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英国 社会与文化

练习册

BRITAIN FOR LEARNERS OF ENGLISH WORKBOOK

James O'Driscoll



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Introduction

When people say and write things, they don't do it in a vacuum. They do it in a certain context. Part of this context is the knowledge they share with their listeners or readers. For example, in the twenty-first century, I don't need to explain the words 'television' and 'internet'. I can just use them and be confident that you know what I am referring to. But imagine trying to use them with a person from 200 years ago. You couldn't just use them and continue with what you were saying. You would have to stop and spend a long time trying to explain.

Television and internet are examples of the knowledge shared by just about everybody in the world in the twenty-first century. But most knowledge is more restricted. In order to understand what British people mean when they use language, therefore, it is very useful to have some knowledge of British objects, British society and British values. And if you want to understand texts produced specifically for British readers, it is especially important.

It is precisely this kind of knowledge that the *Britain Student's Book* is designed to give you. This workbook is designed to assist you in the process of acquiring it.

USING THIS BOOK

This book contains quizzes, exercises, and topics for discussion which both test and develop your knowledge of Britain. It also contains texts which give extra information about various aspects of British life. As you work through the exercises for these texts, you will sharpen your abilities in the English language and further your understanding of British culture at the same time. Each unit of this book corresponds to a chapter in the *Student's Book*, so in order to benefit from it fully, you should read that chapter first!

EXERCISE ONE

On page 6 is an adapted extract from the opening paragraphs of a book written by a well-known radio host and humorous writer in 2007.

1 Before you read it, here is a short glossary of words you might need.

brunch the name sometimes used for a meal eaten between the normal times for breakfast and lunch

hangover the bad feeling a person has in the morning after drinking a lot of alcohol the night before

pesto a sauce typically used with pasta

tripe the stomach and other internal parts of an animal, usually a cow

lard pig fat used in cooking

rivet to secure or fasten something with the use of nails and a hammer

dragon a mythical animal which breathes fire

2 Now read the text and try to understand as much as you can.

I was in my kitchen making a Sunday brunch for some hungover, very northern mates who were 'down' for the weekend. One of them was helping me out and asked, 'Where are the sun-dried tomatoes?'

'They're next to the cappuccino maker', I replied.

A terrible silence fell. Slowly, we turned to meet each other's gaze. We didn't say anything. We didn't need to. Each read the other's unspoken thoughts; we had changed. We had become the kind of people who had brunch on Sundays, passed around sections of the Sunday papers, the kind of people who had sun-dried tomatoes and cappuccino makers.

Southerners!

Now before readers from Aylesbury and Exeter throw this book in the bin, let me explain. I don't like thinking this way, like a Pict in an animal skin. I'd rather be cosmopolitan and display an easy confidence with pesto, fish knives and the Bakerloo Line. I have tried to change, really I have. I say 'book' with an 'uh' not an 'oooh'. (Though I draw the line at 'barth'.) And I do have a cappuccino maker and sun-dried tomatoes. But on some level, I feel it should be a plate of tripe and a pound of lard, the sort of food you want after a hard day digging coal or riveting steel plates – proper jobs, in fact, as opposed to tapping effeminately at a keyboard or talking to yourself in a radio studio.

This book is an attempt to rediscover both the north itself and my own inner northerner. Does the north still exist? What is it? Where does it begin and end and why does that two-hour journey from London to Manchester or Leeds still feel like crossing time zones, political borders and linguistic frontiers?

The north means the Lake Poets and Lindisfarne Island and at the same time sink estates and ASBOs. The north is big and complicated. Square metres of it are crowded, square miles of it are almost deserted. Surprisingly for an area so well-covered by CCTV, it still says 'Here Be Dragons' on the *Daily Telegraph* map of Britain.

(adapted from *Pies and Prejudice* by Stuart Maconie)

Using your reading skills and your knowledge of English words, you probably worked out (1) that this text is about the contrast between north and south, (2) that the differences are connected with, among other things, food, pronunciation, and jobs, and (3) that the writer is a northerner who feels uneasy about becoming a southerner. (Note: if you didn't work that out, go back and read the text again!)

But notice that this knowledge is not enough to understand the details of the text. This is because the writer uses a large number of culture-specific references.

- 3 Underline all the words and phrases in the text which seem to be specific to England or Britain (this is quite easy – they nearly all begin with a capital letter).
- 4 You can now find most of them in the index to *Britain*. Knowledge of these items will help you to understand the text better. For example, it helps to know that the Bakerloo Line is part of the London underground rail system, and that Manchester and Leeds are cities in the north of England.
- 5 But notice now that even knowledge about the identity of these British things is still not enough to understand the text fully. To do this, you need more general knowledge about British culture, so that you know what all these things mean to British people. Perhaps people in your country eat sun-dried tomatoes and tripe. But these things may have different associations in the minds of people in different countries. To understand this text fully, you need to know the associations that they carry in the minds of British people. (Chapters 3, 4, and 20 of *Britain* will help you with this text.)

