

UK
USA

英美背景

RICHARD
MUSMAN

4

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(附中文注释)

R. 穆斯曼 著

刘又本 注释

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内 容 简 介

本书为介绍英美背景知识的中级英语读物，用英国英语编写。为便于读者阅读，特对书中的难词、难句加上中文注释，附在书末。

本书共 12 个单元，24 篇短文。全书通过英美两国人民互访介绍了对美国和英国各方面的印象，如两种语言、两种生活方式、城市生活、饮食习惯、交通、污染、闲暇出游、种族关系等。每篇短文后均附有英美词汇对照表和多种练习。是一本很好的英语读物。可供高中生、大学低年级学生以及赴英美留学、访问或进修的人员使用。

UK/USA

R.Musman

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Introduction

The Americans remained predominantly British for two and a half centuries — from the founding of the first colony in Virginia in 1607 until the arrival of the great flood of immigrants from central and eastern Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century. Today fewer than 45% of Americans are of British origin. Yet there are still strong cultural links between the UK and the USA and some Americans still call Britain the 'Mother Country'. Most British visitors find it as easy to get on with Americans as Americans do with the British. The differences between the American and the British way of life are accepted with great good humour, and the Americans and the British do not usually regard each other as foreigners. One of the aims of this book is to illustrate this pleasant relationship.

The common language is of course one of the strongest links of all, although somebody predicted not long ago that before the year 2000 there would be two separate languages. American English was changing so fast, he said, that the two peoples would no longer be able to communicate without the help of dictionary or interpreter. This prophet forgot to take into account films and television.

The multitude of American TV serials and films have provided excellent publicity for Americanisms. When the British use 'hopefully' instead of 'I hope', or 'There you go!' instead of 'Here you are!', they are without realising it talking American. But there is a basic unchanging English language spoken and written on both sides of the Atlantic, and in all parts of the English speaking world.

This book is written in British English, but every opportunity is taken to show how British and American English differ, not only in vocabulary but also in accent, stress and spelling. Words and phrases which in 1985 have already begun their invasion of the UK have been included in the lists of Americanisms, but there are other American phrases which have been a part of British English for so long that they are to be found in the Oxford English Dictionary.

Facts and figures

These underline some of the important differences between the UK and the USA as they are today. The USA is a huge country with a very large population, but with vast areas of uninhabited mountains, forests, deserts and prairies. The UK, a group of islands, is one of the most crowded nations in the world. But the UK means the United Kingdom of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. England is the most densely populated part of the UK, while Scotland is very sparsely inhabited and has areas of mountain and moorland where no one lives at all. Of the 50 US states, ten are larger than the whole of the UK.

The largest, Alaska, is five times as large, but has a population of only 350,000.


It is hoped that students will use the Facts and figures to make comparisons with their own countries.

Faces and places

Is there a British or an American type? Frequently you can only tell who is British and who is American by the way they dress and behave. Look at the photos on the Faces and places page and see if you can decide.

Photopages

Photographs play an important role in this book. The photopages, which wherever possible are arranged in themes, are provided with questions. Try to answer them before looking at the captions.

All the photos in the book can be used for discussion. The many photos of signs and notices which bear the symbol  are intended for use as a basis for interpreting or explanation, either in the student's own language, or in English, or if desired as translation practice.

The photographs give glimpses of the UK and USA which will, it is hoped, open up broader vistas beyond.



All photographs in this book, unless otherwise acknowledged, are by the author.

American adviser Diana Krone

Facts and figures

	UK	USA
Population	56,000,000 (England 46,000,000 Wales 3,000,000 Scotland 5,000,000 Northern Ireland 1,500,000)	230,000,000
Density of population	230 per sq km (England and Wales 326 Scotland 66)	24 per sq km
Population growth rate	0.3%	5.3%
Expectation of life (at birth)	69 (men) 75 (women)	69.5 (men) 77 (women)
Number of students at university	400,000	7,000,000
Number of students at institutes of higher education	400,000 (approximate)	4,000,000 (approximate)
Percentage of govt expenditure on education	14%	17%
Telephones per 100 inhabitants	48	79
Television per 1000 inhabitants	400	650
Radio receivers per 1000 inhabitants	930	2000
Average sunshine May to Sept.	6.1 hours (England & Wales) 5.2 hours (Scotland)	

