

The Republic of Uzbekistan
The Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education
Navoi Mining Institute
Energy Mechanical Faculty
“Foreign Languages” chair

Abstract on the theme:
Great Britain

Done by: 8-09 MEM group Abisheva Rayxan
Checked by: Energy Mechanical Faculty
“Foreign Languages” chair of teacher Bazarova Umida

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Анатация

Ушбу реферат инглиз тилида Буюк Британия ҳақида маълумот олмоқчи бўлганларга мўлжалланган бўлиб, бундан Буюк Британиянинг анъаналари, спорти, ўқитиш тизими, байрамлари ҳақида кенг маълумот олишлари мумкин. Бундан мактаб ўқувчилари, талабалар, магистрантлар фойдаланиши мумкин.

Настоящее реферат представляет собой практическое руководство по подготовке к сдаче вступительного экзамена по английскому языку. Предназначено для широкого круга лиц, осуществляющих подготовку с помощью преподавателя или самостоятельно, а также для учеников школ и студентов, магистров.

THEME: GREAT BRITAIN

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THEME: GREAT BRITAIN

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland occupies territory of the British Isles which are situated to the north-west of Europe. They consist of two main islands: Great Britain and Ireland. England is in the south of the island of Great Britain, Scotland is in the north and Wales is in the west. Northern Ireland is situated in the north-eastern part of Ireland. Its western coast is washed by the Atlantic Ocean. In the east the island of Great Britain is washed by the North Sea. The Irish Sea, the North Channel and the St. George's Channel separate Ireland from Great Britain. Great Britain is separated from France by the English Channel, which is 32 km wide in its narrowest part. In everyday speech "Great Britain" is used to mean the UK.

The climate of Britain is usually described as cool, temperate and humid. As the weather changes with a wind, and Britain is visited by winds from different parts of the world, the most characteristic feature of Britain's weather is its variability. Summers are not hot and winters are not cold in Britain. The snow never lies for long on the ground. As a rule there is no ice on the waters of rivers and lakes. So we may say that the British climate has 3 main features: it is mild, humid and changeable. That means that it's never too hot or too warm. Weather changes very often.

English is the official, but not the only language used in the country.

Britain has been many centuries in the making. The Romans conquered most part of Britain, but were unable to subdue the fiercely independent tribes in the West and in the North. Further waves of invaders followed: Angels, Saxons, Jutes, Vikings and Normans. All these contributed to the mixture we call English. For many centuries this country was known simply as England. It had a strong army and navy. It waged numerous colonial wars. England, once the "work shop of the world", was the first to become a highly industrial country.

There are no big rivers in Great Britain. The biggest are Severn and Thames. The Severn in England is the longest river. It is 350 kilometers long. It flows south – west into the Irish Sea. There are a lot of mountains in Great Britain, but they are not high. The highest mountain - Ben Nevis - is in Scotland. The flora of the British Isles is much varied and the fauna is similar to that of the north-west of Europe. The country is not very rich in natural resources but there were suffice for the Industrial Revolution to start.

LONDON

London is the capital of the Great Britain.

It was founded by the Romans. It is very old city. It is two thousand years old. London is only the capital of the country; it is also a huge port.

London is situated upon both banks of the Thames. There are 17 bridges across the river. The population of London is over 8 million people.

London has got three parts of London, the West End, and the East End. The City of London is the oldest part of London. You can see narrow streets and pavements there. There are many offices, films and banks in this part of London. The City of London is the financial centre of the Great Britain.

The West End is the centre of London. There are many sights in the West End. They are many, for example, the Houses of Parliament with Big Ben. It is interesting that the clock “Big Ben” came into service in 1859. Big Ben is biggest clock bell in Britain. It weight 13.5 tons.

The other interesting place is Westminster Abbey, which was founded in 1050. It is situated in the centre of London. Many great Englishmen were buried in the Abbey: Newton, Darwin and others.

The official London residence of the Queen is Buckingham Palace. It was built in the 18th century. There are many nice squares in London. Trafalgar Square is one of them and it is in the centre of West End. One can see a statue of Lord Nelson in the middle of this square.

There are many museums, libraries and galleries in London. The Gallery is one of the well – known galleries in London. Henry Tate was a sugar manufacturer. He was found of paintings and collected many pictures.

The British Museum is a very interesting place in London. It was founded in 1753. The library of this museum has a lot of books.

The East End of London is the district for the working people. There are many factories, workshops, docks there. There are many cars and buses in London. There is a tube (an underground) in London, too. It is a nice one.

One can say that the City is the money of London, the West End is the goods of London, the East End is the hands of London.

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Great Britain is highly industrialized, this was the country in which the earliest developments of modern industry.

The Great Britain is a parliamentary monarchy. A parliament is the group of people who make the laws of their country. British laws are made in the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The main political parties in Great Britain are the Conservative, Labor, Liberal and Social – Democratic Parties.

The largest cities of Great Britain besides London are: Birmingham, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Bristol, Leeds, and Edinburgh. The most important seaports are: London, Liverpool, Belfast, Glasgow and Cardiff.

Education in Great Britain

The British education system has much in common with that in Europe, that :

- **Full-time education is compulsory for all children in the middle teenage years.** Parents are required by law to see that their children receive full-time education, at school or elsewhere, between the ages of 5 and 16 in England, Scotland and Wales 4 and 16 in Northern Ireland.

- **The academic year begins at the end of summer.** **Compulsory education is free charge, though parents may choose a private school and spend their money on education their children.** About 93% of pupils receive free education from public funds, while the others attend independent schools financed by fees paid by parents.
- **There are three stages of schooling** with children, moving from primary school to secondary school. The third stage provides further and higher education, technical college of higher education and universities.

There is, however, quite a lot that distinguishes education in Britain from the way it works in other countries. The most important distinguishing features are the lack of uniformity and comparatively little central control. There are three separate government departments managing education: the Department for Education and Employment is responsible for England and Wales alone; Scotland and Northern Ireland retain control over the education within their respective countries. None of these bodies exercises much control over the details does not prescribe a detailed program of learning, books and materials to be used, nor does it dictate the exact hours of the school day, the exact days of holidays, school's finance management and such like. As many details possible are left to the discretion of the individual institution.

Many distinctive characteristics of British education can be ascribed at least partly, to public school tradition. The present-day level of "grass-root" independence as well as different approach to education has been greatly influenced by the philosophy that a school is its own community. The 19th century public schools educated the sons of the upper and upper-middle classes and the main aim of schooling was to prepare young men to take up positions in the higher ranks of the army, the Church, to fill top-jobs in business, the legal profession, the civil service and politics. To meet this aim the emphasis was made on "character-building" and the development of "team spirit" rather than on academic achievement.

Such schools were (and still often are) mainly boarding establishments, so they had a deep and lasting influence on their pupils, consequently, public-school leaves for formed a closed group entry into which was difficult, the ruling elite the core of the Establishment.

The 20th century brought education and its possibilities for social advancement within everybody's reach, and new, state schools naturally tended to copy the features of the public schools. So today, in typically British fashion, learning for its own sake, rather than for any practical purpose is still given a high value. As distinct from most other countries, a relatively stronger emphasis is on the quality of person that education produces rather than helping people to develop useful knowledge and skills. In other words, the general style of teaching is to develop understanding rather than acquiring factual knowledge and learning to apply this knowledge to specific tasks.

Public Schools – For Whom?

About five per cent of children are educated privately in what is rather confusingly called public schools. These are the schools for the privileged. There are about 500 public schools in England and Wales most of them single-sex. About half of them are for girls.

The schools, such as Eton, Harrow, Rugby and Winchester, are famous for their ability to lay the foundation of a successful future by giving their pupils self-confidence, the right accent, a good academic background and, perhaps most important of all, the right friends and contacts. People who went to one of the public schools never call themselves school-leaves. They talk about “the old school tie” and “the old boy network”. They are just old boys or old girls. The fees are high and only very rich families can afford to pay so much. Public schools educate the ruling class of England. One such school is Jordon-stone, which the Prince of Wales, the elder son of the Queen, left in 1968. Harrow School is famous as the place where Winston Churchill was educated, as well as six other Prime Ministers of England, the poet Lord Byron, the playwright Richard Sheridan and many other prominent people.

Public schools are free from state control. They are independent. Most of them are boarding schools. The education is of a high quality; the discipline is very strict. The system of education is the same: the most able go ahead.