- 6 Notice, therefore, that there are two kinds of vocabulary item for which you need cultural knowledge in order to understand fully:
- a culture-specific items such as 'Pict', 'Bakerloo Line', 'Leeds', and 'ASBO';
 - b items which are shared with your culture but which may have different associations in Britain, for example, pesto, Sunday newspapers and 'the north'.

EXERCISE TWO

Stories are always set in a particular place at a particular time.

Below are the opening paragraphs from two British novels.

- 1 Read them and see how much you understand.

Brian, watched by his mother, stood in the paddling-pool without becoming part of the fray. Thinking he needed fresh air from the bug-eaten back-to-backs of Albion Yard, Vera had put on their coats and led him up Wilford Road, meaning to save threeha'pence by walking in order to buy him an ice-cream cornet on the way. Maybe she'd even get a free ride back on a tram by saying Brian was under five and winking at the conductor. Harold would paste her if he knew, but then, what the eye don't see the heart don't grieve. When they reached the railway bridge, Brian clamoured to see a train drive underneath. Satisfied only when coughing smoke back at the loco-funnel, they walked as far as a boat on the Trent and cows by the far bank, then turned into the compound of grass-lawned paddling-pool already full of other kids and mams.

(adapted from *Key to the Door* by Alan Sillitoe)

Mr Sniggs, the Junior Dean, and Mr Postlethwaite, the Domestic Bursar, sat alone in Mr Sniggs's room overlooking the garden quad at Scone College. From the rooms of Sir Alastair Digby-Waine-Trumpington, two staircases away, came a confused roaring and breaking of glass. They alone of the senior members of Scone were at home that evening, for it was the night of the annual dinner of the Bollinger Club. The others were scattered over Boar's Hill and North Oxford at gay, contentious little parties, or at other senior common rooms, or at the meetings of learned societies, for the annual Bollinger dinner is a difficult time for those in authority.

(from *Decline and Fall* by Evelyn Waugh)

- 2 How many words and phrases can you find in these texts which demand cultural knowledge for their interpretation?
- 3 Both of these novels are set in the middle years of the twentieth century. What are the clues which allow the reader to understand this?
- 4 The first novel is set in a poor, working-class world in the north of England. What are the clues which allow the reader to understand this?
- 5 The second novel is set in the middle and upper class world of an Oxbridge college. What are the clues which allow the reader to understand this?

EXERCISE THREE

As with literature, so with journalism. Below are the front-page articles of a British newspaper on one day in 2008. How many culturally dependent allusions can you find in them?

MPs tell Brown to purge his Scots

Gordon Brown is under pressure to axe the so-called Scots mafia who dominate his cabinet and to promote 'English voices' into more high-profile roles.

Amid concerns that Labour is risking a landslide general election defeat, Brown is being urged to give key jobs to ministers who can reach out to middle-class voters in England's marginal seats.

The PM is braced for harsh scrutiny about his recent performance as Labour backbenchers return

to the Commons tomorrow for the first time since the disastrous Crewe by-election.

Keith Vaz, a member of Labour's ruling national executive committee and chairman of the Commons home affairs committee, called for Brown to appoint an English deputy PM.

This would mean an effective demotion for Alistair Darling, chancellor of the exchequer and a Scot, who has been accused of failing to understand the concerns of English taxpayers.

NHS scandal: dying cancer victim was forced to pay

A woman dying of cancer was denied free NHS treatment in her final months because she had paid privately for a drug to try and prolong her life.

Linda O'Boyle was told that as she had paid for private treatment she was banned from free NHS care. She is believed to have been the first

patient to die after fighting for the right to top up NHS treatment with a privately purchased cancer medicine that the health service refused to provide. News of her death has emerged as six other patients launch a legal action to trigger a test case that they hope would force the NHS to allow them to top up their care with private drugs.

Avast there! William to take on pirates of the Caribbean

Prince William is to go into action fighting the modern-day pirates of the Caribbean. He may be armed if he joins the Royal Navy boarding parties that stop cocaine traffickers trying to smuggle drugs in fast launches. The role is a consolation to the prince after he was banned from going to war in the Gulf with the Royal Navy because of fears his presence could provoke a terrorist attack on British ships. Similarly, Prince Harry was banned from joining his regiment – the Blues and Royals – in Iraq

in 2007 because it was considered too dangerous. He later served in Afghanistan in secrecy for ten weeks until his cover was blown by an influential American website and he was pulled out. Harry said during his deployment that William was 'a bit jealous' and had written to him to say how proud their mother, Diana, Princess of Wales, would have been of him for serving on the front line. The concerns about William are more acute, given his position as second in line to the throne.