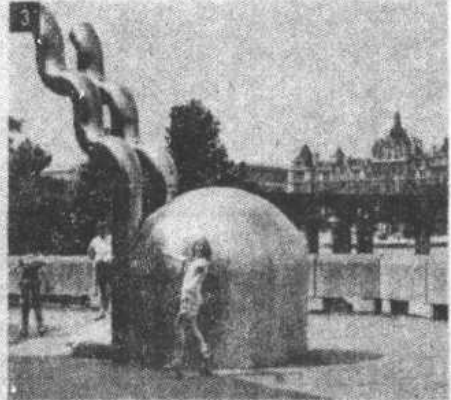
Faces and places



3, 4, 7, 9, 10



1, 2, 5, 6, 8



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Unit 1

Some common differences

1 Two languages

Liz, a graduate at the University of Wales, was going to spend a year at the University of Massachusetts studying economics. She had been invited to stay with the Van Dyke family, who had been recommended by a friend. Alex, the eldest son, met her at the airport and drove her home, where Mrs Van Dyke was waiting at the door.

'Welcome to America, Liz!'

They shook hands.

'How do you do, Mrs Van Dyke?'

'Just call me "Mary",' Mrs Van Dyke said.

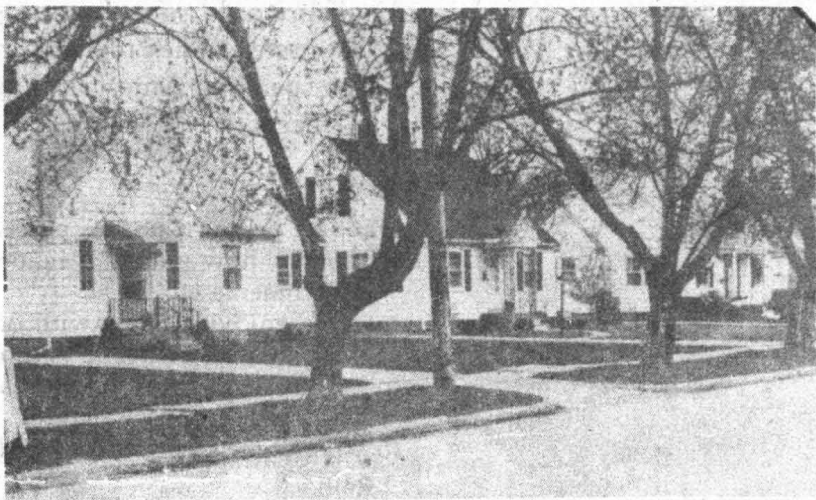
Liz looked round her. 'Oh, what a lovely road!'

The road stretched in a straight line as far as the distant highway. It was lined with trees and all the houses were built of wood and painted white.

'Your front gardens haven't got any hedges or walls between them.'

'We call them front *yards* over here, Liz! No, our front yards belong more to the street as a whole. We're more sociable than you are. We drop in on each other. You like to be more private.

"An Englishman's home is his castle!" Isn't that right, Liz?'



'Oh, what a lovely road!'

'Well, yes and no. I'm afraid we're becoming more and more American!'

'Come on in!' Mrs Van Dyke said. 'I'll show you your room so you can wash up.'

Alex laughed. 'She doesn't mean "do the dishes". She means "wash your hands".'

'I'll just get my luggage from the boot', said Liz. 'Is it unlocked?'

Alex roared with laughter. 'That's really great! Excuse me, Liz! I'm not correcting you. It's just that "boot" seems so funny to us. We call it "trunk", and we say "baggage", not "luggage"! Go on up with Ma. I'll get your suitcases.'

Mary Van Dyke pointed to the door opposite Liz's room. 'That's the bathroom, and the shower is next door. Alex tells me that many English people would rather take a bath than a shower. I'm afraid our bathtub is very small . . . Well, now you know where everything is, I'll leave you in peace.'

