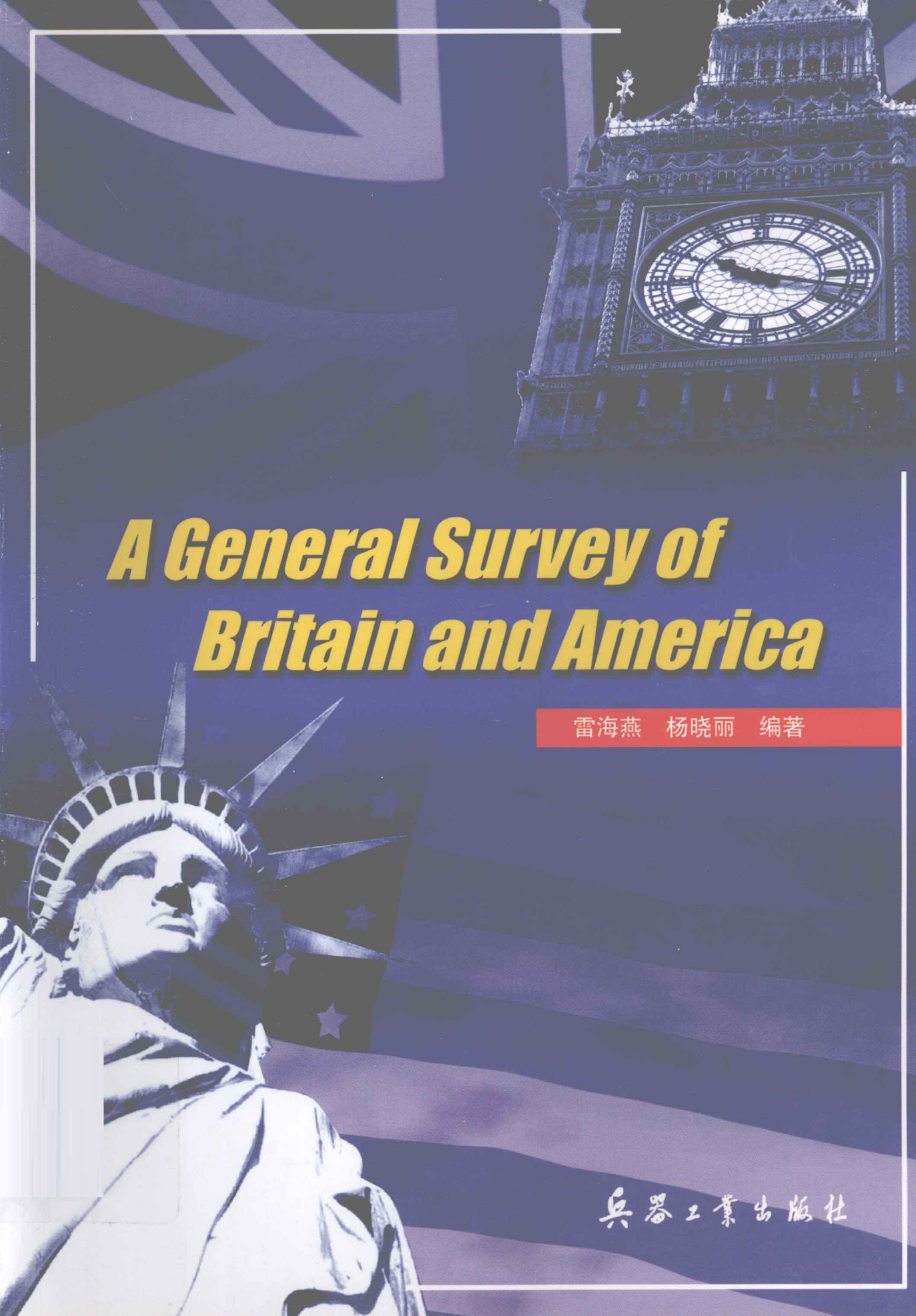




A General Survey of Britain and America

雷海燕 杨晓丽 编著

兵器工业出版社

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内 容 简 介

本书旨在提高英语专业学生和英语自学者了解英、美国家的社会和文化概况，如地理、历史、政治、教育及其文化传统、风俗习惯和社会生活的有关知识。读者通过对本书课文的学习和练习的实践，达到提高英语水平的目的。全书知识介绍连贯、系统，重点突出，详略得当，图片丰富。本书适合英语专业大学二年级学生、英语应试者、出国深造者及众多的涉外人员阅读。

