

1. What was the British Empire? What do you know about it? In what way is the “Empire” still felt in Britain and in the international field?

The British Empire comprised the dominions, colonies, protectorates, mandates, and other territories ruled or administered by the United Kingdom, that had originated with the overseas colonies and trading posts established by England in the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

In the international field, Britain has great voice in politics, economy and culture and so on.

2.

Why impossible to sum up British people with a few simple phrases: The UK is made up of different elements. It includes 4 parts within the one nation-state. It is now a multiracial society with different religion believes. It is divided economically and it is a society with a class-structure. And within each of the four countries there are different regions. Since this country was so complicated both in history or humanity, it is impossible to sum up their people.

3.

A history of invasions: (1) Before the 1st century AD Britain was made up of tribal kindoms of Celtic people. They brought the central European culture to Britain. Then in 43AD, Roman Empire invaded Britain and controlled it for slave society but also disseminated their Catholicism. (2)However, in the 5th century, the Roman Empire rapidly waned in power and Britain was conquered by the Angles and the Saxons. In order to defend the Saxons, a great leader—King Arthur appeared. He created the "round table" to satisfy all the knights' requirement of having equal precedence. Thus it gradually formed the monarchy in Britain as a more democratic system. Whether Arthur's a real person in the history or not, Anglo-Saxons did succeed in invading Britain and they were the forefathers of the English. (3)In the 8th century, the Vikings from Denmark controlled the nothern and eastern England. A Anglo-Saxon herio, king Alfred the Great fought against the vikings with the truly English. And that's why there's a certain cultural difference between northerners and southerners in England (4)Later, the Nomans from northern France, under the leading of William of Normandy, killed the king and William became the Frist of England. They imported a rulling class that French-speaking Norman aristocracy rulled Saxon and English-speaking population. In this condition, there weren't a lot of rebellions among the English people. That directly formed an English unique character: a richly unconventional interior life hidden by an external conformity. Even today, we can still find this personality from the British people through their lifestyles.

How did they influence culture:[接着上边一起看] (2) a lot of stories of King Arthur, which brought a lot of singers, poets, novelists and filmmakers. Places associated with his legend. Round table was seen as an indicator of the way in which the English have wished to see their monarch as something other than a remote dictator. (3) Anglo-Saxon invaders were the forefathers of the English. By Vikings' settlements the English heroes were truly English. There remains to this day a certain cultural divide between northerners and southerners in England. (4) Norman aristocracy ruling a largely Saxon and English-speaking population. the legend of Robin Hood.

4.

General characteristic of Scotland: Scotland is the second largest of the four nations, both in population and in geographical area. It is also the most confident of its own identity because alone amongst the non-English components of the UK it has previously spent a substantial period of history as a unified state independent of the UK. (1) rugged. (2) not conquered by the Romans (3) maintain its separate political identity for more than a hundred years. (4) eager for independence.

How Scotland became part of the union of Great Britain: in 1707 by agreement of the English and Scottish parliaments, Scotland joined the Union. In 1745 there was a brutal military response from the British army. The rebel army was destroyed at the battle of Culloden in northern Scotland.

5.

Describe Wales and the unification with Britain: (1) wales was an important element in Britain's industrial revolution, as it had rich coal deposits. It is successful in attracting investment from abroad. Wales has been dominated by England for longer than the other nations of the union. Despite this nearness and long-standing political integration Wales retains a powerful sense of its difference from England. (2)Wales has been dominated by England for longer than the other nations of the union. Despite this nearness and long-standing political integration Wales retains a powerful sense of its difference from England. In 1536, wales was brought legally, administratively, and politically into the UK by an act of the British parliament. This close long-standing relationship means that modern wales lacks some of the outward signs of difference which Scotland possesses --- its legal system and its education system are exactly the same as in England.

6.