At that moment Alex arrived with Liz's two suitcases. 'You look worried,' he said. 'What's the matter?'

'Well, your mother didn't tell me where the loo, I mean toilet, is.'

'Did she tell you where the bathroom is?'

'Yes.'

'That's one of the words we use for toilet. You can call it "the toilet" if you prefer — or "the WC". We don't have bathrooms in the English style. Most of us prefer showers, and I must warn you, Liz, our showers are pretty powerful. They sting! I heard Ma say "take a bath". You say: "have a bath", don't you?'

'Yes, we have a bath in a bath!'

'Crazy language!' he said, dropping her suitcases in her room. 'The closets are all empty. Know what I mean?'

'Yes, cupboards!' Liz answered with a laugh. 'I read somewhere not long ago,' she went on, 'that British English and American English would soon be two separate languages.'

'Nonsense!' Alex replied. 'In another ten years, you British will all be speaking American English. But I hope you don't change your accent!'

Glossary

graduate person who has passed his/her final university exam
economics how money is made and spent by businessmen, governments etc

sociable enjoying being with other people

to drop in visit someone without warning

to correct tell someone who has made a mistake what he/she should have done, said etc

to sting some insects sting (eg bees, scorpions), causing a sudden pain

British and American English



garden, (yard or backyard is where dustbins are kept)	yard
(dustbin)	(garbage can)
wash your hands	wash up
wash up, do or wash the dishes	do the dishes
sorry!	excuse me!
boot	trunk
luggage	baggage
have a bath (or shower)	take a bath (or shower)
bath	bathtub
loo, toilet, WC, lavatory	bathroom, toilet, WC
mad ('crazy' also used)	crazy

A A letter^c

Rewrite Liz's letter in British English. American English words and phrases are underlined.

Dear Mum,

You've no idea how difficult it is to understand, sometimes. For instance, I'll tell you in American what I did on my first day with the Van Dykes. First of all Mrs Van Dyke showed me my room and the bathroom while Alex carried up my baggage from the trunk. I unpacked and put away my things in the closet, after which I washed up. Mrs Van Dyke asked me which I'd rather do in the morning, take a bath or a shower. The bathtub is so small I said I'd rather take a shower. After supper I helped do the dishes, and then I went and stood in the front yard and looked down the street. There were no hedges ...

B Either/or

Example Is Liz a child or a young woman? *She's a young woman.*

Does she travel by air or by boat? *She travels by air.*

- 1 Is Liz a graduate of an American or a British university?
- 2 Does Alex or Mrs Van Dyke meet her at the airport?
- 3 Do the British or the Americans use their yards for garbage cans?
- 4 Who understands Liz's language difficulties best: Alex or his mother?
- 5 What are American showers like?
- 6 Is there just one accent in your country, or several?

C Different scenery (UK)

You show a friend a photo of the Scottish Highlands where you hiked the year before. Either (a) tell the story to the class or (b) write it in a letter. Keep to the information given below.

You point to mention the dark clouds on the mountain tops and explain that it rains a lot in the Scottish Highlands. There are sometimes mists which can make hiking quite dangerous in Scotland. You tell your friend how you were once caught in a mist high up in the mountains and dared not move because of the many cliffs. You had to spend the night on the mountains and were rescued, cold, wet and hungry, by the Mountain Rescue Team.



D Different scenery (USA)

Look at the photo of the Texas desert. Explain why it would be unwise to hike across the desert in July or August. Use the following notes.

Hot sun. No streams or water. Look at the cacti. Cacti store water. Why do they? No rain. Temperature sometimes above 43°C. Is there any shade? A tree or a rock? Hikers carry plenty of water. Danger of thirst and when hot, dehydration (drying up of water in your body). Dehydration kills very quickly. If you must go, always tell a Ranger (National Park policeman and guide) where you are going.