These schools accept pupils from preparatory schools at about 11 or 13 years of age usually on the basis of an examination, known as Common Entrance. There are three sittings of Common Entrance every year in February, June and November. Scholarships are rarely awarded on the results of Common Entrance. The fundamental requirements are very high. At 18 most public school-leaves, gain entry to universities.

Schooling.

Great Britain does not have a written constitution, so there are no constitutional provisions for education. The system of education is determined by the National Education Acts.

Schools in England are supported from public funds paid to the local education authorities. These local education authorities are responsible for organizing the schools in their areas.

Let's outline the basic features of public education in Britain. Firstly, there are wide variations between one part of the country and another. For most educational purposes England and Wales are treated as one unit, though the system in Wales is a little different from that of England. Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own education systems.

Secondly, education in Britain mirrors the country's social system: it is class-divided and selective. The first division is between those who pay and those who do not pay. The majority of schools in Britain are supported by public funds and the education provided is free. They are maintained schools, but there are also

a considerable number of public schools. Parents have to pay fees to send their children to these schools. The fees are high. As matter of fact, only very rich families can send their children to public schools. In some parts of Britain they still keep the old system of grammar schools, which are selective. But most secondary schools in Britain, which are called comprehensive schools, are not selective – you don't have to pass an exam to go there.

Another important feature of schooling in Britain is the variety of opportunities offered to schoolchildren. The English school syllabus is divided into Arts and Sciences, which determine the division of the secondary school pupils into study groups: a Science pupil will study Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Economics, Technical Drawing, Biology, geography; an Art pupil will do English Language and Literature, History, foreign languages, Music, Art, Drama. Besides these subjects they must do some general education subjects like Physical Education, Home Economics for girls, and Technical subjects for boys, General Science. Computers play an important part in education. The system of options exists in all kinds of secondary schools.

The National Curriculum, which was introduced in 1988, sets out detail the subjects that children should study and the levels of achievement they should reach by the ages of 7, 11, 14, and 16, when they are tested. Until that year headmasters and headmistresses of schools were given a great deal of freedom in deciding what subjects to teach and how to do it in their schools so that there was really no central, control at all over individual schools. The National Curriculum does not apply in Scotland, where each school decides what subjects it will teach.

After the age of 16 a growing number of school students are staying on at school, some until 18 or 19, the age of entry into higher education in universities, Polytechnics or colleges. Schools in Britain provide careers guidance. A specially trained person called careers advisor or careers officer helps school students to decide what job they want to do and how they can achieve it.

British university courses are rather short, generally lasting for 3 years. The cost of education depends on the college or university and special which one chooses.

Education in Britain.

class	school	age
	nursery school	3
	playgroup or kindergarten	4
reception class		5
year 1	infant school	6
year 2		7
year 3	primary school	8

year 4	junior school	9
year 5		10
year 6		11
year 7	secondary school	12
year 8		13
year 9		14
year 10		15
year 11		16
year 12	sixth form college	17
year 13		18
first year (fresher)	University or Polytechnic	19
second year		20
third/final year		21
postgraduate	University	23

Pre-primary and Primary Education.

In some of England there are nursery schools for children under 5 years of age. Some children between two and five receive education in nursery classes or in infants' classes in primary schools. Many children attend informal pre-school playgroups organized by parents in private homes. Nursery schools are staffed with teachers and students in training. There are all kinds of toys to keep the children busy from 9 o'clock in the morning till 4 o'clock in the afternoon while their parents are at work. Here the babies play, lunch and sleep. They can run about and play in safety with someone keeping an eye on them.

For day nurseries, which remain open all the year round, the parents pay according to their income. The local education authority's nurseries are free. But only about three children in 100 can go to them: there aren't enough places and the waiting lists are rather long.

Most children start school at five in primary school. A primary school may be divided into two parts-infants and juniors. At infants school reading, writing and arithmetic are taught for about 20 minutes a day during the first year, gradually increasing to about 2 hours in their last year. There is usually no written timetable. Much time is spent in modeling from clay or drawing, reading or singing.

By the time children are ready for the junior school they will be able to read and write, do simple addition and subtraction of numbers.

At seven children go on from the infants' school to the junior school. This marks the transition from play to "real work". The children have set periods of arithmetic, reading and composition which are all Eleven Plus subjects. History, Geography, Nature Study, Art and Music, Physical Education, Swimming are also on the timetable.

Pupils are streamed, according to their ability to learn into, A, B, C and D streams. The least gifted are in the D stream. Formerly towards the end of their fourth year the pupils wrote their Eleven

Plus Examination. The hated 11 + examination was a selective procedure on which not only the pupil's future schooling but their future careers depended. The abolition of selection at Eleven plus Examination brought to life comprehensive schools where pupils can get secondary education.

Secondary Education.

The majority of state secondary school pupils in England and Wales attend comprehensive schools. These largely take pupils without reference to ability or aptitude and provide a wide range of secondary education for all or most children in a district. Schools take those, who are the 11 to 18 age-range, middle schools (8 to 14), and schools with an age-range from 11 to 16. Most other state-educated children in England attend grammar or secondary modern schools, to which they are allocated after selection procedures at the age of 11.

Before 1965 a selective system of secondary education existed in England. Under that system a child of 11 had to take an exam, which consisted of intelligence tests covering linguistic, mathematical and general knowledge which was to be taken by children in the last year of primary schooling. The object was to select between academic and non-academic children. Those who did well in the examination went to a grammar school, while those who failed went to a secondary modern school and technical college. Grammar schools prepared children for national examinations such as the GCE at O level and A-level. These examinations qualified children for the better jobs, and for entry higher education and the professions. The education in secondary modern schools was based on practical schooling, which would allow entry into a variety of skilled and unskilled jobs.

Many people complained that it was wrong for a person's future to be decided at a so young age. The children who went to "secondary moderns" were seen as "failures". More over, it was noticed that the children who passed this exam were almost all from middle-class families. The Labor Party, returned to power in 1965, abolished the 11+ and tried to introduce the non-selective education system in the form of "comprehensive" schools, that would provide schooling for children of all ability levels and from all social backgrounds, ideally under one roof. The final choice between selective and non-selective schooling, though, was left to LEAS that controlled the provision of school education in the country. Some authorities decided for comprehensive, while others retained grammar schools and secondary moderns.

In the late 1980s the Conservative government introduced another major change. Schools could now decide whether to remain as LEA-maintained schools or to "opt-out" of the control of the LEA and put themselves directly under the control of the government department. These "grant-maintained" schools were financed directly by central government. This did not mean, however, that there was more central control: grant-maintained schools did not have to ask anybody else about how to spend their money.

A recent development in education administration in England and Wales in the School Standards and Framework Act passed in July 1998. The Act established that from 1.09.1999 all state school education authorities with the ending of the separate category of grant maintained status.

There are some grant-maintained or voluntary aided schools, called City Technology Colleges. In 1999 there were 15 City Technology Colleges in England. These are non-fee-paying independent secondary schools created by a partnership of government and private sector sponsors. The promoters own or lease the schools, employ teachers and make substantial contributions to the costs of building and equipment. The colleges teach the NC, but with an emphasis on mathematics, technology and science.

So, today three types of state schools mainly provide secondary education: secondary modern schools grammar schools and comprehensive schools. There should also be mentioned another type of schools, called specialist schools. The specialist school programmer in England was launched in 1993. Specialist schools are state secondary schools specializing in technology, science and mathematics; modern foreign languages; sports; arts.

State schools are absolutely free (including all textbooks and exercise books) and generally co-educational.

Under the NC a greater emphasis at the secondary level is laid on science and technology. Accordingly, ten subjects have to be studied: English, history, geography, mathematics, science, a modern foreign language, technology, music, art and physical education. For special attention there of these subjects (called "core subjects"): English, science, mathematics and seven other subjects are called "foundation or statutory subjects". Besides, subjects are grouped into departments and teachers work in teams and to plan work.

Most common departments are:

- **Humanities Departments:** geography, history, economics, English literature, drama, social science;
- **Science Department:** chemistry, physics, biology, mathematics;
- **Language Department:** German, French, English;
- **Craft Design and Technology Departments:** information and communications technology, computing, home economics and photography.