01 Country and people

SECTION A Quiz

Choose the correct answer.

- 1 What is the common internet domain address for Britain?
 - A .br
 - B .gb
 - C .uk
- 2 Which of these is not an acceptable short name for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland?
 - A England
 - B Great Britain
 - C the United Kingdom
- 3 Which city is not in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland?
 - A Belfast
 - B Cardiff
 - C Dublin
- 4 Which is the smallest of the four nations?
 - A Ireland
 - B Scotland
 - C Wales
- 5 Which of the following figures is not associated with Britain?
 - A Britannia
 - B John Bull
 - C Uncle Sam
- 6 Which of the four nations' flags is not incorporated in the flag of the UK?
 - A Ireland
 - B Scotland
 - C Wales
- 7 By what name is the UK flag often known?
 - A The Britannia
 - B Old Glory
 - C The Union Jack
- 8 What proportion of the population of Britain lives in England?
 - A more than 80%
 - B about 60%
 - C less than 40%
- 9 What proportion of the population of Britain answered 'white British' to the ethnic group question in the 2001 census?
 - A more than 80%
 - B about 60%
 - C less than 40%
- 10 What is the largest minority ethnic grouping in Britain?
 - A African
 - B Caribbean
 - C south Asian
- 11 A surname beginning with 'Mac' or 'Mc' is understood to be ...
 - A ... Scottish or English.
 - B ... Scottish or Irish.
 - C ... Scottish or Welsh.
- 12 In which of the following does a 'Great Britain' team compete?
 - A cricket
 - B the Olympics
 - C rugby union
- 13 Historically and culturally speaking, which country may be divided into 'Lowland' and 'Highland'?
 - A England
 - B Scotland
 - C Wales
- 14 Of which country is St. David the patron saint?
 - A England
 - B Scotland
 - C Wales

SECTION B Summary

Put the following clauses and phrases into the correct order to complete a paragraph summarizing parts of chapter 1 of *Britain*. The first and last sentences are provided.

In the group of islands lying off the north-west European coast ...

- 1 Historically, it has also been the richest and most powerful.
 - 2 Many of these people feel British
 - 3 is never short of supporters
 - 4 which are often referred to as 'the four nations'.
 - 5 For both these reasons,
 - 6 whose roots lie in the Caribbean or in southern Asia.
 - 7 That is why the Pakistani or Indian cricket team,
 - 8 there are four recognized countries
 - 9 There are also millions of other people in England
 - 10 or the Irish football team
 - 11 England is by far the largest of these countries.
 - 12 many Scottish, Irish, and Welsh people live in England.
 - 13 but they do not feel especially English.
- ... when they are playing in England.

SECTION C British words and phrases

Find the word or phrase in chapter 1 of *Britain* which is used to mean or describe:

- 1 a platform used for public speaking and presenting prizes
- 2 the flag of England
- 3 a citizen of the UK
- 4 Britain or England, with the white cliffs of the south coast in mind
- 5 the umbrella organization for employees in the UK
- 6 the organization which controls the supply of money in the UK
- 7 the Caribbean, especially the English-speaking parts of it



SECTION D Extension

Read this text adapted from a report published on the internet in 2007 and answer the questions below.

Record numbers of people are leaving Britain at the same time as immigration is slowing down, according to figures from the Office of National Statistics. The UK has seen a huge influx of immigrants since the EU expanded in 2004, allowing citizens of former Eastern Bloc countries free movement of labour. Over 683,000 eastern Europeans, mostly Poles, have applied to work in Britain. When Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU in 2007, the UK government decided to impose restrictions on their citizens seeking to work in the UK and in the first half of that year, only 17,360 arrived.

The overall rate of immigration slowed

considerably after that. In the second quarter of 2007, applications fell to 50,000 – 6,000 lower than the same period in 2006. At the same time, figures released in August 2008 suggest that the boom in immigration from eastern Europe is not permanent. Some 16,000 people from eastern European states left the UK in 2007 after living here for more than a year.

Emigration is currently running at the highest rate since records began in 1991. In total 385,000 people quit the UK in 2007, as the trend was accelerated by a rise in foreigners returning to their home countries.

From: <http://jp.ecademy.com/module.php?mod=list&lid=76817>

- 1 According to this text, what were the trends in rates of immigration and emigration in 2007?
- 2 According to the text, what was the overall pattern of rates of immigration and emigration in the years 2004–2007?
- 3 From which country did most immigrants to Britain come from in 2004–2007?
- 4 What is one reason given in this text for the rise in emigration?