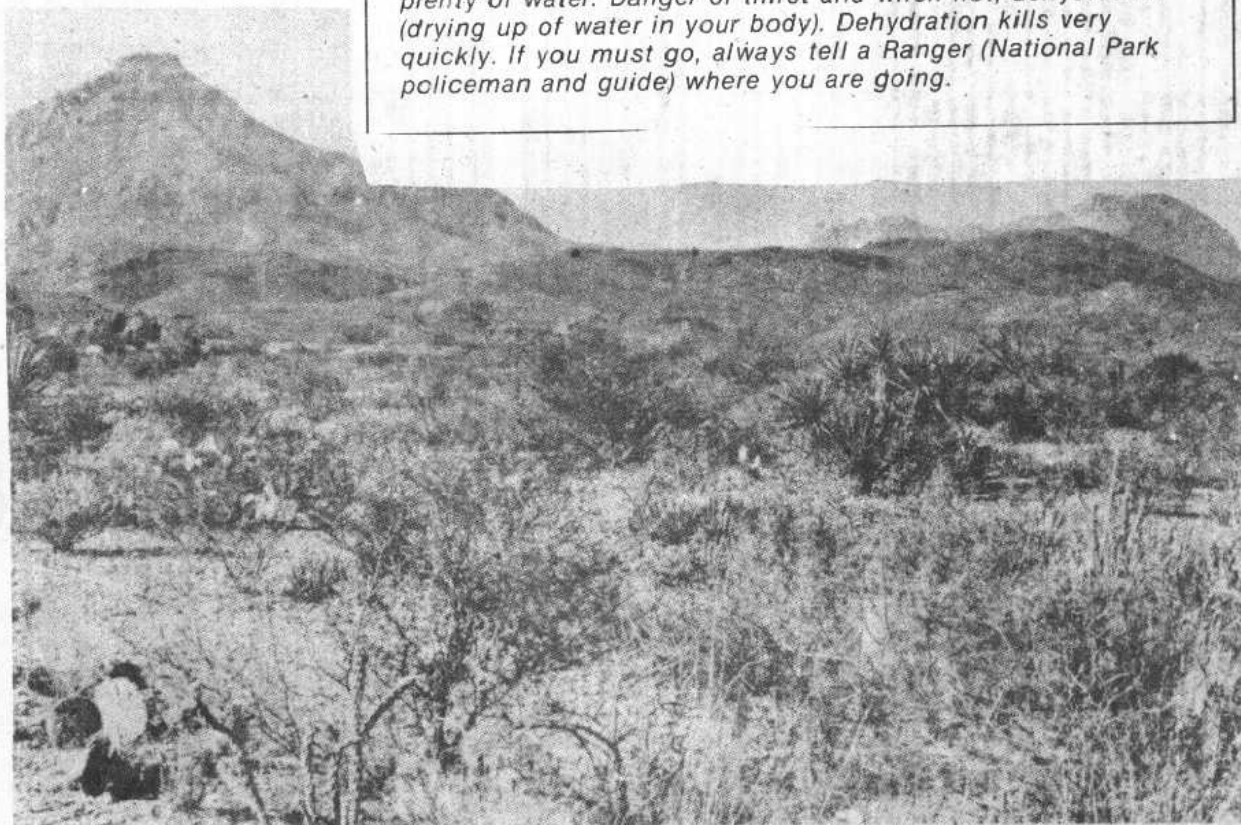
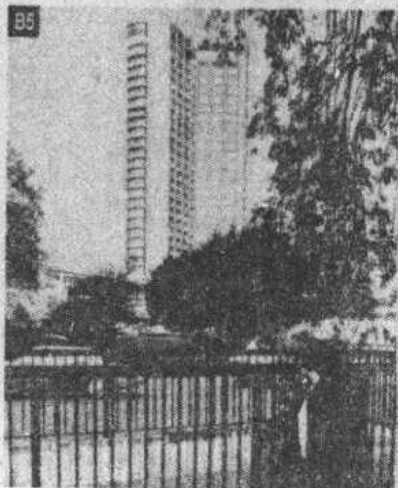


PHOTO PAGE

- (a) Which do you prefer, a garden which gives you privacy or one without a hedge or fence? (A)
- (b) Some buildings in America look English and some in England look American. Can you explain why? (B)



- A**
- 1 This English family loves privacy.
 - 2 One way of cutting a tall hedge.
 - 3 Even small gardens have hedges or walls.
This is a street in the suburbs of a Yorkshire city.