Differences between England, Scotland and Wales in terms of cultural tradition:

[书上说的比较散，建议参考 festival 那章的答案，这里只有一些零散的不系统的比较] (1) English character: a richly unconventional interior life hidden by an external conformity. But young people are not all stereotypes. But it is certainly true that the lifeless fronts of many English houses conceal beautiful back gardens. (2) The dream of an independent Scotland has not vanished. They are always eager for freedom. Scotland has a great tradition of innovation in the arts, philosophy and science. "Superficially fully integrated into the UK, but concealed beneath this is a still-strong Scottish identity." Some people speak Gaelic. (3) Wales is different, and one of the key markers of that difference is the Welsh language -- the old British Celtic tongue which is still in daily use. Modern Wales lacks some of the outward signs of difference which Scotland possesses. (its legal system and education system are exactly the same as in England)

Unit 2

1.

Why is Northern Ireland so significant in the UK: Though Northern Ireland is small it is significant because of the political troubles there.

Its political problem: The problem is in Northern Ireland in 1921 in southern Ireland independence from Britain, Ireland North and South following the separation of issues left over by history, mixed it with historical, political, ethnic and religious conflicts, extremely complex. Ireland's independence, to remain under British rule within the framework of the 6 in the northern island of Ireland residents of the pro-British Protestant majority (about 51%), the Catholic nationalist minority (about 38%), as a result of the two major forces in Northern Ireland On the contrary position of ownership and lead to confrontation, conflict. [因为发现实在太难 sum up 了, 所以就搜了一下, 以下是 wikipedia 版本] Northern Ireland was for many years the site of a violent and bitter ethno-political conflict — the Troubles — which was caused by divisions between nationalists, who are predominantly Roman Catholic

, and unionists, who are predominantly Protestant. Unionists want Northern Ireland to remain as a part of the United Kingdom,^[6] while nationalists wish for it to be politically reunited with the rest of Ireland, independent of British rule. [网络其它版本]Until 1921 the full name of the UK was "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland", not only "Northern Ireland", because the whole island of Ireland was politically integrated with Great Britain, and had been since 1801, while Britain's domination of the Irish dated back centuries even before that date. But Irish desires for an independent Irish state were never lost, and one of the key issues in late nineteenth century British politics was a campaign in parliament for what was called "home-rule"—Irish political control of Irish affairs. The Home Rule Bill was finally passed in 1914, but the process was overtaken by the First World War and was suspended for the duration of the war.

2.

Factors in Irish and English history that affect the situation in Northern Ireland today: Along with the political campaign for home-rule there were groups who followed a more direct method of pursuing Irish independence, engaging in guerilla or terrorist activities against British institutions and the British military forces. During the First World War and immediately after, this activity increased, sometimes brutally suppressed by British forces.

3.

Sum up solutions to NI's political problems of different parties and groups in the UK: Margaret Thatcher's government did not give in to this demand for political status and 11 prisoners starved to death. This event revitalised the political campaign of Sinn Fein, the legal political party which supports the IRA's right to fight. Its leaders spoke of a twin campaign for union with Ireland, both political and military, which they called the policy of "The Bullet and the Ballot Box".

4.

What do you think should be the right solution to the political problem in Northern Ireland: I think they can ask the UN for help. / Keep the present status.
Turn to other countries for help. [自由发挥啦]

Unit 3

1.

Characteristics of the British constitutional monarchy: The monarch of the country has limited rights because of Bill of Right. For example, while the official head of state is the queen, her powers are largely traditional and symbolic. The government at national and local levels is elected by the people and governs according to British constitutional principles.

How the English monarchy evolved to present constitutional monarchy:

Originally the power of the monarch was largely derived from the ancient doctrine of the "divine right of kings". For a thousand years Britain has had a hereditary king or queen as the head of the state. While the King in theory had God on his side, in practice even in medieval times it was thought that he should not exercise absolute power. King John was unwilling to receive advice from prominent men, which led battles between the king and other powerful groups. Finally the king granted them a charter, named Magna Carta, of liberty and political rights. The civil war

2.

The civil war was rooted in a dispute over the power of the king vis-a-vis Parliament. James I and his successor Charles I both insisted on their divine right as kings. They felt Parliament had no real political right to exist, but only existed because the king allowed it to do so. It was the effort to reassert the rights of parliament that led to the civil war.