SECTION E Talking points

- 1 Why is it not possible to find an agreed name for the group of islands off the north-west coast of Europe? Which of the names suggested in *Britain* do you think would be the best? Can you think of any others?
- 2 Here is a puzzle: in 1991 UEFA, the governing body for football in Europe, briefly introduced a regulation which limited the number of foreign players who were allowed to play for a football club in European competitions. For example, an Italian club team could have only a certain number of players in it who were not Italian. Under these regulations, a famous player in the Liverpool team at that time, Ian Rush, was classified as 'foreign', even though he was born only twenty miles from Liverpool and had lived in the same area all his life. Can you explain why? Many people in England thought that this classification was ridiculous. Do you?
- 3 In the British government, there are ministers with special responsibility for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, but there is no minister for England. Why do you think this is?
- 4 Chapter 1 of *Britain* speaks of 'divisions' and 'crossovers' of national loyalties among the people of Britain. Does the same kind of thing occur in your country?

02 History

SECTION A Quiz

Choose the correct answer.

- 1 What is Stonehenge?
 - A a royal castle
 - B a prehistoric monument
 - C a historic document
- 2 What was Magna Carta?
 - A a royal castle
 - B a prehistoric monument
 - C a historic document
- 3 Where is Hadrian's Wall?
 - A in London
 - B in Edinburgh
 - C on the English-Scottish border
- 4 Who won the Civil War in the seventeenth century?
 - A the Cavaliers
 - B the Roundheads
 - C the Vikings
- 5 In what part of England is Wessex?
 - A the north-west
 - B the north-east
 - C the south-west
- 6 Which of these place names is of partly Roman origin?
 - A Birmingham
 - B Leeds
 - C Manchester
- 7 Which people settled in large numbers in Britain?
 - A the Anglo-Saxons
 - B the Normans
 - C the Romans
- 8 In which century was there a single parliament for the whole of Britain and Ireland?
 - A the seventeenth
 - B the eighteenth
 - C the nineteenth
- 9 In which century did England and Scotland first have the same monarch?
 - A the seventeenth
 - B the eighteenth
 - C the nineteenth
 - D the twentieth
- 10 In which century did England and Scotland first have the same parliament?
 - A the seventeenth
 - B the eighteenth
 - C the nineteenth
 - D the twentieth
- 11 Which century saw the greatest extent of the British empire?
 - A the seventeenth
 - B the eighteenth
 - C the nineteenth
 - D the twentieth
- 12 In which century was the last battle to be fought on British soil?
 - A the seventeenth
 - B the eighteenth
 - C the nineteenth
 - D the twentieth
- 13 In the middle of the twentieth century, a joke history book was published. It satirized the way history was taught in schools at that time, which typically involved the memorizing of lots of dates. What do you think its title was?
 - A *1066 And All That*
 - B *1328 And All That*
 - C *1492 And All That*
- 14 In the 1980s, the BBC compiled a computer video package of very detailed information about every place in Britain. It timed the publication to fall on a particular anniversary. In which year was it published?
 - A 1985
 - B 1986
 - C 1987

SECTION B Quiz on British monarchs

Answer the questions, using the letters from the box.
You will need to use some letters more than once.

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| A | Alfred |
| B | Arthur |
| C | Charles I |
| D | Elizabeth I |
| E | Henry II |
| F | Henry VIII |
| G | John |
| H | Victoria |

- 1 Who is famous for having six wives?
- 2 Who was executed after a formal trial?
- 3 Who is famous for burning some cakes?
- 4 Who is the longest-reigning monarch in British history so far?
- 5 Whose soldiers murdered the Archbishop of Canterbury?
- 6 Who was forced to sign the Magna Carta?
- 7 Who is famous for never having married?
- 8 Who is famous because of Camelot and the knights of the round table?
- 9 Who is often known as 'the Great'?
- 10 Who was the first head of the Church of England?



SECTION C British words and phrases

Find the word or phrase in chapter 2 of *Britain* which is used to mean or describe:

- 1 the record of all the people and things in his country compiled by William I ('the Conqueror')
- 2 the famous stories written by Geoffrey Chaucer
- 3 leave behind for your successors after you go or die (verb)
- 4 when a group of people refuse to work
- 5 a festival of Welsh music and poetry
- 6 being able to make or grow everything you need to live yourself
- 7 the phrase used by the poet Rudyard Kipling to describe the sense of moral obligation among British empire builders
- 8 women who campaigned for the right to vote in the early twentieth century
- 9 an area of land which used to be available for use by everybody in a village
- 10 the set of laws passed in the sixteenth century which took away the power of the Roman Catholic Church in England