The latter brings together the practical subjects like cooing, woodwork, sewing, and metalwork with the new technology used in those fields. Students can design a T-shirt on computer using graphics software and make-up the T-shirt design. Students can also look at way to market their product, thus linking all disciplines. This subject's area exemplifies the process approach to learning introduced by the NC.

It is worth mentioning here the growing importance of personal and Social Education. Since the 1970s there has been an emphasis on "pastoral" care, education in areas related to life skills such as health (this includes looking at drug, discussing physical changes related to poverty, sex education and relationship). There are usually one or two lessons a week, from primary school through to sixth

form and they are an essential part of the school's aim to prepare students to life in society.

Education in Britain is not solely concentrated on academic study. Great value is placed on visits and activities like organizing the school club or field trips, which are educational in a more general sense. The organization of these activities by teachers is very much taken for granted in the British school system. Some teachers give up their free time, evenings and weekends to do this "unpaid" work. At Christmas teachers organized concerts, parties and general festivities. It is also considered a good thing to be "seen" to be doing this extra work since it is fairly essential for securing promotion in the school hierarchy.

Classes of pupils are called "forms" (though it has recently become common to refer to "years") and are numbered from one to beginning with first form. Nearly all schools work a five-day week and are closed on Saturdays. The day starts at nine o'clock and finishes between three and four. The lunch break usually lasts about an hour-and-a-quarter. Nearly two-thirds of pupils have lunch provided by the school. Parents pay for this except for the 15 per cent who are rated poor enough and have it for free. Other children either go home for lunch or take sandwiches.

Schools usually divide their year into three "terms" starting at the beginning of September:

Autumn term	Christmas Holiday (about 2weeks)	Spring term	Easter Holiday (about 2 weeks)	Summer term	Summer Holiday (about 6 weeks)
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Passage from one year to the next one is automatic. At the age of 14 pupils are tested in English, mathematics and science, as well as in statutory subjects. At that same age in the third or fourth pupils begin to choose their exam subjects and work for two years to prepare for their qualifications. The exams are usually taken in fifth form at the age of 16, which is a school-leaving age. The actual written exams are set by outside examiners, but they must be approved by the government and comply with national guidelines. There are several examination boards in Britain and each school decided that board's exam its pupils take. Most exams last for two hours, marks are given for each exams separately and are graded from A to G (grades A, B, C are considered to be "good" marks).

16 are an important age for school-leaves because they have to make key decisions as to their future lives and careers. There is a number of choices for them.

Life at School.

The school year is divided into terms, three months each, named after seasons: autumn term, winter term and spring term.

The autumn term starts on the first Tuesday morning in September. In July schools break up for eight weeks.

Life at school is more or less similar everywhere. Each group of 30 pupils is the responsibility of a form tutor. Each school day is divided into periods of 40-50 minutes, time for various lessons with 10-20 minutes breaks between them. It might be interesting for you to see the “Bell Times” at Lawns wood school in Leeds.

Bell Times

8.40 a.m. – School begins

8.45 a.m. – Registration

8.50 a.m. – Assembly bell

9.00 a.m. – Pupils move to lessons

9.05 a.m. – Lesson 1

9.45 a.m. - Lesson 2

10.25 a.m. – Lesson 3

11.25 a.m. – Lesson 3

11.05 a.m. – Break

11.25 a.m. – Pupils move to lessons

11.30 a.m. – Lesson 4

12.10 p.m. – Lesson 5

12.50 p.m. – Lunch time

1.40 p.m. – Afternoon school begins

1.45 p.m. – Registration

1.50 p.m. – Lesson 6

2.30 p. m. Lesson 7

3.10 p.m. – End of normal lessons

3.10 p.m. – Start of additional lessons, clubs, societies, team practice, and detentions.

On important occasions such as end of term or national holiday, called in English schools speech-days pupils are gathered in the assembly or hall.

Most of the pupil’s time is spent in a classroom equipped with desks and a blackboard nowadays often called chalkboard because normally it is brown or green. The desks are arranged in rows, the space between the rows is called an aisle.

In addition to classrooms there are laboratories for Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Technical rooms are for Woodwork, Metalwork, Technical Drawing. There are rooms for computer studies. Many young people use them for school exercise. They are now able to write their own games as well. The Physical Education lessons are conducted at the gymnasium, games-hall or at the playground in front of the school building. There are also language laboratories

and house craft rooms. Every school has a library and a school canteen. In student common room boys and girls can relax during the breaks and lunchtime the Staff common room is for teachers. In case of illness a schoolchild may go to the sick room.

Pupils at many secondary schools Britain have to wear a school uniform. This usually means a white blouse for girls (perhaps with a tie), with a dark-colored skirt and pullover. Boys wear a shirt and tie, dark trousers and dark-colored pullovers. Pupils also wear blazers-a kind of jacket-with the school badge on the pocket. They often have to wear some kind of hat on the way to and from school-caps for boys and berets or some other kind of hat for girls shoes are usually black or brown. And no high heels!

Young people in Britain often don't like their school uniform, especially the hats and shoes. Sometimes they do not wear the right clothes. Schools will often give them a warning the first time that this happens but then will punish them if they continue not to wear the correct uniform. Senior student don't have to wear their school uniform.

It sounds logical to say that the school's function is to train a pupil's mind and his character should be formed at home. Teachers would be pleased if the problem could be solved so easily. But children don't leave their characters at home when their minds go to school. Many of them have personality problems of one kind or another.

The pupils who violate various school regulations may be punished in the following ways: for lateness, truancy they may be reported to the Headmaster or named in school assembly. They may be detained in school after ordinary hours.

Corporal punishment has recently been banned in state schools. But in most public schools it is still allowed. Caning is the usual punishment for serious misbehavior in class, damage and vandalism. Many teachers remark that standards of discipline have fallen since corporal punishment was banned by the government.

You may want to know whether there are any rewards and prizes for the best pupils. Of course, there are. Each school has its system of rewards: medals and prizes.

Social, Cultural and Sporting Life

Each school or sixth-form college has its School or College Council. It helps to plan the policy for the whole school. It organizes the social and cultural life at the school.

School Councils in many schools and colleges are chaired by a student and have a majority of student members. They run discos and parties, stage drama productions and decorate the student common room. Music-making is part of school life. Some students help in local hospitals, homes for the handicapped and elderly people.

There are many clubs and societies. Very popular, especially with senior pupils, is a school debating society.

Most clubs meet regularly: daily, weekly or monthly, at lunch time or after school. Extracurricular activities include various outings, visits to places of interest and dances. School choirs and orchestras give regular concerts. Sports are very popular too: running, jogging, swimming, self-defense, football, soccer, badminton, aerobics, rugby, etc.

There are many national voluntary youth organizations in Britain. You have probably read about the Scout and Girl Guides Associations. There are some clubs run by the churches. There three pre-service organizations (the Sea Cadet Corps, Army, Cadet Force and Air Training Corps) are not very large. Their activities are related to the work of the armed forces.

But the largest youth organizations, as you probably know, are the associations of the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides. There are about 1,300,000 boys and girls in them. The movement of Boy Scouts was founded by General Baden-Powell in 1908 and began to spring up in almost every town and village of the British Isles. Its aim is to help a Scout (a boy from 8 to 18) to develop into a good man and a useful citizen. He must be able to handle sails, to use a compass, to lay and light a fire out of doors, he must know first aid and develop his interest in music, literature, drama, arts and films. A Scout is a friend to animals, he is 'clean in thought, word and deed'. He must obey the Scout Law.

The Girl Guides Association was founded by Lord Baden-Powell in 1910. It is divided into three sections: Brownies (from 7,5 to 11), Guides (age 11 — 16) and Rangers (age 16 — 21). The programme of training is planned to develop intelligence and practical skills including cookery, needle-work and childcare. The training and the Law are much the same as those of the Scouts. Like a Scout a Girl Guide must be a friend to animals. She must be 'pure in thought, word and deed'. She must be loyal to God and the Queen.

There are several youth organizations associated with political parties. The Youth Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (YCND) unites thousands of young people of Great Britain. It co-operates with the National Union of Students and many other youth organizations. It organizes mass rallies and meetings, demonstrations, marches of protest, festivals.

Life at College and University

The academic year in Britain's universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education is divided into three terms, which usually run from the beginning of October to the middle of December, from the middle of January to the end of March, and from the middle of April to the end of June or the beginning of July.