- B**
- 1 This English cottage is about 400 years old.
 - 2 Old house in Hampstead (London).
 - 3 Eighteenth-century colonial buildings in Boston, USA.
 - 4 A stand in London selling American hamburgers.
 - 5 An American-style hotel in London.

2 Two ways of life

The average American is happier in his job than the British worker. He earns higher wages and pays less tax, and he usually gets on well with his boss. The cost of living is lower than in the UK. Some British workers suspect their bosses of deceiving them, of trying to make them work harder without a fair wage.

Britain is a welfare state. The USA is not. The Americans as a whole do not believe in government interference. They feel that it is a sign of weakness if a person is unable to succeed in life. Many Americans know little about the miserable backgrounds that make it impossible for some of the poor to climb the social ladder. The US government, however, has introduced a form of welfare. Government food stamps protect the poor against starvation, and free medical and hospital treatment looks after them when they are ill. But there are millions of people not protected by this welfare, people who are unable or unwilling to pay enough to insurance companies to cover all the doctors' and hospital bills.

The British National Health Service serves rich and poor alike. Many rich people prefer to go to private hospitals where they can have private rooms, but they get no better attention than they would in a National Health hospital.

There is much to criticise in the British welfare state. There are shocking housing problems. People with serious illnesses have to wait far too long for a hospital bed. But there is always an angry outcry if any part of the welfare state is threatened.

It has always been the custom of Americans, rich and poor alike, to send their children to a public school. As teenagers these children attend the neighbourhood high school. Except in some poor districts of big cities, the relationship between teachers and students is good and students of all backgrounds mix well. The discipline is not strict. In many parts of the USA the private schools are not as good as the public schools.

About 90% of British teenagers go to a state school of one kind or another, of which the comprehensive is the most common.

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Comprehensive schools take children of all abilities and backgrounds from the age of 12 to 18. (Children have to stay at school until 16 in both the UK and the USA.) But many middle-class parents dislike their children mixing with the poorer classes. So if they can afford it they send their children to an independent or private school, of which they have a large choice. There are the independent grammar schools, whose fees are comparatively low and teaching standards high. And at the top of the list there are the famous public schools, which are completely independent of the state and which cost between £3000 and £6000 a year. They are the schools which once educated the rulers of the British Empire.

Imagine Sir Luke Piggot-Smith, MP. He would not dream of sending his son to the local comprehensive. The boy might pick up some nasty habits! There are about 400 public schools, which educate less than 1% of the school population. In the days of the British Empire this 1% held all the important posts throughout the colonies. Many of the older public school men are unashamed snobs and still believe that a public school education can give a man powers of leadership, but their children are now questioning their parents' values.

public

Glossary

welfare state country which provides help and care free of charge for those who need it
starvation death by hunger
discipline making people do what they are told
fee (here) what a school charges
snob person who does not want to mix with people of a lower class

British and American English



ill ('sick' also used, but 'to be sick' usually means 'to vomit' or bring up your food)

sick

criticise

criticize

neighbourhood,; neighbour

neighborhood,; neighbor

student (*pronounced* 'st-ew-dent')

student (*pronounced* 'st-oo-dent')

public schools

In the USA — and in Scotland — 'public' has its proper meaning, ie the schools are for the use of everyone (up to college) and are free. In England 'public schools' are completely independent of the state. Some are several hundred years old and were 'public' when they first appeared.

A Right or wrong?

Choose the most suitable of the following answers:

Yes, I think so.
Yes, that's right.
I honestly don't know
No, that's definitely wrong.
That's nonsense!
I don't think so.
Yes, I'm sure there are.

- 1 American workers lead a better life than British workers.
- 2 The USA is a welfare state which gives free hospital beds to everyone.
- 3 There are a lot of poor people in the USA.
- 4 The Americans are worse snobs than the British.
- 5 High schools are built on the highest point in the neighbourhood.
- 6 Caning is good for naughty children.
- 7 The British public schools do not help class relationships.