English Revolution: "English Revolution" has been used to describe two different events in English history. The first was the Glorious Revolution of 1688, whereby James II was replaced by William III and Mary II as monarch and a constitutional monarchy established, was described by Whig historians as the English Revolution.[1]

In the twentieth-century, however, Marxist historians used the term "English Revolution" to describe the period of the English Civil Wars and Commonwealth period (1640-1660), in which Parliament challenged King Charles I's authority, engaged in civil conflict against his forces, and executed him in 1649. This was followed by a ten-year period of bourgeois republican government, the "Commonwealth", before monarchy was restored in the shape of Charles' son, Charles II, in 1660.

3.

History of English parliament: Traditionally, when medieval kings wanted to raise money he would try to persuade the Great Council, a gathering of leading, wealthy barons which the kings summoned several times a year. Later kings found this group was so small that they could not make ends meet. So they widened the Great Council to include representatives of counties, cities and towns and get them to contribute. It was in this way that the Great Council came to include the House of Lords(who were summoned) and the House of Commons(representatives of communities).

What role did the parliament play in the Civil War: Since James I and Charles I both thought that Parliament didn't need to exist, the Parliament was enraged. Leading politicians and church authorities asked William of Orange to replace them two. In 1689 Parliament passed the bill of Rights which ensured that the King would never be able to ignore Parliament.

4.

Characteristics of British constitution: Unlike many nations, Britain has no core constitutional documents.

Contents: Statute laws(laws passed by Parliament); the common laws(laws which have been established through common practice in the courts); and conventions(rules and practices which do not exist legally but are nevertheless regarded as vital to the workings of government).

5.

Why parliament is supreme: because it alone has the power to change the terms of the Constitution. There are no legal restraints upon Parliament.

Parliament's function: First, it passes laws. Second, it provides the means of carrying on the work of government by voting for taxation. Third, it scrutinises government policy, administration and expenditure. Fourth, it debates the major issues of the day.

Queen/King's role: To symbolise the tradition and unity of the British state. To represent Britain at home and broad. To set standards of good citizenship and family life. She is legally head of the executive, an integral part of the legislature, head of the judiciary, commander in chief of the armed forces and "supreme governor" of the Church of England.

PM's role: The Prime Minister is the leader of the political party which wins the most seats in a general election. He/She chose usually around 20 MPs to become government ministers in the Cabinet. Together they carry out the functions of policy-making, the coordination of government departments and the supreme control of government.

6.

The House of Lords: It was below the Queen, consisting of the Lords Spiritual (who are the Archbishops and most prominent bishops of the Church of England) and the Lords Temporal (which refers to those lords who either have inherited the seat from their forefathers or they have been appointed). The lords mainly represent themselves instead of the interests of the public. It is the upper house of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, the United Kingdom's national legislature. It maintains the relationship with government, debates legislation and has some power to amend or reject bills (has some legislative functions).

Unit 4

1.

Anyone who is eligible to vote can stand as an MP. It is necessary only to make a deposit of 500 pounds.

Why small parties and independent candidates powerless: Voters will see it as a wasted vote because even if they were to win the seat they would be powerless in parliament against the big parties' representatives. Voting them will prevent the voters from contributing to the competition between the big parties as to which of them will form a government.

2.

Three big parties in the UK: the Labour party, the Conservative party, the Liberal Democrats.

Similarities: Since Conservative began to have a "fartherly" sense of obligation to the less fortunate in society, they didn't dismantle principles the Labour set up. That indicates that thus the difference between the Labour and Conservative is one of degree, not an absolute.

Dissimilarities: (1) Labour is a socialist party. They believe a society should be relatively equal in economic terms and that part of the role of government is to act as a "redistributive" agent. They think government should provide a range of public services, therefore high taxes. (2) Conservative is the party that spent most time in power. They are seen as the party of the individual, protecting

individual's right to acquire wealth and to spend it how they choose, therefore low taxes. (3) Liberal Democrats is a party of the "middle", occupying the ideological ground between the two main parties. They are comparatively flexible and pragmatic in their balance of the individual and the social.