There are about one hundred universities in Britain. The oldest and best-known universities are located in Oxford, Cambridge, London, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Southampton, Cardiff, Bristol, Birmingham.

Good A-level results in at least two subjects are necessary to get a place at a university. However, good exam passes alone are not enough. Universities choose their students after interviews. For all British citizens a place at a university brings with it a grant from their local education authority.

English universities greatly differ from each other. They differ in date of foundation, size, history, tradition, general organization, methods of instruction, way of student life.

After three years of study a university graduate will leave with the Degree of Bachelor of Arts, Science, Engineering, Medicine, *etc.* Later he may continue to take a Master's Degree and then a Doctor's Degree. Research is an important feature of university work.

The two intellectual eyes of Britain — Oxford and Cambridge Universities — date from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The Scottish universities of St. Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh date from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries the so-called Redbrick universities were founded. These include London, Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Sheffield and Birmingham. During the late sixties and early seventies some 20 'new' universities were set up. Sometimes they are called 'concrete and glass' universities. Among them are the universities of Sussex, York, East Anglia and some others.

During these years the Government set up thirty Polytechnics. The Polytechnics, like the universities, offer first and higher degrees. Some of them offer full-time and sandwich courses. Colleges of Education provide two-year courses in teacher education or sometimes three years if the graduate specializes in some particular subject.

Some of those who decide to leave school at the age of 16 may go to a further education college where they can follow a course in typing, engineering, town planning, cooking, or hairdressing, full-time or part-time. Further education colleges have strong ties with commerce and industry.

There is an interesting form of studies which is called the Open University. It is intended for people who study in their own free time and who attend lectures by watching television and listening to the radio. They keep in touch by phone and letter with their tutors and attend summer schools. The Open University students have no formal qualifications and would be unable to enter ordinary universities.

Some 80,000 overseas students study at British universities or further education colleges or train in nursing, law, banking or in industry.

Higher education.

As has been mentioned above, there is a considerable enthusiasm for post-school education in Britain. The aim of the government is to increase the number of students who enter into higher education. The driving force for this has been mainly economic. It is assumed that the more people who study at degree level, the more likely the country is to succeed economically. A large proportion of young people – about a third in England and Wales and almost half in Scotland – continue in education at a more A-level beyond the age of 18. The higher education sector provides a variety of courses up to degree and postgraduate degree level, and careers out research. It increasingly caters for older students; over 50% of students in 1999 were aged 25 and over and many studied part-time. Nearly every university offers access and foundation courses before enrolment on a course of higher education of prospective students who do not have the standard entry qualifications.

Higher education in Britain is traditionally associated with universities, though education of University standard is also given in other institutions such as **colleges and institutes of higher education**, which have the power to award their own degrees.

The only exception to state universities is the small University of Buckingham which concentrates on law, and which draws most of its students of overseas.

All universities in England and Wales are state universities (this includes Oxford and Cambridge).

English universities can be broadly classified into three types. First come the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge that date from the 12th century and that until 1828 were virtually the only English universities.

Oxbridge

Oxford and Cambridge are the oldest and most prestigious universities in Great Britain. They are often called collectively Oxbridge. Both universities are independent. Only the education elite go to Oxford or Cambridge. Most of their students are former public schools leavers.

The normal length of the degree course is three years, after which the students take the Degree of Bachelor of Arts (B.A.). Some courses, such as languages or medicine, may be one or two years longer. The students may work for other degrees as well. The degrees are awarded at public degree ceremonies'. Oxford and Cambridge cling to their traditions, such as the use of Latin at degree ceremonies. Full academic dress is worn at examinations.

Oxford and Cambridge universities consist of a number of colleges. Each college is different, but in many ways they are alike. Each College has its name, its coat of arms. Each college is governed by a Master. The larger ones have more than 400 members; the smallest colleges have less than 30. Each college offers teaching in a wide range of subjects. Within, the college one

will normally find a chapel, a dining hall, a library, rooms for undergraduates, fellows and the Master, and also rooms for teaching purposes.

Oxford is one of the oldest universities in Europe. It is the second largest in Britain, after London. The town of Oxford is first mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in 911 A.D. and it was popular with the early English kings (Richard Coeur de Lion' was probably here). The university's earliest charter" is dated to 1213.

There are now twenty-four colleges for men, five for women and another five which have both men and women members, many from overseas studying for higher degrees. Among the oldest colleges are University College, All Souls and Christ Church.

The local car industry in East Oxford gives an important addition to the city's outlook. There a great deal of bi- cycle traffic both in Oxford and Cambridge.

Oxford.

The first written record of the town of Oxford dates back to the year 912. Oxford University, the oldest and most famous university in Britain, was founded in the middle of the 12th century and by 1300 there were already 1,500 students. At that time Oxford was a wealthy town, but by the middle of the 14th century it was poorer, because of a decline in trade and because of the terrible plague, which killed many people in England. The relations between the students and the townspeople were very unfriendly and there was often fighting in the streets.

Nowadays there are about 12,000 students in Oxford and over 1000 teachers. Outstanding scientists work in the numerous colleges of the University teaching and doing research work in physics, chemistry, mathematics, cybernetics, literature, modern and ancient languages, art and music, psychology.

Oxford University has a reputation of a privileged school. Many prominent political figures of the past and present times got their education at Oxford.

The Oxford English Dictionary is well-known to students of English everywhere. It contains approximately 5,000,000 entries, and there are thirteen volumes, including a supplement.

Oxford University Press, the publishing house which produces the Oxford English Dictionary has a special department called the Oxford Word and Language Service.

Cambridge University started during the 13th century and grew until today. Now there are more than thirty colleges.

On the banks of the Cam'4 willow trees drown their branches into the water. The colleges line the right bank. There are beautiful college gardens with green lawns and lines of tall trees. The oldest college is Peter house, which was founded in 1284, and the most recent is Robinson College, which was opened in 1977. The most famous is probably King's College" because of its magnificent chapel, the largest and the most beautiful building in Cambridge and the most perfect example

left of English fifteenth-century architecture. Its choir of boys and undergraduates is also very well known.

The University was only for men until 1871, when the first women's college was opened. In the 1970s, most colleges opened their doors to both men and women. Almost all colleges are now mixed.

Many great men studied at Cambridge, among them Desideratum Erasmus", the great Dutch scholar, Roger **Bacon**", the philosopher, Milton, the poet, Oliver Cromwell", the soldier, Newton, the scientist, and Kapitza, the famous Russian physicist.

The universities have over a hundred societies and clubs, enough for every interest one could imagine. Sport is part of students' life at Oxbridge. The most popular sports are rowing and punting.

Cambridge.

The Cambridge Folk Festival. Every year, in summer, one of the biggest festivals of folk music in arrive in Cambridge for the Festival. Many of the fans put up their tents to stay overnight. The Cambridge Folk Festival is always very well organized and there is always good order. However, some people who live nearby do not like Festival. They say that there is too much noise, that too much rubbish is left on the ground, and that many of the fans take drugs. On the other hand, local shopkeepers are glad, because for them the Festival means a big increase in the number of customers.

The second group of universities comprises various institutions of higher education, usually with technical study, that by 1900 had sprang up in new industrial towns and cities such as Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds. They got to be know as civic or 'redbrick' universities. Their buildings were made of local material, often brick, in contrast to the stone of older universities, hence the name, 'redbrick'. These universities catered mostly for local people. At first they prepared students for London University degree, but later they were given the right to award their own degrees, and so became universities themselves. In the mid-20th century they started to accept students from all over the country.

The third group consists of new universities founded after the Second World War and later in the 1960s, which saw considerable expansion in new universities. These are purpose-built institutions located in the countryside but close to towns. Examples are East Anglia, Sussex and Warwick. From their beginning they attracted students from all over the country, and provided accommodation for most of their students in site (hence their name, 'campus' universities). They tend to emphasize relatively 'new' academic disciplines such as social science and make greater use than other universities of teaching in small groups, often known as 'seminars'.

Among this group there are also universities often called 'never civic' universities. These were originally technical colleges set up by local authorities in the first half of this century. Their upgrading to university status took place in two

waves. The first wave occurred in the mid-1960s, when ten of them were promoted in this way.