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前 言

英美概况是一门实用性很强的文化知识课。随着中国经济日益走向全球化，国际政治、经济和文化将进一步扩大。为适应时代变化和教学方面的新需要，笔者根据《英语专业英美概况教学大纲》的精神，编写了本书。本书主要涵盖了英、美两国的地理、历史、政治、教育及其文化传统、风俗习惯和社会生活的有关知识。在本书的编写过程中遵循了如下原则：

1. 以学生为中心，注重学生的全面发展，培养学生跨文化交际的意识。
2. 以事实为基础，知识介绍连贯、系统，重点突出，详略得当，学以致用。
3. 用英语编写，力求语言通顺、地道，便于学生在学习英、美文化的同时提高英语的理解和应用水平。
4. 每课后都附有思考题，帮助学生记忆各种信息，巩固和提高文化和语言知识，帮助学生复习、归纳所学内容。

本书共有 24 章，前 12 章为英国部分，后 12 章为美国部分。本书的使用对象为英语专业大学二年级学生、英语应试者、出国深造者及众多的涉外人员。

本书编写分工如下：雷海燕编写前 12 章（共 20 万字），杨晓丽编写后 12 章（共 20 万字）。

本书此次出版得到很多老师的帮助，希望以后能不断听到他们的批评指正和修改建议，在此表示深深谢意。

由于水平有限，书中难免有疏漏和不妥之处，恳请广大读者指正。

编著者
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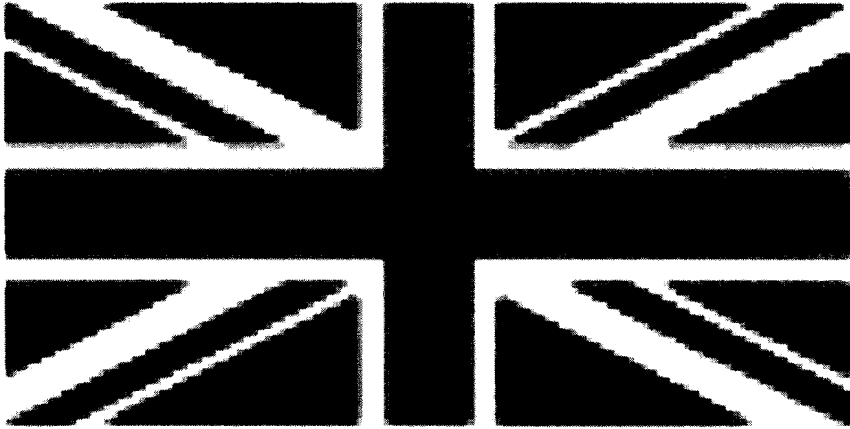
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Part One

Britain



Chapter 1 Land and People

The British Isles are a group of islands situated off the continent of Europe. The largest of islands is Great Britain. The next largest consists of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland which belongs to the British State. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is generally referred to as the United Kingdom, Great Britain or Britain. Its national capital is London, a city on the River Thames. Its national flag is called the Union Jack because of the fact that Great Britain is historically a "Union of nations". "God Save the Queen" is the national anthem of Great Britain.



1. Topography

Situated in Northeastern Europe, lying to the north of France and the west of the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is made up of England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and numerous coastal islands. The total area of the

country is 244,110 square kilometers. Great Britain, with an area of about 223,000 square kilometers, is just less than 1,000 kilometers (about 600 miles) from the south coast to the extreme north of Scotland and just under 500 kilometers (some 300 miles) across in the widest part. It is therefore possible to travel to any part of the country within one day.

Great Britain is geographically and historically divided into 3 parts: England occupies the southern portion of Great Britain with an area of about 130,000 square kilometers. It is the most important part of the kingdom in wealth, size and population. Scotland is to the north of England with an area of 77,167 square kilometers and Wales to the west of England.

Most of the smaller United Kingdom islands are found near western and northern Scotland, including the Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands off the northern coast of Scotland, Anglesey to the northwest of Wales and the Isle of Wight in the English Channel.

The English Channel and the North Sea separate Britain from Europe, and the Shallow Irish and Celtic Seas separate Britain and Ireland. The Atlantic Ocean is in the west of the country and the North Channel, which is only about 20 kilometers wide at one point, separates Northern Ireland from Scotland.