3.

Recent political trends [注意下一小问]: (1) Conservatives won the election under their leader Margaret Thatcher in the 1970s. During that time the economy did badly, with high inflation and low growth. (2) she dismissed being "fartherly", encourages entrepreneurship. One of the major policies was the privatisazion of nationalised industry. (3)part of the mechanism of change was a less redistributive taxation system. Tax rate were cut to allow people to keep more of what they earned.

Author's opinion: The 1980s have seen British politics move to the "right", away from the "pulic" and toward the "private"; away from the "social", and toward the "individual", and all parties have had to adjust to those changes.

4.

How people are divided into different classes: (1) employment: manual(or blue-collar) workers usually call themselves working-class, and office(or white-collar) workers would usually call themselves middle-class. (2) cultural differences: like what newspaper they read. Working-class often read THE SUN, a newspaper with little hard news and more about soap operas, royal family and sports. Middle-class often read THE GUARDIAN, a larger newspaper with longer stories, covering national and international events. (3) education: private school or public school. (4) the UK has also retained a hereditary aristocracy. (5) the way they speak.

Compare with the US and China: not similar at all. The UK has also retained a hereditary aristocracy. Among the students at the private schools attended by the upper-middle-class above would be a thin scattering of aristocratic children, who will inherit titles like baronets. This is due to Britain's different history and convention.

Unit 5

1.

Absolute decline means recession, developing in a minus speed.

Relative decline means that although the UK improved, other countries developed more rapidly than the UK, which made it slid from being the second largest economy to being the sixth.

Reasons: (1) The UK had gone into debt after WWII. (2) Britain spent a higher proportion of its national wealth on the military than most of its competitors. (Joining NATO and UN Security Council) (3)The era of empire was over. Former colonial countries announced independence, leaving Britain as a medium-size European country. (4)Britain's industry survived comparatively unaffected, but its competitors did not. So the competitors invested in modern equipment and new products while British industry still continue with older ones. (5) Low rates of investment. The UK lacks a close relationship between industry and banks due to its history. A low rate of domestic industrial investment coupled with a very high rate of overseas investment.

2.

What did the conservative party under Mrs. Thatcher promise to do to the UK national economy in 1979:

A radical programme of reform.

What was her radical reform programme: Bureaucracy was reduced, (foreign exchange controls were lifted, rules governing banks loosened, for example). Throughout the 1980s an extensive programme of privatisation was carried out.

Was it successful: It seemed in some ways to be successful in that inflation came under control, and business made profits. The negative aspect was a rapid increase in unemployment. The national economy as a whole continued to grow at lower rates than its competitors.

3.

Main areas in national economies: Primary industries such as agriculture, fishing and mining; secondary industries which manufacture complex goods from those primary products; tertiary/service industries such as banking, insurance, tourism and the retailing.

Development of each: (1) agricultural sector is small but efficient. Energy production is an important part of the UK economy. (2) in the secondary sector, manufacturing industry remains important, producing 22% of national wealth. (3) tertiary or service industries produce 65% of national wealth.

4.

Why relatively shrinking of the important secondary industry and a spectacular growth in tertiary or service industries: A lot of the tertiary or service industries is domestic activity, accounting for about 10% of the world's exports of such services. 70% of the UK's workforce are employed in the service sector.

Compare tertiary industries in China in the past 20 years or so: Chinese tertiary industries didn't grow as fast as the UK, though the portion was increasing.

How is this growth related to the reform and opening up to the outside world: China was famous for the name of "world factory", which means Chinese workforces can produce products at low paid. China is a developing country, experiencing the transfer of manufacturing is reasonable. However, as China is developing, wages of workforces are also increasing. Comparing to India, we may lose our "advantage" gradually.

Unit 6

1.

Why Geoffrey Chaucer's work written in Middle English can still read and studied today: It is notable for its diversity, both in the range of social types amongst the 31 pilgrims, and the range in style of the stories they tell.

2.