Another thirty became 'polytechnics', in the early 1970s, which meant that along with their former courses they were allowed to teach degree courses (the degrees being awarded by a national body). Polytechnics were originally expected to offer a broader-based, more practical and vocational education than the universities. In the early 1990s most of the polytechnics became universities. So there are now 80 universities and a further 19 colleges and institutions of higher education in the UK. The country has moved rapidly from a rather elitist system to one which is much more open, if not yet a mass system of higher education.

Higher education in England and Wales is highly selective; i.e. entrance to British universities is via a strict selection process is based on an interview. Applications for first degree courses are usually made through the Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS), in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. After the interview a potential student is offered a place on the basis of GCE A-level exam results. If the student does not get the grades specified in the offer, a place can not be taken up. Some universities, such as Oxford and Cambridge, have an entrance exam before the interview stage.

This kind of selection procedure means that not everyone in Britain with A-level qualifications will be offered the chance of a university education. Critics argue that this creates an elitist system with the academic minority in society whilst supporters of the system argue that this enables Britain to get high-quality graduates who have specialized skills. The current system will be modified by the late 90s and into the 21st century, since secondary system is moving towards a broader-based education to replace the specialized 'A' level approach. The reasons for this lie in Britain's need to have a highly skilled and educated workforce, not just an elite few, to meet the needs of the technological era.

The independence of Britain's educational institutions is most noticeable in universities. They make their own choices of who to accept on their courses and normally do this on the basis of a student's A-level results and an interview. Those with better exam grades are more likely to be accepted. Virtually all degree courses last three years, however there are some four-year courses and medical and veterinary courses last five or six years. The British University year is divided into three terms, roughly eight to ten weeks each. The terms are crowded with activity and the vacations between the terms – a month at Christmas, a month at Easter, and three or four months in summer – are mainly periods of intellectual digestion and private study.

The courses are also 'full-time' which really means full-time: the students are not supposed to take a job during term time. Unless their parents are rich, they receive a state grant of money, which covers most of their expenses including the cost of accommodation. Grants and loans are intended to create opportunities for equality in education. A grants system was set up to support students through university. Grants are paid by the LEA on the basis of parental income. In the late 80s (the Conservative) government decided to stop to increase these grants, which were previously linked to inflation. Instead, students were able to borrow money in

the form of a low-interest loan, which then had to be paid back after their course had finished. Critics argue that students from less affluent families had to think twice before entering the course, and that this worsened the trend which saw a 33% drop in working-class student numbers in the 1980s.

Students studying for the first degree are called undergraduates. At the end of the third year of study undergraduates sit for their examinations and take the bachelor's degree. Those engaged in the study of arts such subjects as history, languages, economics or law take Bachelor of Arts (BA). Students studying pure or applied sciences such as medicine, dentistry, technology or agriculture get Bachelor of Science (BSc). When they have been awarded the degree, they are known as graduates. Most people get honours degrees, awarded in different classes. These are: Class I (known as 'a first'), Class II, I (or 'an upper second'), Class II, II (or 'a lower second'), Class III ('a third'). A student who is below one of these gets a pass degree (i.e. not an honours degree).

Students who obtain their Bachelor degree can apply to take a further degree course, usually involving a mixture of exam courses and research. There are two different types of post-graduate courses – the Master's Degree (MA or MSc), which takes one or two years, and the higher degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), which takes two or three years. Funding for post-graduate courses is very limited, and even students with first class degrees may be unable to get a grant. Consequently many post-graduates have heavy bank loans or are working to pay their way to a higher degree.

The university system also provides a national network of extra-mural or 'Continuing Education' Departments which offer academic courses for adults who wish to study – often for the sheer pleasure of study – after they have left schools of higher education.

One development in education in which Britain can claim to lead the world is the Open University. It was founded in 1969 in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire and is so called because it is open to all – this university does not require any formal academic qualifications to study for a degree, and many people who do not have an opportunity to be 'ordinary' students enroll. The university is non-residential and courses are mainly taught by special written course books and by programmes on state radio and television. There are, however, short summer courses of about a week that the students have to attend and special part-time study centers where they can meet their tutors when they have problems.

As mentioned above, the British higher education system was added to in the 1970s, which saw the creation of colleges and institutions of higher education, often by merging existing colleges or by establishing new institutions. They now offer a wide range of degree, certificate and diploma courses in both science and art, and in some cases have specifically taken over the role of training teachers for the schools.

There are also a variety of other British higher institutions, which offer higher education. Some, like the Royal College of Arts, the Cornfield Institute of Technology and various Business Schools, have university status, while others, such as agricultural, drama and arts colleges like the Royal Academy of Dramatics

Arts (RADA) and the Royal college of Music provide comparable courses. All these institutions usually have a strong vocational aspect in their programmes, which fills a specialized role in higher education.

SCIENCE

The word “science” comes from the Latin word “scientia”, which means “knowledge”. Scientists make observations and collect facts in field they work in. Then they arrange facts orderly and try to express the connection between the facts and try to work out theories. Then they have to prove the facts or theory correct and make sufficient and sound evidence. So scientific knowledge is always growing and improving.

Science has great influence on our life. It provides with base of modern technology, materials, and sources of power and so on. Modern science and technology have changed our life in many different ways. During the present century our life changed greatly. Thanks to radio and television we can do a great number of jobs; it was radio and TV that made it possible to photograph the dark side of the moon and to talk with the first cosmonaut while he was orbiting the Earth. One of the wonders of our age is the “electronic brain” or giant calculating machine, which can to some extent duplicate human senses. The desk computer is expected to function as your personal librarian, to carry out simple optimization computations, to control your budget or diet, play several hundred games, etc. Further development of the computer is believed to lead to a situation in which most of the knowledge accepted by mankind will be stored in the computers and made accessible to anyone with the home computers. It is natural that the advent of minicomputers with extensive memories and possibilities will lead to a new higher level in information culture. Among other things, we shall be able to organize educational process in the country’s colleges and universities and also in the system of school education on a new basis. Knowledge is the most valuable wealth, and minicomputers will help us to make it accessible for everyone. Agricultural scientists develop better varieties of plants. The development of antibiotics and other drugs has helped to control many diseases. Studies in anatomy and physiology have led to amazing surgical operations and the inventions of lifesaving machines that can do the work of such organs as heart, lungs and so on. Nuclear fission when a tremendous amount of energy is setting free is very important discovery.

Science improved the living standards, communications, promoted contact between people and government, knowledge and culture, made it possible to discover and develop new sources of energy, made it possible to prolong man’s life.

But science also has some disadvantages. It produces mass culture: painting, music, literature. Some scientific inventions increase the ecological problems, provide with new diseases like AIDS, increased the danger of violent death.

The greatest scientists were very persistent and were sure in their success. Even without any serious education they made great inventions. Even during times of disappointing experiments and unacknowledged by other scientists, they didn't give up and went on working out theories. Also they were always ready to begin everything from the very beginning. They worked a lot, and this work wasn't for money.

The aim, the main object of the greatest scientists of all times was always to find out the truth and no personal prejudices can be allowed. So the science grows and prospers and is the engine of progress.

The problem of learning languages very important today. Foreign languages are socially demanded especially at the present time when the progress in science and technology has led to an explosion of knowledge and has contributed to an overflow of information. The total knowledge of mankind is known to double every seven years. Foreign languages are needed as the main and the most efficient means of information exchange of the people of our planet.

Today English is the language of the world. Over 300 million people speak it as mother tongue. The native speakers of English live in Great Britain, the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand. English is one of the official languages in the Irish Republic, Canada, and the South African Republic. As the second language it is used in the former British and US colonies.

It is not only the national or the official language of some thirty states which represents different cultures, but it is also the major international language for communication in such areas as science, technology, business and mass entertainment. English is one of the official languages of the United Nations Organization and other political organizations. It is the language of literature, education, modern music, international tourism.

Russia is integrating into the world community and the problem of learning English for the purpose of communication is especially urgent today.

So far there is no universal or ideal method of learning languages. Everybody has his own way. Sometimes it is boring to study grammar or to learn new words. But it is well known that reading books in the original, listening to BBC news and English speaking singers, visiting an English speaking country, communicating with the English speaking people will help a lot.

When learning a foreign language you learn the culture and history of the native speakers.

Traditions and holidays in Great Britain.

Every nation and every country has its own traditions and customs. Traditions make a nation special. Some of them are old-fashioned and many people remember them, others are part of people's life. Some British customs and traditions are known all the world.