England is predominately a flatland or undulating country, although there are the Pennines in the north and the moorlands in Yorkshire. The flat lands are mainly in the east and the south, crossed or dotted by the Cotswold's..., Lincolnshire Wolds, Chiltern Hills, Berkshire Downs, the Weald...It is sometimes called the Lowland Zone.

The Pennines is a kind of "upland". Since the 19th century, it has been called "the backbone of England", which stretches about 120 kilometers from the south to the north. In the west of the Pennines is the Lake District which consists of a crudely radial arrangement of lakes set in spectacular U-shaped valleys among jagged mountains. This area is very beautiful and quiet. Many English poets, such as W. Wordsworth and S. Coleridge wrote poems about the district. To the north of the Pennines lie the Cheviot Hills along the border with Scotland.

Scotland is chiefly mountainous. With a general trend from southeast to northwest, the southern Uplands, the Grampians and the North West Highlands dominate Scotland. The first two are separated by a region of lower hills and rolling country drained by the lower parts of the Clyde River, the Tay River. The Grampians and the North West Highlands are divided by Loch Ness. In the north-western part of the Grampians stands Ben Nevis (1,343 meters high), the highest mountain in the UK.

The southern Uplands contain broad, rounded hills, many of them high enough to be heather-covered. These hills are drained by pleasant rivers, some of which ran in valleys that cut across the prevailing east-northeast grain of the country. North of the southern Uplands is the Midland Valley of Scotland, which is an area of hilly and rolling country in which there are two principal cities: Edinburgh and Glasgow. The valley trends east-northeast.

The Grampians lie peacefully in the high lands of Scotland. It is the largest mountain range in the UK in which there are four high mountains, all of which are more than one thousand meters high and two of which are the highest in the UK. The Tay, the Dee and the Spey rivers find their sources

in the range. On the other side of Loch Ness lie North West Highlands which are scarcely populated.

Wales is, like Scotland, mostly mountainous. The northern part of Wales is largely hills and moorland. The conspicuous Mt. Snowdon (1,085 meters high) rises in the northeast. The Cambrian Range dominates the region. South and east of Aberystwyth is the plateau region of central Wales, lying at an average elevation of about 2,000 feet. The limestone country in the northeast, the great coal field area with its characteristic deep valleys in the south and the peninsula of Pembroke in the southwest can be recognized. The fine, cliffy coast of Wales shows little evidence of the fiord development that took place in the western Scotland. The Island of Anglesey, off the northwest coast, is almost totally flat.

Northern Ireland is made up of six counties that consist of fertile, drumlin country surrounding Lough Neagh and extending southward to the Mourne Mountains and Slieve Gullion. In the north a broad plateau, terraced around its sides, leads to the splendid north coast where the Giant's Causeway can be seen near Ballycastle.

The chief mountain ranges are the Pennines in the middle, the Cambrians in the west and the Grampians in the North of Great Britain. Besides, there are some small mountains such as Mountains of Antrim, Mourne Mountains and Sperrin Mountains in the Northern Ireland. Ben Nevis (1,343 meters in Scotland) is the highest Mountain in the UK. Scafell Pike (978 meters) is the highest Mountain in England and Snowdon (1,085 meters) is the highest in Wales, but the second highest Mountain in the UK is Ben Macdhui (1,311 meters) in Cairngorm Mountains of the Grampians, Scotland.

Great Britain is a country of many rivers and lakes, but none of them are very large. The longest river in the country is River Severn which is 355 kilometers long. Second to it is the 332-kilometer Thames, which is the main river in Southeast England. It has many tributaries, so that the total drainage area of the Thames amounts to nearly 7,000 square kilometers. It is well known to the world because it flows through London before it empties into the North Sea. Other important rivers that drain into the North Sea include the Trent, the Humber, the Tyne and the Tees. In the northwest of England, the Eden and Mersey are important rivers that flow into the English Channel especially rivers from the Northern Ireland. These rivers are generally very short, except the Erne, the Foyle and the Bann.

2. Climate

The climate of Britain, a gift of the North Atlantic Drift Current, is much milder than that of many places in the same latitude. It often has frequent changes and it is hard to predict the weather even by the most experienced meteorologist. So, weather becomes a frequent topic of discussion among people. However, it has few extremes of temperature. It is rarely above 32 or below -10. Western winds coming across the Atlantic waters warm Ireland and western Britain in winter and cool them in summer, while eastern winds crossing the European continent and the cold North Sea bring a raw, damp cold to eastern Britain.