Do you think Elizabethan Drama occupies a significant position in British literature: Yes. Elizabethan drama, and Shakespeare in particular, is considered to be among the earliest work to display a "modern" perception of the world: full of moral doubts and political insecurities, where the right of those who wield power to do so is put in question.

The most important figure in Elizabethan Drama: William Shakespeare

Some of his well-known plays: (tragedies) Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth; (comedies) The Taming of the Shrew, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Twelfth Night, the Tempest; (history plays) Richard III, Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V j Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra.

3.

Some of the features of Romantic Literature: writers of romantic literature are more concerned with imagination and feeling than with the power of reason.

4.

Modernism: it refers to a form of literature mainly written before WWII. It is characterized by a high degree of experimentation. It can be seen as a reaction against the 19th century forms of Realism. Modernist writers express the difficulty they see in understanding and communicating how the world works. Often they seem disorganized, hard to understand. It often portrays the action from the viewpoint of a single confused individual, rather than from the viewpoint of an all-knowing impersonal narrator outside the action.

Postmodernism: After WWII. Postmodernist can be thought of as abandoning the search of buried meaning below confusing surfaces.

Examples to illustrate: (modernist) Virginia Woolf "Mrs.Dalloway""to the Lighthouse""Orlando"; D.H.Lawrence "Sons and Lovers" and E.M.Forster "a Passage to India"; (postmodernist)George Orwell "1984", John Fowles "the French Lieutenant's woman"

Book I Unit 7, British Education System

1. What are the purposes of the British education system? Please comment on these purposes. What are the main purposes of the Chinese education system? Are there any differences or similarities in the education of the two nations?

Schools in Britain do not just teach the students 3 Rs, (reading, writing and arithmetic), but to provide children with literacy and the other basic skills they will need to become active members of society.

2. How does the British education system reflect social class?

Firstly, in Britain, the school you attend can refer to your social status.

And the school tie is a clear marker of social class,

3. What are the major changes that have taken place since World War II? Is British education moving towards more progress or more equality? Pick up some examples from the text to illustrate your points.

- 1) The old education system has disrupted due to the war. So with the help of the church and newly powerful trade unions began to reconstruct a new education system.
- 2) The new system emphasizes equality. 1944 education act made entry to secondary schools and universities meritocratic. Children would be able admitted to schools not because they were of a certain social class or because their parents possessed a certain amount of money, but because of the abilities they displayed. All children were given right to a free secondary education and the main concern was to make sure more children had access to a good education.
- 3) 1989, a national curriculum was introduced by the government.

4. Why does the author say that universities in Britain have rather elitist?

Most students in British universities are from the middle classes, attend good schools, perform well in their A-levels and receive a fully-funded place in a university. And when they graduate, they can become very influential in banking, the media, the arts, education or even the government.

5. What is the Open University in Britain? What do you think of this system?

The opening university offers a non-traditional route for people to take university level courses and receive a university degree. People can register without having any formal educational qualifications. They follow university courses through textbooks, TV and radio broadcasts, correspondence, videos, residential schools and a network of study centre.

I think the system has been quite successful. Thanks to the system, tens of thousands of Britons, from various statuses attend the Open University each year. And this has improve the equality in Britain's high education.

Unit 8 British Foreign Relations

1. What and how did the British Empire end? How did the Britain react to this reality? How did the end of British imperialism influence the psychology of the British and the making of Britain's foreign policy?

- 1) After the World War II the British could no longer afford to maintain its empire; while Britain had won the war, it had paid a terrible price in terms of lives and in terms of economic destruction. And the British realized that countries should be granted the independence and left to run their own affairs. People and territory should not just be treated as a source of economic resources for the ruling centers of commerce in Europe.

- 2) Many people are still alive who can remember when Britain was one of the most powerful and rich nations on earth. It is sometimes hard to think about Britain as it really is today.
- 3) Because Britain lost its empire so recently, british policy makers frequently forget that Britain is not as influential as it used to be in world affairs. Historians argue that the British foreign policy makers retain very conservative and traditional views of Britain's role as a world power and point to many major foreign policy decisions as examples.

