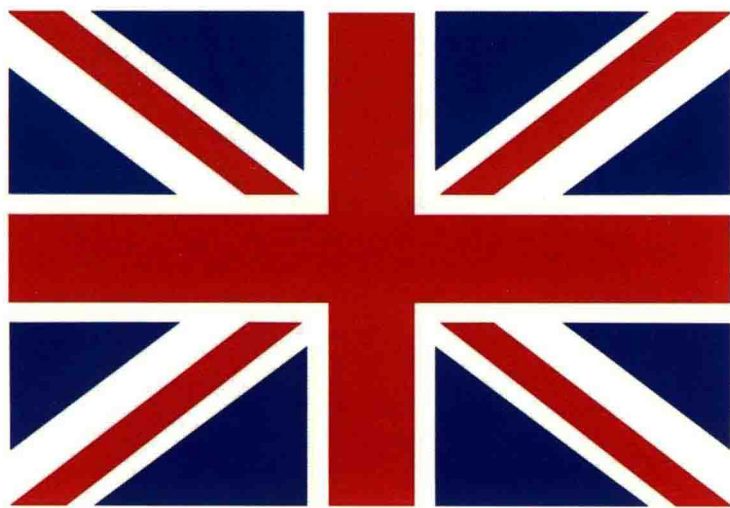


英语国家文化与生活 ③

This Is Great Britain

英国



出国留学英文版

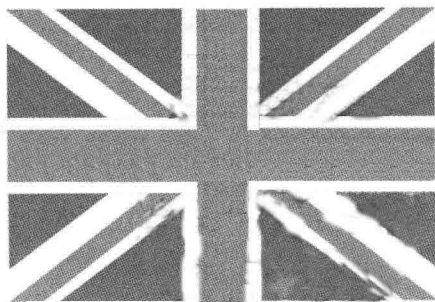
[加] 杰姬·盖伊 (Jackie Gay) / 著

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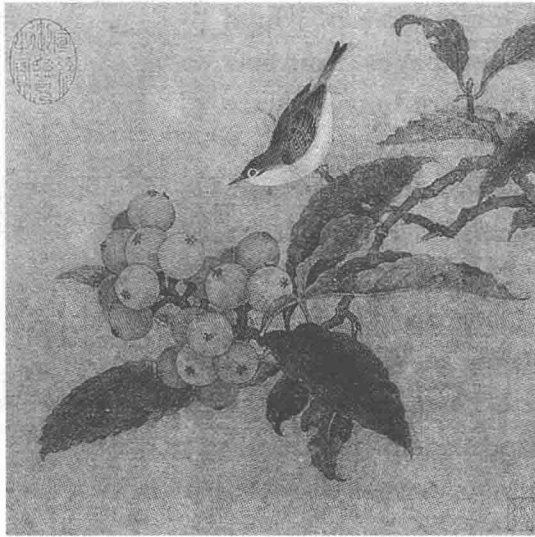
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Chapter 1

Who, Where, What Is the United Kingdom?



Introducing the United Kingdom



“Nín hǎo!” (“您好”)

Or as we say in here in the UK—“Hello!”—and welcome to this **unique** guide to the United Kingdom for Chinese learners of English.

In these pages you will learn **not only** the history, culture and language of the UK but also intriguing details of the people, places and hidden secrets of this ancient land in the modern world. In fact, you will be so **carried away** by the journey through place and time that you could almost forget that you’re practising your language skills at the same time.

So just in case you do... each chapter has a **glossary** and **vocabulary** (highlighted in bold), and practice activities and comprehension exercises are included in the text. These activities are designed to reinforce the practical information, practice English language skills and enhance cultural understanding.



This way you can show your teachers and parents that you really are doing your homework!

So... to get us started just where and what is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (to use its full name) **aka** Britain, GB, Great Britain and the UK?

Well, if you look closely at a map of Europe you will see a few islands off the northwest coast. Some say the biggest island looks like a face. Can you see it? In fact, many islands make up the United Kingdom—some of which we will visit in these pages. You may also know that there are four separate countries within the state: England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, all of which have their own history and culture, and in the case of the Welsh—their own language. “Bore da”—means good morning in Welsh. That’s it. No more Welsh language this is an ENGLISH language reader. **Phew!**



So, some statistics for the **nerds** amongst you...

The United Kingdom has an area of 243,000 km squared, making it the 80th-largest state in the world and the 11th-largest in Europe. Compared to China—at 9.6 million km squared—the UK is tiny, however it is highly populated with an estimated 64.1 million inhabitants. England—particularly the London area—is one of the most densely populated areas in the world.