The average annual rainfall is more than 1,600 mm (over 60 inches) in the mountainous areas

of the north and west but less than 800 mm (30 inches) over central and eastern parts. Rain can occur at any time but, on average, March to June is the driest months and September to January the wettest. During May, June and July (the months of longest day light), the average daily duration of sunshine varies from five hours in the north to eight hours on the South. During the months of shortest daylight (November, December and January), the average drops to an hour a day in the far north and two hours on the south.

3. Natural Resources

Despite its small area, the United Kingdom has large deposits of some major natural resources for industry, especially energy resources such as coal, oil and gas. For most of the 19th and 20th centuries, coal was England's richest natural resource, meeting most of the nation's requirement for energy. Today, coal can be produced more cheaply in other countries and so many British factories and mines have closed. In 1970 UK was the third largest producer of coal but coal production has declined rapidly since then. In 2000, only 35 million tons of coal was produced compared to 145 million in 1970. Areas like south Wales, central Scotland, the north of England (the Midlands, Merseyside, Manchester, West Yorkshire and Newcastle) and London were important industrial centers. Oil and gas were discovered under the North Sea during the 1960s and new supplies are still being found today. Gas has been particularly important in replacing coal as a fuel for generating electricity.

England has relatively few mineral resources. Zinc, tin, iron ore, and copper are all produced in small quantities. The main commercial minerals are those used in the construction and building industries such as sand and gravel, limestone and gypsum. They are normally mined from the surface in quarries using heavy machinery. Smaller quarries are also found across England and provide stone for the local building industry. This means that many parts of England have a distinctive appearance according to the local stone available.

4. People

The total population of the United Kingdom is around 60 million, of which over 80% live in England, especially around London and the Thames areas. The rest are distributed in Scotland (over 5 million), Wales (around 3 million) and Northern Ireland (close to 1.7 million). The majority of this population is decedents of the Anglo-Saxons, a term referring to the three groups Germanic people from Europe who went to England between the 5th and the 7th centuries: the Angles, Saxons, and the Jutes. These people tend to be tall, have blond hair and blue eyes. Their language became the official language of the country. These people settled in England and drove the native Celtic people there to the mountainous areas in Wales and Scotland.

Today, most people in Wales and Scotland are decedents of the Celtic people who were the earliest known inhabitants of Great Britain. The Irish people were also Celtic in origin. In spite of the fact that English is today the official language for the whole country, some of these people still adhere to their old mother tongues that are derived from the Celtic language that was popular throughout

Europe in ancient times. Even when they do speak English, they speak it in their own ways, like Irish English, Welsh English or Scottish English.

Many foreigners who have not visited Britain call all the inhabitants “English”. In fact, the British Isles contain a variety of peoples and only the people of England call themselves English. The others refer to themselves as Welsh, Scottish or Irish, and the case may be that they are often slightly annoyed at being classified as “English”.

5. The English Language

The official language of the United Kingdom is English and the word “English” means the language of the Angles. However, today’s English is very different from the English of the 7th century. The English language has changed a lot in the 1,300 years after the speakers went to their new home which they named England, meaning the land of the Angles.

The development of the English language can be divided into three periods: Old English, Middle English, and Modern English. Old English, also known as Anglo-Saxon, is the first period of the English language from the time of the Anglo-Saxon invasion of Britain in 450 A. D. to the Norman Conquest in 1066. Old English uses both Latin and Germanic scripts. It is the ancestor of Modern English and quite different from today’s English. It has strong and weak forms of verbs. Its nouns and adjectives have cases and genders. Word order is not very important in the meaning of sentences.

Middle English is the name given to the English language in use from the Norman Conquest of 1066 to the introduction of the printing press in England in 1476. It is the blend of Anglo-Saxon, Latin and French. The difference between Old English and Middle English lies mainly in the abandonment of the system of grammatical inflexions, but the changes from Middle English to Modern English involve mainly pronunciation, vocabulary and spelling.

Modern English is the English language since 1476 and spellings and written forms of the English language began to become standardized. The biggest change was in the vocabulary which became enriched by the Renaissance and Reformation when Greek and Latin words came into the English vocabulary in large numbers. Colonization and new invention also introduced new words into the vocabulary.

