It has developed and has been promoted as a model for the