From Scotland to Cornwall, Britain is full of customs and traditions. A lot of them have very long histories. Some are funny and some are strange. But they are all interesting. There is the long menu of traditional British food. There are many royal occasions. There are songs, saying and superstitions. They are all part of the British way of life.

You cannot really imagine Britain without all its traditions, this integral feature of social and private life of the people living on the British Isles that has always been an important part of their life and work.

English traditions can be classified into several groups: traditions concerning the Englishmen's private life (child's birth, wedding, marriage, wedding anniversary); which are connected with families incomes; state traditions; national holidays, religious holidays, public festival, traditional ceremonies.

What about royal traditions? There are numerous royal traditions in Britain, some are ancient, and others are modern. The Queen is the only person in Britain with two birthdays. Her real birthday is on April 21st, but she has an "official" birthday, too. That is on the second Saturday in June. And on the Queen's official birthday, there is a traditional ceremony called the Trooping of the Color. It is a big parade with brass bands and hundreds of soldiers at Horse Guard's Parade in London. A "regiment" of the Queen's soldiers, the Guards, march in front of her. At the front of the parade there is the regiment's flag or "color". Thousands of Londoners and visitors watch in Horse Guards' Parade. And millions of people at home watch it on television. This custom is not very old, but it is for very old people. On his or her one hundredth birthday, a British person gets a telegram with congratulations from the Queen.

The changing of the Guard happens every day at Buckingham Palace, the Queen's home in London. The ceremony always attracts a lot of spectators – Londoners as well as visitors – to the British capital.

So soldiers stand on front of the palace. Each morning these soldiers (the "guard") change. One group leaves and another arrives. In summer and winter tourists stand outside the palace at 11:30 every morning and watch the Changing of the Guard. Traditionally the Queen opens Parliament every autumn. But Parliament, not the Royal Family, controls modern Britain. The Queen travels from Buckingham Palace to the Houses of Parliament in a gold carriage – the Irish State Coach. At the Houses of Parliament the Queen sits on a "throne" in the House of Lords. Then she reads the "Queen's Speech". At the State Opening of Parliament the Queen wears a crown. She wears other

jewels from the Crown Jewels, too.

Every year, there is a new Lord Mayor of London. The Mayor is the city's traditional leader. And the second Saturday in November is always the day for the Lord Mayor's Show. This ceremony is over six hundred years old. It is also London's biggest parade.

The Lord Mayor drives to the Royal Courts of Justice in a coach. The coach is two hundred years old. It is red and gold and it has six horses.

As it is also a big parade, people make special costumes and act stories from London's history.

In Britain as in other countries costumes and uniforms have a long history.

One is the uniform of the Beefeaters at the tower of London. This came first from France. Another is the uniform of the Horse Guards at Horse Guard's Parade, not far from Buckingham Palace. Thousands of visitors take photographs of the Horse Guards.

Britannia is a symbol of Britain. And she wears traditional clothes, too. But she is not a real person.

Lots of ordinary clothes have a long tradition. The famous bowler hat, for example. A man called Beaulieu made the first one in 1850.

One of the British soldiers, Wellington, gave his name to a pair of boots. They have a shorter name today – "Willies". There is a very special royal tradition. On the River Thames there are hundreds of swans. A lot of these beautiful white birds belong, traditionally, to the king or queen. In July the young swans on the Thames are about two months old. Then the Queen's swan keeper goes, in a boat, from London Bridge to Henley. He looks at all the young swans and marks the royal ones. The name of this strange but interesting custom is Swan Upping.

There are only six public holidays a year in Great Britain, that is days on which people need not go in to work. They are: Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Spring Bank Holiday and Late Summer Bank Holiday, Boxing Day.

So the most popular holiday in Britain is Christmas. Christmas has been celebrated from the earliest days of recorded history, and each era and race has pasted a colorful sheet of new customs and traditions over the old.

On the Sunday before Christmas many churches hold a carol service where special hymns are sung. Sometimes carol singers can be heard in the streets as they collect money for charity. There are a lot of very popular British Christmas carols. Three famous ones are: "Good King Wenceslas", "The Holly and The Ivy" and

"We Three Kings".

Each year, hundreds of thousands of people all over the world send and receive Christmas cards. Most of people think that exchanging cards at Christmas is a very ancient custom but it is not right. In fact it is barely 100 years old. The idea of exchanging illustrated greeting and presents is, however, ancient. So the first commercial Christmas card was produced in Britain in 1843 by Henry Cole, founder of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The hand colored print was inscribed with the words 'A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year to you'. It was horizontally rectangular in shape, printed on stout cardboard by lithography. A traditional feature of Christmas in Britain is the Christmas tree. Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, brought the German tradition (he was German) to Britain. He and the Queen had a Christmas tree at Windsor Castle in 1841. A few years after, nearly every house in Britain had one. Traditionally people decorate their trees on Christmas Eve – that's December 24th. They take down the decorations twelve days later, on Twelfth Night (January 5th). An older tradition is Christmas mistletoe. People put a piece of this green plant with its white berries over a door. Mistletoe brings good luck, people say. Also, at Christmas British people kiss their friends and family under the mistletoe.

Those who live away try to get back home because

Christmas is a family celebration and it is the biggest holiday of the year. As Christmas comes nearer, everyone is buying presents for relatives and friends. At Christmas people try to give their children everything they want. And the children count the weeks, than the days, to Christmas. They are wondering what presents on December 24th. Father Christmas brings their presents in the night. Then they open them on the morning of the 25th.

There is another name for Father Christmas in Britain – Santa Claus. That comes from the European name for him – Saint Nicholas. In the traditional story he lives at the North Pole. But now he lives in big shops in towns and cities all over Britain. Well, that's where children see him in November and December. Then on Christmas Eve he visits every house. He climbs down the chimney and leaves lots of presents. Some people leave something for him, too. A glass of wine and some biscuits, for example.

At Christmas everyone decorates their houses with holly, ivy colorful lamps.

In Britain the most important meal on December 25th is Christmas dinner. Nearly all Christmas food is traditional, but a lot of the traditions are not very old. For example, there were no turkeys in Britain before 1800. And even in the nineteenth century, goose was the traditional meat at Christmas. But not now.

A twentieth-century British Christmas dinner is roast turkey with carrots, potatoes, peas, Brussels sprouts and gravy. There are sausages and bacon, too. Then, after the turkey, there's Christmas pudding. Some people make this pudding months before Christmas. A lot of families have their own Christmas pudding recipes. Some, for example, use a lot of brandy. Others put in a lot of fruit or add a silver coin for good luck. Real Christmas puddings always have a piece of holly on the top. Holly bushes and trees have red berries at Christmas time, and so people use holly to decorate their houses for Christmas. The holly on the pudding is part of the decoration.

Crackers are also usual at Christmas dinner. These came to Britain from China in the nineteenth century. Two people pull a cracker. Usually there is a small toy in the middle. Often there is a joke on a piece of paper, too. Most of the jokes in Christmas crackers are not very good. Here is an example:

Customer: Waiter, there's a frog in my soup.

Waiter: Yes, sir, the fly's on holidays.

A pantomime is a traditional English entertainment at Christmas. It is meant for children, but adults enjoy it just as much. It is a very old form of entertainment, and can be traced back to 16th century Italian comedies. There have been a lot of changes over the years. Singing and dancing and all kinds of jokes have been added; but the stories that are told are still fairy tales, with a hero, a heroine, and a villain.

In every pantomime there are always three main characters. These are the "principal boy", the "principal girl", and the "dame". Pantomimes are changing all the time. Every year, someone has a new idea to make them more exciting or more up-to-date.

December 26th is Boxing Day. Traditionally boys from the shops in each town asked for money at Christmas. They went from house to house on December 26th and took boxes made of wood with them. At each house people gave them money. This was a Christmas present. So the name of December 26th doesn't come from the sport of boxing – it comes from the boys' wooden boxes.

Now, Boxing Day is an extra holiday after Christmas Day. Traditionally Boxing Day Hunts is a day for foxhunting. The huntsmen and huntswomen ride horses. They use dogs, too. The dogs (fox hounds) follow the smell of the fox. Then the huntsmen and huntswomen follow the hounds. Before a Boxing Day hunt, the huntsmen and huntswomen drink not wine. But the tradition of the December 26th hunt is changing. Now, some people want to stop Boxing Day Hunts (and other hunts, too). They don't like foxhunting. For them it's not a sport – it is cruel.