2. What are the foundations of Britain's foreign policy?

It is greatly influenced by its imperial history and also by its geopolitical traits.

Britain's imperial history made the policy maker very conservative and traditional.

And its geopolitical traits created a sense of psychological isolation in its inhabitants. And as Britain is an island state, it naturally developed as a nation of seafarers who roamed the globe looking for territory and economic opportunities.

3. How is Britain's foreign policy made? Does the government's foreign policy represent the desires of British citizen?

- 1) The prime minister and cabinet decide on the general direction of Britain's foreign policy. The main government department involved is of course the foreign and commonwealth office but many other government ministries also play a part in formulating and executing the government's decisions.
- 2) Since Britain is a parliamentary democracy, the government's foreign policy in theory represented the desires of its electorate, but in fact British citizens are more concerned about issues closer to home. On the whole, they are not very inclined to try to influence the direction of Britain's foreign policy. There are a number of different interest groups however, and it is interesting that rare occurrences of civil disobedience in the UK often involve foreign policy issues.

4. Why does the author say that the decision to join the EC was and remains controversial in Britain?

- 1) It is an important psychological decision for the nation because traditionally Britain had looked beyond its European neighbors feeling that really it had more in common with the United States on the one hand and the commonwealth on the other. To many Britons, membership in the European community meant turning its back on these "old friends".

- 2) In fact, it is natural for Britain to join the EC. For British economic, political and military interests were already bounded up with other European countries.
- 3) At the center of the controversy is that it is not clear what the EU is and what it will become. The UK is interested in free trade between countries but the UK has always been less enthusiastic about giving up its national sovereignty.
- 4) Briton are happy to have other European countries as trading partners, they are reluctant to think about them as fellow citizen belonging to the same state.

5. Why does the author think that Britain has a “special relationship” with the United States? Does this relationship still exist?

- 1) The two were closely allied during World War II. They continue to work together closely in the post war years. They shared many of the same worries about Soviet Union.
- 2) Today, British and American policy makers agree generally on many respects.
- 3) They had gone through ups and downs.

4) England is an outpost of an American- ^{可编辑修改} dominated military bloc.

6. What was the purpose of establishing the NATO in the author's opinion? Do you agree with him? Explain your point.

The purpose of NATO is to protect member states against aggression to provide a foundation for security in Europe, and to provide a forum for transatlantic defense cooperation.

Unit 10 Sports, Holidays and Festivals in Britain

1. Find some examples from the text to demonstrate how Christian church has influenced the sports and leisure activities of the British?

One example is how Sunday----- the day of the week when everyone traditionally went to Church---is still the day that most people have off in the UK.

2. Why is cricket very English? Why does the author believe that cricket was associated with a set of English values?

1) Cricket was one of the very first team sports in Britain to have organized rules and to be played according to the same rules nationally. The sport was played by Britons from all walks of life originally. But since 19th century, cricket became a sport associated with the upper class. It's kind of a "snob" game played by boys who attended public schools. It also became popular in places where the public school system was adopted. So ,all these can explain why is cricket very English.

2) As generations of public school boys grew up to become the civil servants and rulers of the UK and its colonies, cricket became associated with a set of moral values, in particular the idea of “fair play” which characterized British government.

3. How do the British celebrate Christmas? In what way does this holiday and the ways of celebration in Britain reflect western cultural tradition in general and British traditions in particular?

Western cultural tradition: Britain celebrates Christmas according to some “Christian” tradition such as decorating the house with ever-green plants like holly and ivy, or kissing under a twig of mistletoe. And they also exchange gifts and Christmas cards on that day as well as prepare holiday foods, decorate homes and workplaces with colored lights, Christmas trees and ornaments.

Britain traditions in particular: there are three Christmas traditions which are particularly British: one is the Christmas pantomime, a comical musical play. The second is to hear the Queen give her Christmas message to her realm over the television and radio. The third is Boxing Day in which shops nowadays open up to sell off all their Christmas stock decorations at low prices.

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