All the changes and fashions in style of speech and pronunciation over the centuries are proof of adaptability and versatility. In 1,500 years, English has developed from the language of a small, warlike people, the Anglo-Saxons, to the language of a highly developed technological civilization and now has one of the richest vocabulary of any language in the world. Although regional dialects still exist today, from the 20th century, the educated people began to develop a class dialect based on the language used at Eton, Oxford and Cambridge. This became wide spread because the public media such as the British Broadcasting Corporation adopted what is known as the Received Pronunciation (RP) English or Standard English because of their particular style of speech.

Questions

1. What are the physiographical features of the United Kingdom?

2. What is the weather like in Great Britain?
3. Does England have rich natural resources?
4. Who are the British people?
5. What kind of development has the English language experienced so far?

Chapter 2 Economy

Britain was the home of the Industrial Revolution and for many years was the world's richest and most industrialized nation. In the 20th century, however, British trade and manufacturing lost the supremacy that once enabled Britain to be called the "Workshop of the World". Among the causes were competition from developing countries, the worldwide depression of the 1930s, the high cost of two world wars, increasing obsolescence of factories and equipment, and the loss of a far-flung empire. It has been overtaken by the U. S. as the largest producer of coal and metal products and by Germany as a producer of industrial chemicals. Despite this, Britain is still a member of the group of Eight, the group of the most industrialized countries leading the world in economic activities. The European Union Commission announced in early 2004 that the British economy in 2003 was one of the healthiest and strongest in the European Union.

British national economy has its own special characters. It can be divided into three main areas: "primary" industries, such as agriculture, fishing and mining; "secondary" industries, which manufacture complex goods from those primary products; and tertiary industries, often describe as services, such as banking, insurance, tourism and selling of goods. British currency, the pound sterling, has ever been exchange currency for about one third of the world's foreign trade.

1. Agriculture

Of the important countries of the world, the United Kingdom has the smallest number of farmers in proportion to its population. In Great Britain, only about 3 out of every one hundred people depend on agriculture for a living. This feature and its advanced degree of mechanization are the two main features that distinguish British agriculture from that of other Western European and industrialized countries. The degree of mechanization reaches such an extent it has one tractor for every 35 acres of arable land. Although it engages only about 3 percent of the labor force and accounts for a similar percentage of the GNP, agriculture is important as it supplies about half of Britain's food. Britain's damp climate and hilly terrain make much of the country well suited agriculture and animal husbandry.

Principal agricultural products in Britain are wheat, barley, potatoes, sugar-beets and oats. Much of its barley crop is turned into whiskey. Oat cakes and oatmeal porridge are favorite food with many people in Britain, especially in Scotland.

Britain's animal husbandry remains an important part of agriculture. The country is dotted with tracts of grazing-land, some of which are green throughout the year because of the mild climate and abundant rainfall. About three-fifth of full-time farms are devoted mainly to dairying, beef produc-

tion and sheep-farming. Some farmers graze their sheep and cattle while others rear their sheep and cattle in the yards. This kind of mixed farming, though less efficient than the highly-specialized farming in America, can help make farmers' work less seasonal. Big farms employ paid laborers or seasonal farm workers.

Increased productivity and advanced mechanization have made British farms among the most efficient in the European Economic Community (Common Market). Britain now produces just over half of its total food requirements and almost three-quarters of the food crops that can be grown in its climatic zone. Farmers receive various subsidies as well as guaranteed minimum prices for certain agricultural products such as wheat, beef, eggs and butter; these prices are mostly fixed through the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Many farmers in the UK are dissatisfied, because through the CAP, efficient British agriculture has to support uneconomic farming in some other parts of the Community; in particular, they are angry at having to reduce output of certain products so as to become less competitive with producers of the same commodities elsewhere in the EEC. The British government, conscious of their discontent, is trying to introduce significant changes in the CAP.

2. Industry

Compared with many other countries, Britain has considerable reserves of coal. Experts estimate that these will serve Britain for the next 200 years at the present rate of consumption. Coal is a major source of energy for industry. It was the development of Britain's coalfields which led to the Industrial Revolution and the growth of traditional heavy industries such as textiles, steel, ship-building, and engineering. Almost all the industrial areas in Britain except London and Belfast are based on coalfields. Important coal areas can be found in Central lowlands of Scotland, North-east England, Central England and South Wales around such big cities as Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Sheffield, Nottingham, Manchester, Birmingham, and Swansea. Not all coal is of the same type, the coal from the coalfields of the North-East is most suitable for producing blast-furnace coke in the steelworks and the Midlands coalfields produce coal suitable for the power stations.