In England people celebrate the New Year. But it is not as

widely or as enthusiastically observed as Christmas. Some people ignore it completely and go to bed at the same time as usual on New Year's Eve. Many others, however, do celebrate it in one way or another, the type of celebration varying very much according to the local custom, family tradition and personal taste.

The most common type of celebration is a New Year party, either a family party or one arranged by a group of young people. And another popular way of celebrating the New Year is to go to a New Year's dance.

The most famous celebration is in London round the statue of Eros in Piccadilly Circus where crowds gather and sing and welcome the New Year. In Trafalgar Square there is also a big crowd and someone usually falls into the fountain.

Every Year the people of Norway give the city of London a present. It's a big Christmas tree and it stands in Trafalgar Square.

Also in central London, Oxford Street and Regent Street always have beautiful decorations at the New Year and Christmas.

Thousands of people come to look at them.

In Britain a lot of people make New Year Resolutions on the evening of December 31st. For example, "I'll get up early every morning next year", or "I'll clean, my shoes every day". But there is a problem. Most people forget their New Year Resolutions on January 2nd.

But New Year's Eve is a more important festival in Scotland than it is in England, and it even has a special name. It is not clear where the 'Hominy' comes from, but it is connected with the provision of food and drink for all visitors to your home on 31st December.

There is a Scottish song that is sung all over the world at midnight on New Year's Eve. It was written by Robert Burns, the famous Scottish poet, and you may find some of the traditional words a bit difficult to understand, but that's the way it's always sung – even by English people!

It was believed that the first person to visit one's house on New Year's Day could bring good or bad luck. Therefore, people tried to arrange for the person of their own choice to be standing outside their houses ready to be let in the moment midnight had come.

Usually a dark-complexioned man was chosen, and never a woman, for she would bring bad luck. The first footer was required to carry three articles: a piece of coal to wish warmth, a piece of bread to wish food, and a silver coin to wish wealth. In some parts of northern England this pleasing custom is still observed. So this interesting tradition called "First Footing".

On Bank holiday the townsfolk usually flock into the country

and to the coast. If the weather is fine many families take a picnic – lunch or tea with them and enjoy their meal in the open. Seaside towns near London, such as South end, are invaded by thousands of trippers who come in cars and coaches, trains and bicycles. Great amusement parks like South end Ursula do a roaring trade with their scenic railways, shooting galleries, water-shoots, Crazy houses and so on. Trippers will wear comic paper hats with slogans, and they will eat and drink the weirdest mixture of stuff you can imagine, sea food like cockles, mussels, whelks, fish and chips, candy floss, tea, fizzy drinks, everything you can imagine. Bank holiday is also an occasion for big sports meeting at places like the White City Stadium, mainly all kinds of athletics. There are also horse race meetings all over the country, and most traditional of all, there are large fairs with swings, roundabouts, a Punch and Judy show, hoop-la stalls and every kind of side-show including, in recent, bingo. There is also much boating activity on the Thames.

Although the Christian religion gave the world Easter as we know it today, the celebration owes its name and many of its customs and symbols to a pagan festival called Easter. Easter, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of springtime and sunrise, got her name from the world east, where the sunrises. Every spring northern European peoples celebrated the festival of Easter to honor the awakening of new life in nature. Christians related the rising of the sun to the resurrection of Jesus and their own spiritual rebirth. Many modern Easter symbols come from pagan time. The egg, for instance, was a fertility symbol long before the Christian era. The ancient Persians, Greeks and Chinese exchanged eggs at their spring festivals. In Christian times the egg took on a new meaning symbolizing the tomb from which Christ rose. The ancient custom of dyeing eggs at Easter time is still very popular. The Easter bunny also originated in pre-Christian fertility lore. The rabbit was the most fertile animal our acnes torso knew, so they selected it as a symbol of new life. Today, children enjoy eating candy bunnies and listening to stories about the Easter bunny, who supposedly brings Easter eggs in a fancy basket. Also there is a spectacular parade on Easter. It is a truly spectacular Easter Parade in Battersea Park. It is sponsored by the London Tourist Board and is usually planned around a central theme related to the history and attractions of London. The great procession, or parade, begins at 3 p.m. but it is advisable to find a vantage-point well before that hour.

On October 31st British people celebrate Halloween. It is undoubtedly the most colorful and exciting holiday of the year. Though it is not a public holiday, it is very dear to those who

celebrate it, especially to children and teenagers. This day was originally called All Hollow's Eve because it fell on the eve of All Saints' Day. The name was later shortened to Halloween.

According to old beliefs, Halloween is the time, when the veil between the living and the dead is partially lifted, and witches, ghosts and other super natural beings are about. Now children celebrate Halloween in unusual costumes and masks. It is a festival of merrymaking, superstitions spells, fortunetelling, traditional games and pranks. Halloween is a time for fun.

Few holidays tell us much of the past as Halloween. Its origins date back to a time, when people believed in devils, witches and ghosts. Many Halloween customs are based on beliefs of the ancient Celts, who lived more than 2,000 years ago in what is now Great Britain, Ireland, and northern France.

Every year the Celts celebrated the Druid festival of Sambaing, Lord of the Dead and Prince of Darkness. It fell on October 31, the eve of the Druid New Year. The date marked the end of summer, or the time when the sun retreated before the powers of darkness and the reign of the Lord of Death began. The Dun god took part in the holiday and received thanks for the year's harvest.

It was believed that evil spirits sometimes played tricks on October 31. They could also do all kinds of damage to property. Some people tried to ward off the witches by painting magic signs on their barns. Others tried to frighten them away by nailing a piece of iron, such as a horseshoe, over the door.

Many fears and superstitions grew up about this day. An old Scotch superstition was that witches – those who had sold their souls to the devil – left in their beds on Halloween night a stick made by magic to look like themselves. Then they would fly up the chimney attended by a black cat.

In Ireland, and some other parts of Great Britain, it was believed, that fairies spirited away young wives, whom they returned dazed and amnesic 366 days later.

When Halloween night fell, people in some places dressed up and tried to resemble the souls of the dead. They hoped that the ghosts would leave peacefully before midnight. They carried food to the edge of town or village and left it for the spirits.

In Wales, they believed that the devil appeared in the shape of a pig, a horse, or a dog. On that night, every person marked a stone and put it in a bonfire. If a person's stone was missing the next morning, he or she would die within a year.

Much later, when Christianity came to Great Britain and Ireland, the Church wisely let the people keep their old feast. But it gave it a new association when in the 9th century a festival in honor of all saints (All Hallows) was fixed on November 1. In the

11th century November 2 became All Souls' Day to honor the souls of the dead, particularly those who died during the year. Christian tradition included the lighting of bonfires and carrying blazing torches all around the fields. In some places masses of flaming stew were flung into the air. When these ceremonies were over, everyone returned home to feast on the new crop of apples and nuts, which are the traditional Halloween foods. On that night, people related their experience with strange noises and spooky shadows and played traditional games.

Halloween customs today follow many of the ancient traditions, though their significance has long since disappeared.

A favorite Halloween custom is to make a jack-o'-lantern.

Children take out the middle of the pumpkin, cut hole holes for the eyes, nose and mouth in its side and, finally, they put a candle inside the pumpkin to scare their friends. The candle burning inside makes the orange face visible from far away on a dark night – and the pulp makes a delicious pumpkin-pie.

People in England and Ireland once carved out beets, potatoes, and turnips to make jack-o'-lanterns on Halloween.

When the Scots and Irish came to the United States, they brought their customs with them. But they began to carve faces on pumpkins because they were more plentiful in autumn than turnips. Nowadays, British carve faces on pumpkins, too.

According to an Irish legend, jack-o'-lanterns were named for a man called Jack who was notorious for his drunkenness and being stingy. One evening at the local pub, the Devil appeared to take his soul. Clever Jack persuaded the Devil to "have one drink together before we go". To pay for his drink the Devil turned himself into a sixpence. Jack immediately put it into his wallet. The Devil couldn't escape from it because it had a catch in the form of a cross. Jack released the Devil only when the latter promised to leave him in peace for another year. Twelve months later, Jack played another practical joke on the Devil, letting him down from a tree only on the promise that he would never pursue him again.