The official language is English, spoken by 95% of the population. This makes it a very good idea to practice your English if you ever intend to visit! Other languages spoken include Welsh, Irish, Scottish Gaelic and Cornish; plus Bengali, Punjabi, Hindi and one which might surprise you: Polish. On the streets of Britain’s cities, you will hear many languages and meet people from all over the planet. As a centre of world trade and culture London is truly an international city, yet in corners of the UK you will find villages unchanged for centuries. This is a land of contrasts with deep historical roots and a sharp eye on the future.



So you think you know about the UK? Let's see how much you already know..

The Great Great Britain Quiz

1. What is the capital city of Great Britain?
 - a. London
 - b. Edinburgh
 - c. Cardiff
 - d. Belfast
2. What is the **national dish** of the UK?
 - a. Roast beef
 - b. Chicken Tikka Masala
 - c. Bacon Sandwich
 - d. Fish and Chips
3. What is the national sport of the UK?
 - a. Football
 - b. Soccer
 - c. Rugby
 - d. Cricket
4. What sea surrounds the UK?
 - a. The English Channel
 - b. The North Sea
 - c. The Irish Sea
 - d. The Atlantic Ocean
5. Who is not a member of the Royal Family?
 - a. Queen Elizabeth II
 - b. Prince Charles
 - c. Camilla Parker-Bowles
 - d. Ricky Tomlinson
 - e. Willow & Holly (the Corgi dogs)
6. Which of the following islands are part of the UK?
 - a. The Isle of Wight
 - b. Jersey
 - c. The Isle of Mann
 - d. Iona
 - e. The Shetland Islands



7. When were the Olympics held in the UK?
a. 2012 b. 1908 c. 1948
8. Which of the following are important symbols of Great Britain?
a. The Union Jack flag b. The British Bulldog
c. The corner shop d. Stonehenge
9. Which of the following British cities have a population of over 500,000?
a. Birmingham b. Leeds
c. Glasgow d. Sheffield
10. Which famous cars were designed and built in Britain?
a. The Mini b. The Rolls Royce
c. The Bentley d. The Land Rover

And the answers are... all of them!

If some of these answers (or even questions) are a little confusing, don't worry, your faithful guide to Great Britain will make everything—even the English language—**crystal clear!**



Bird's Eye Tour of the United Kingdom

What answer did you give to question 1 of the Great Great Britain Quiz?

The answer is that each of the countries of Great Britain has its own capital city, so the capital of England is London and that is where we will start our **Bird's Eye** tour of famous places in the UK.

Have you heard of any places in the UK? Which ones would you most like to visit? **Cross your fingers** and you may be lucky!

First we will take a tour of England. What do you think of when you close your eyes and think of England?

- The Royal Family?
- A red London bus?
- Football (soccer)—Manchester United, David Beckham?
- Historic castles and churches?
- Pop music and fashion?

Well, England is all these things and more. But let's start with some traditional **symbols** of England:



How many of these do you recognize? And why are they associated with England?

Don't forget the English flag: the cross of St George—a red cross on a white background. The flag of the United Kingdom is the Union Jack and combines the red cross of the Kingdom of England (which includes Wales) with the blue cross (**saltire**) of Scotland and the red saltire of St Patrick, to represent Ireland.

So, now for our tour, starting off in London.

A bird's eye tour is one taken from the sky above—imagine being in a low flying airplane with a zoom lens—and we will begin our tour at the Tower of London **in the hands** (or claws...) of one of





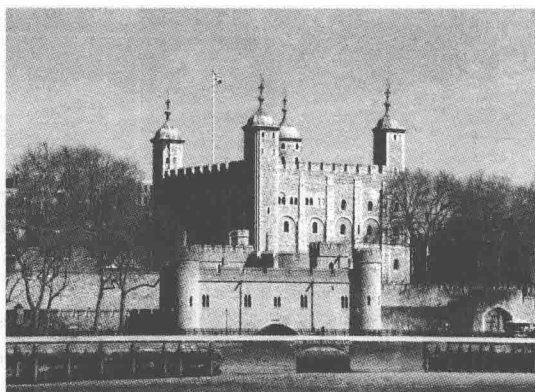
the famous **captive** ravens who live—and according to **legend**—protect the Tower and the British Crown.

Ravens are a wild bird in Britain, but according to **folklore**, ravens have lived at the tower for many centuries, attracted by the **corpses** of enemies of the Crown that were **executed** at the Tower. It was considered unlucky to kill a raven and after the Great Fire of London (see Chapter 2 for more information), King Charles II ordered six birds to be kept at the Tower.