In the past virtually all of the gas and oil had to be imported into Britain. Later natural gas was discovered in 1965 and oil in 1970 under the North Sea, Britain has become a major oil and gas producer, which now accounts for about 1/4 of energy supplies. The technology required to extract oil from the difficult offshore conditions had given UK companies a strong position in the offshore oil industry around the world. Three of the biggest ten companies in Britain are to be found in the energy sector: Shell (half Dutch), British Petroleum (BP), and British Gas. The world's largest mining company, RTZ, is a UK company which operates mines all over the world.

The most radical change in energy resource has been the switch to nuclear energy. The United Kingdom has been a pioneer in this field. Its first nuclear power station was built in 1956. Its use of electricity generated by nuclear plants exceed, by 1970, which of the rest of the world put together. It was expected that, by the mid-1970s, as much as 25 percent of the total public electricity supply would come from nuclear sources.

Britain has traditionally been a manufacturing nation and was once known as the "Workshop of the World". It has established a comprehensive industrial system capable of producing varied goods. Britain's largest manufacturing industry is the iron and steel industry and Britain remains one of the world's major steel-producing nations. Each year, Britain exports a large proportion of its steel either directly (25% of the total) or in the form of the finished products. Its major markets are the United States and other European Community countries. The main steel-producing areas in Britain are Yorkshire, Wales, Scotland, and the West Midlands. But Britain is not self-sufficient in iron ore and more than half of the ore it consumes depends on importation.

The British government once controlled about 80% of steel production. The largest producer was the British Steel Corporation (BSC) which was a public company controlled by the government. To make British steel more competitive in the world market, the government has begun to transfer assets and business of BSC to the private sector. This process is called denationalization or privatization. Britain has a large motor vehicle industry which, in 1980, produced about one million cars in addition to tens of thousands tractors and commercial vehicles. About one-third of its cars are sold abroad, but at the same time the nation imports many cars. Britain is also a leading world's producer and exporter of agricultural tractors which are usually smaller than those made in America. Among British car manufacturers, the most famous are Austin Morris, Range Rover, Dodge, and Rolls Royce. Rolls Royce produces old-fashioned but very expensive cars specially designed and manufactured for the extremely rich and high officials.

The textile industry is one of Britain's oldest. Textiles are one of the country's most valuable exports. Woolens, cottons and synthetic fabrics are among the many kinds of cloth produced in Britain. Britain's textile industries have passed their prime of time. Some former cotton suppliers have developed their own textile industries and they are now Britain's competitors. Britain, therefore, has to work out a program for the progressive closing down of some old cotton mills while developing artificial fibers and high-quality products, as is the trend in many other countries.

3. Services

Like most developed economies Britain has seen a growth in tertiary or service industries, which now produce 65% of national wealth. A lot of this is domestic activity such as retailing, tourism and so on, but Britain is also a major international provider of services, accounting for about 10% of the world's exports of such services. 70% of the UK's workforce is employed in the service sector.

A. Financial Services

The UK has one of the globe's oldest, most extensive and most highly developed financial systems. Currently the financial sector employs 1 million people and accounts for 6% of the national wealth. London ranks one of the world's most important financial centers. The hub of the British financial system is the Bank of England. It was founded in 1694 and was nationalized in 1946 in order to formalize its role as a public institution and instrument of government control. The bank works in close contact with the government, esp. over the control of monetary policy, in which it acts as the

government's executive in giving directions to the commercial banks. The Bank of England prints and issues currency notes and also controls the country's gold reserves.

Although there are stock exchanges in other British cities, the Stock Exchange in London is the largest and most important; and, since its foundation in 1773 it has served as a model for most overseas exchanges. The Exchange provides a market for the purchase and sale of about 8,000 officially-listed securities which give it a greater turnover than any other market in the world. To operate on the "trading floor" of the Stock Exchange a person must be elected a member and either be a stock broker. The Exchange itself does not fix prices; the terms on which deals are made reflect current market trends for the securities concerned. The Exchange is open to the public during trading hours and guides are available to explain all that is going on.

B. Transportation

Transportation is very important to Britain's economy because its trade mainly depends on its transportation. Britain's roads and rail routes are among the densest and most heavily used in the world. This is especially true of the railroads that connect the main manufacturing cities with one another and with the principal ports of the country. Present routes link northern Britain through the Midlands to London and from the West Country and South Wales to London.

Britain has about 18,668 kilometers of railroad tracks. The railways were nationalized in 1947 by the Labor Government, and since then they have been operated with a deficit. However, the railways have already developed one type of passenger service which is both good and profitable. Efforts have been made to electrify the routes and develop new types of high-speed passenger trains.

Britain has 365,600 kilometers of highways, about 1/4 of which are classed as main roads, and there are plans for extension and modernization to cope with the growing number of vehicles.

Britain's island position makes its ports very important. There are over 300 ports in Britain. Some are tiny local harbors operating in the coast trade or as fishing ports. The many large ports are headed by the Port of London, which is one of the three greatest ports in the world, the others being Rotterdam in the Netherlands and New York. Now British ship owners still control a large fleet privately owned, which is one of the largest fleets in the world.

The North Atlantic is the most heavily traveled shipping route in the world, and British ports such as Liverpool, London, Southampton, Bristol, and Glasgow have a major concentration of transatlantic traffic. Manchester, an inland port, specializes in petroleum.

The leading port for European trade is London. Other important eastern-coast ports are Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Hull. Leith, Edinburgh's port, is also an important port for ships trading with continental Europe. Dover on the Channel coast is the principal passenger port for Europe. The car ferries to France from Dover are booked up months ahead in the holiday season.

Most of the bigger ports have large industrial areas near the docks. Petroleum, ores, raw sugar, grains, tobacco, cocoa, and many other goods that enter the country by sea are refined, processed, packed, and redistributed.

The main air services are now operated by the state-owned British Airways (BA) formed in 1973 from the British European Airways (BEA) that operated internal and European scheduled serv-

ices and the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) that operated services to all other continents. Of the country's approximately 120 regularly used commercial airports, the largest is the state-owned London Airport (Heathrow). The two other London airports are Gatwick and Luton. Other important international airports are at Glasgow, Birmingham, Manchester and Prestwick.

C. Trade

Britain is the fifth largest trading nation in the world. It has been a major trading power since the 17th century, when the English East India Company and other trading organizations laid the foundations of its empire.

Britain exports about one-sixth of the total world exports of manufactured goods. The main items it exports are machinery, chemicals, textile manufactures, iron and steel, precious stones, passenger cars and parts, metal manufactures, non-ferrous metal, whisky, petroleum products, vehicles, aircraft, scientific instruments, etc. Now it also exports whole chemical factories and complete plants to manufacture nylon thread.

Britain's traditional customers in trade were the Commonwealth countries and its former colonies. But now its trade with the countries of the Commonwealth and the former colonies has gone down, while that with highly industrialized nations has gone up since it joined the Common Market in 1973. Apart from the Common Market, the United States and Canada are also its important customers in trade now.

The invisible trade makes a great contribution to Britain's balance of payment problems. Earnings from tourism, with the associated shipping, international insurance, banking fees and air services and from private investment overseas constitute one of the largest single sources of foreign currency. A government-sponsored body, the British Trade Authority (BTA), is responsible for the overseas promotion of tourism in Britain.

4. Cities

In modern society cities have become centers of economic activities. An introduction to cities can provide vistas of bygone days as well as information of the present social and economic conditions of a country. Britain has become an urbanized nation. About 3/4 of the population are living in cities and towns. London, the capital of both England and the United Kingdom, has a population of about 7 million. Greater London was created in 1965. It includes the City of London and 32 boroughs, and is governed by the Chairman of Greater London Council. The City of London is located at the centre of the metropolitan area and covers an area of 1.6 square kilometers. The city of London, managed by the Lord Mayor, serves as the financial centre of the country, where there is a concentration of banks, including the Bank of England, insurance companies and stock exchanges. The city of London and its 12 surrounding boroughs are referred to as Inner London, the remaining 20 boroughs Outer London. London was first built by the Romans as an advance base and a trading centre in the first century. It has developed from this small Roman town.

To the east of the city of London is the large area called the East End, which is the industrial area and the port of London. With houses for workers, this is the poorest quarter of London. To the