After the Second World War only one raven survived the **Blitz** and so more were brought in. They are ‘soldiers of the Kingdom’ and can be dismissed for poor conduct.

So we’d better make sure we don’t **misbehave** on our tour with the Raven!

So, to the famous Tower of London. Close your eyes and imagine looking down on a stone building with four towers, one at each corner. What else might you see?



The Tower of London was founded in the year 1066 and sits on the bank of the River Thames. It was originally a royal residence and also served as a prison until 1952 (The **Kray Twins** were imprisoned there). It has also served as an **armoury**, a **treasury** and a **menagerie** and is presently home of the **Crown Jewels** of the United Kingdom.



Imagine yourself looking down at the jewels. Can you see them sparkling?

With the Raven’s eyes you can also see back in time to the past; when **traitors** were bought into the Tower through the Traitors’ Gate. Wild and exotic creatures were kept at the Tower for 600 years. In fact, the first

record of lions at the Tower is from 1210. These animals—from a polar bear who fished in the River Thames, to tigers, kangaroos and ostriches—were given as gifts to the crown and kept for the entertainment of the court. Visiting the wild animals at the Tower was a popular activity and the only way most people could see for themselves the creatures they had only heard about. This was before people had television, the internet or even books, so imagine their excitement when they could see a real wild animal.

After a series of attacks by the beasts (one girl lost her arm after stroking a lion's paw) the animals were removed to London Zoo in 1832. But you can still see the sculptures in the Tower grounds today. As a major tourist attraction, thousands of people visit the Tower every year. Can you see yourself there? The ravens can...

So where next, Raven?

How about the present home of the Kings and Queens of Great Britain (the **Royal Family**)? Like most Royals they have many homes and castles but in London they live in Buckingham Palace, a short flight up the river from the Tower of London.



Buckingham Palace is the official residence of the Queen of England, Queen Elizabeth II. It has 775 rooms—some of which have a Chinese theme—including 78 bathrooms and over 800 staff including clockmakers, flagmen and the famous guards that tourists come to watch every day.



The palace has its own post office, swimming pool, chapel and doctor's surgery.

Crowds often gather around the Palace for national celebrations such as the Queen's Jubilee in 2002. And the Palace **boasts** the most famous balcony in the world,



where the family gather for photographs following special occasions such as the wedding of Prince William to Kate Middleton.

Many famous people have been guests at the Palace over the years including the composer Mozart (when he was seven years old); writers Charles Dickens and Alfred Lord Tennyson; American President JF Kennedy; Mahatma Gandhi (who wore his **loin cloth** and sandals) and the first man on the moon Neil Armstrong.

In addition, every year more than 50,000 people visit as guests at the Queen's **banquets** and garden parties. The Palace is also open for tours every summer, and visitors can explore the rooms which are furnished **lavishly** with great treasures including paintings by Rembrandt and some of the finest furniture in the world.



Would the palace be on your list? Or perhaps you're more interested in **everyday** Londoners and what's happening on the streets? What about the other kings and queens of London, the Pearlyies?

The Pearly Kings and Queens are a **charitable** organization. They began in 19th century Victorian London when the street **traders** started **imitating** the rich people by decorating their clothes with buttons they had found in market areas. Henry Croft, a street-sweeper and rat catcher



took this a **step further** when he discovered a load of pearl buttons on the **mud banks** of the river Thames. He joined the street traders on their **fund raising** parades and was strongly influenced by their **philosophy** of giving to those in need even if you have little yourself. The tradition continues to this day with charity work, as well as spreading goodwill and **Cockney** cheer. A parade of **present-day** pearly Kings and Queens featured in the London 2012 Olympics opening ceremony.

Cockneys, Geordies & Scousers

People who were born in different parts of Great Britain have different names, the names refer to a place, a way of speaking and regional accent and sometimes an attitude towards life—the “cheerful, cheeky Cockney”. “Cockney” refers to Londoners, particularly working-class people from the East End of the city. Originally Cockney meant a city-dweller, but later came to mean “Bow Bell Cockneys, those born within earshot of Bow Bells, the bells of Mary-le-Bow church in Cheapside”.

See if you can find out where these other groups of people were born, and what characteristics they are associated with:

Scousers	
Brummies	
Geordies	
Mancunians	
Taffs	

“Hey,” says the Raven, “we’re still in London, remember, there’s still plenty to see here!”

Let me take you up the River Thames to the Houses of Parliament.



The Houses of Parliament sit right next to the river and are the home of the Government of the United Kingdom. It is also known as the House of Westminster—but by now you should understand that everything in the UK has more than one name! Originally a royal palace was here, however the Parliament of England has been meeting here since the 13th century. The present buildings were designed by Charles Barry in the gothic style after a fire **destroyed** the previous palaces.



Westminster is the centre of political life in Great Britain and the Elizabeth Tower or “Big Ben” has become a symbol of London and the political system of the UK, **parliamentary democracy**. In this system all adults can vote for who represents them in parliament.

During the Second World War the Houses of Parliament were attacked by German planes in the **Blitz**. The buildings were hit at least fourteen times and three people died. Even the Elizabeth Tower was hit and the glass was shattered. But the clock’s dials and bells were not affected and the great clock continued to keep accurate time.

Big Ben continued to ring! A **morale boost** for the country at war. Big Ben is the largest of the bells in the tower and you can hear it ring every hour as it has done since 1859.

Chapter 2 has more information about the Second World War in the UK.

There are many **traditions** associated with the Houses of Parliament. For examples loops of pink ribbon hang in the Members’ **Cloakroom**, where member had to leave their swords before entering the **debating chamber** (where no weapons are allowed). Hats must not be worn, nor military decorations; and speeches may not be read out (although members can refer to notes).



Where else can the Raven take us, as he **spirals** upwards from the tower of Big Ben?

Well, you might have noticed a red London bus on the bridge across the river—another symbol of London. We could **hop on** one of the **open-top** buses for a drive through the city? At Piccadilly Circus you’ll see the hustle and bustle of the shopping and entertainment districts; at Trafalgar Square are famous museums and statues, including Nelson’s column reaching high into the sky. You may also have heard

of the four **plinths** that form the bases for statues of the famous and powerful. The fourth plinth was empty for 150 years until the year 2000 when a series of modern art works were **commissioned** for the plinth. What do you think of this one, for example, from 2012?

Named “Powerless Structures”, it was intended to show the “heroism of growing up”. Interesting, in contrast to Lord Nelson on his column, don’t you think?

Perhaps you’re more interested in Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre—**reconstructed** on the original site on the banks of the Thames in Southwark? The new building shows the theatre as it would have been in Shakespeare’s time: there are no electric lights or sound, all music is live and the actors and audience can see each other just as they would have done in the 16th century. Quite an experience! But best enjoyed with a **good command** of the English language... so keep reading...



“But what about the modern age?” I hear you say. London is known as the centre of the “**swinging sixties**” and is full of interesting places in popular culture such as Abbey Road where the Beatles recorded all of their albums in the studios of the same name. People



come to Abbey Road from all over the world to try and re-create the moment when the Beatles walked across the **zebra-crossing** and into the record books, changing pop culture forever. Why not do it for yourself?

Or how about a train ride to **Hogwarts**, leaving from platform 9 and three quarters?

At King’s Cross railway station, you photograph yourself pushing the trolley into Wizard World. Fans of **Harry Potter** will know exactly what I mean!

Some of you may be interested in a visit to one of the most **well-**



known addresses in London—221B Baker St. What building could it be? **Elementary my dear Watson**, it's the residence of Britain's most famous detective Sherlock Holmes, and now the home of the Sherlock Holmes museum with **wax** figures of characters from the stories and Holmes's famous study where he worked on his **deductions**. We'll see a lot more of Sherlock Holmes in Chapter 2 of this book when he will take us back in time with his special magnifying glass to look at the history of Britain.

“But listen,” says the Raven. London isn't just famous for history, or buildings, or famous writers and politicians. Or even pop culture, theatres and music venues. What about the two things most young people are most interested in... yes I'm talking about **SHOPPING** and **SPORT**!



Quick! To Oxford Street, home of famous shops such as Selfridges, Harrods and Marks & Spencer. Oxford Street **hosts** the **flagship stores** of these companies and the street is busy all year round with shoppers from all over the world.

But there is only one place that the young people of the world want to be and that is **TOP SHOP**. **Advertised** as “one of the most fashionable shops in the world”—the Oxford Circus store has three floors of fashion, **catwalk**-inspired looks and designer collections. At good prices! There's something for everyone at Top Shop, and that's a promise from the Raven.



Save some of your money for London's markets—there are so many of them! Camden Lock market is the original **arts and crafts** market for London and is a great day out—especially if the weather is good and you can eat outside next to the **canal** and **people-watch** as tourists and locals