Finally, Jack's body wore out. He could not enter heaven because he was a miser. He could not enter hell either, because he played jokes on the Devil. Jack was in despair. He begged the Devil for a live coal to light his way out of the dark. He put it into a turnip and, as the story goes, is still wandering around the earth with his lantern.

Halloween is something called Beggars' Night or Trick or Treat night. Some people celebrate Beggars' Night as Irish children did in the 17th century. They dress up as ghosts and witches and go into the streets to beg. And children go from house to house and say: "Trick or treat!", meaning "Give me a treat or I'll

play a trick on you". Some groups of "ghosts" chant Beggars' Night rhymes:

Trick or treat,

Smell our feet.

We want something

Good to eat.

In big cities Halloween celebrations often include special decorating contests. Young people are invited to soap shop-windows, and they get prizes for the best soap-drawings.

In old times, practical jokes were even more elaborate. It was quite normal to steal gates, block house doors, and cover chimneys with turf so that smoke could not escape. Blame for resulting chaos was naturally placed on the "spirits".

At Halloween parties the guests wear every kind of costume. Some people dress up like supernatural creatures, other prefers historical or political figures. You can also meet pirates, princesses, Dracula's, Cinderella's, or even Frankenstein's monsters at a Halloween festival.

At Halloween parties children play traditional games. Many games date back to the harvest festivals of very ancient times.

One of the most popular is called bobbing for apples. One child at a time has to get apples from a tub of water without using hands. But how to do this? By sinking his or her face into the water and biting the apple!

Another game is pin-the-tail-on-the –donkey. One child is blind folded and spun slowly so that he or she will become dizzy. Then the child must find a paper donkey hanging on the wall and try to pin a tail onto the back.

And no Halloween party is complete without at least one scary story. It helps too create an air of mystery.

Certain fortunetelling methods began in Europe hundreds of years ago and became an important part of Halloween. For example, such object as a coin, a ring, and a thimble were baked into a cake or other food. It was believed that the person who found the coin in the cake would become wealthy. The one who found the ring would marry soon, but the person who got the thimble would never get married.

Unfortunately now most people do not believe in evil spirits. They know that evil spirits do not break steps, spill garbage or pull down fences. If property is damaged, they blame naughty boys and girls. Today, Halloween is still a bad night for the police...

March 1st is a very important day for Welsh people. It's St. David's Day. He's the "patron" or national saint of Wales. On March 1st, the Welsh celebrate St. David's Day and wear daffodils in the buttonholes of their coats or jackets.

On February 14th it's Saint Valentine's Day in Britain. It is not a national holiday. Banks and offices do not close, but it is a happy little festival in honor of St. Valentine. On this day, people send Valentine cards to their husbands, wives, girlfriends and boyfriends. You can also send a card to a person you do not know. But traditionally you must never write your name on it. Some British newspapers have got a page for Valentine's Day messages on February 14th.

This lovely day is widely celebrated among people of all ages by the exchanging of "valentines".

Saint Valentine was a martyr but this feast goes back to pagan times and the Roman feast of Lupercalia. The names of young unmarried girls were put into a vase. The young men each picked a name, and discovered the identity of their brides.

This custom came to Britain when the Romans invaded it. But the church moved the festival to the nearest Christian saint's day: this was Saint Valentine's Day.

Midsummer's Day, June 24th, is the longest day of the year.

On that day you can see a very old custom at Stonehenge, in Wiltshire, England. Stonehenge is one of Europe's biggest stone circles. A lot of the stones are ten or twelve meters high. It is also very old. The earliest part of Stonehenge is nearly 5,000 years old. But what was Stonehenge? A holy place? A market? Or was it a kind of calendar? Many people think that the Druids used it for a calendar. The Druids were the priests in Britain 2,000 years ago. They used the sun and the stones at Stonehenge to know the start of months and seasons. There are Druids in Britain today, too. And every June 24th a lot of them go to Stonehenge. On that morning the sun shines on one famous stone – the Heel stone. For the Druids this is a very important moment in the year. But for a lot of British people it is just a strange old custom.

Londoners celebrate carnivals. And one of them is Europe's biggest street carnival. A lot of people in the Notting Hill area of London come from the West Indies – a group of islands in the Caribbean. And for two days in August, Notting Hill is the West Indies. There is West Indian food and music in the streets. There is also a big parade and people dance day and night.

April 1st is April fool's Day in Britain. This is a very old tradition from the middle Ages (between the fifth and fifteenth centuries). At that time the servants were masters for one day of the year. They gave orders to their masters, and their masters had to obey.

Now April fool's Day is different. It is a day for jokes and tricks.

One of the most interesting competitions is the university boat

race.

Oxford and Cambridge are Britain's two oldest universities. In the nineteenth century, rowing was a popular sport at both of them. In 1829 they agreed to have a race. They raced on the river Thames and the Oxford boat won. That started a tradition. Now, every Spring, the University Boat Race goes from Putney to Mort lake on the Thames. That is 6,7 kilometers. The Cambridge rowers wear light blue shirts and the Oxford rowers wear dark blue. There are eight men in each boat. There is also a "cox". The cox controls the boat. Traditionally coxes are men, but Susan Brown became the first woman cox in 1981. She was the cox for Oxford and they won.

An annual British tradition, which captures the imagination of the whole nation, is the London to Brighton Car Rally in which a fleet of ancient cars indulges in a lighthearted race from the Capital to the Coast.

When the veteran cars set out on the London – Brighton run each November, they are celebrating one of the great landmarks in the history of motoring in Britain – the abolition of the rule that every "horseless carriage" had to be preceded along the road by a pedestrian. This extremely irksome restriction, imposed by the Locomotives on Highways Act, was withdrawn in 1896, and on November of that year there was a rally of motor-cars on the London - Brighton highway to celebrate the first day of freedom – Emancipation Day, as it has known by motorists ever since. Emancipation is still on the first Sunday of the month, but nowadays there is an important condition of entry – every car taking part must be at least 60 years old.

The Run is not a race. Entrants are limited to a maximum average speed of 20 miles per hour. The great thing is not speed but quality of performance, and the dedicated enthusiasts have a conversation all their own.

The Highland Games – this sporting tradition is Scottish. In the Highlands (the mountains of Scotland) families, or "clans", started the Games hundreds of years ago.

Some of the sports are the Games are international: the high jump and the long jump, for example. But other sports happen only at the Highland Games. One is tossing the caber. "Tossing" means throwing, and a "caber" is a long, heavy piece of wood. In tossing the caber you lift the caber (it can be five or six meters tall). Then you throw it in front of you.

At the Highland Games a lot of men wear kilts. These are traditional Scottish skirts for men. But they are not all the same. Each clan has a different "tartan". That is the name for the pattern on the kilt. So at the Highland Games there are traditional sports

and traditional instrument – the bagpipes. The bagpipes are very loud. They say Scots soldier played them before a battle. The noise frightened the soldiers on other side.

The world's most famous tennis tournament is Wimbledon. It started at a small club in south London in the nineteenth century. Now a lot of the nineteenth century traditions have changed. For example, the women players don't have to wear long skirts. And the men players do not have to wear long trousers. But other traditions have not changed at Wimbledon. The courts are still grass, and visitors still eat strawberries and cream. The language of tennis has not changed either.

There are some British traditions and customs concerning their private life. The British are considered to be the world's greatest tea drinkers. And so tea is Britain's favorite drink. The English know how to make tea and what it does for you. In England people say jokingly: 'The test of good tea is simple. If a spoon stands up in it, then it is strong enough; if the spoon starts to wobble, it is a feeble makeshift'.

Every country has its drinking habits, some of which are general and obvious, others most peculiar. Most countries also have a national drink. In England the national is beer, and the pub "pub", where people talk, eat, drink, meet their friends and relax. The word "pub" is short for "public house". Pubs sell beer. (British beer is always warm). An important custom in pubs is "buying a round". In a group, one person buys all the others a drink. This is a "round". Then one by one all the people buy rounds, too. If they are with friends, British people sometimes lift their glasses before they drink and say: "Cheers". This means "Good luck".

In the pubs in south-west England there is another traditional drink-scrimpy.

Pub names often have a long tradition. Some come from the thirteenth or fourteenth century. Every pub has a name and every pub has a sign above its door. The sign shows a picture of the pub's name.

And as you know, the British talk about the weather a lot. They talk about the weather because it changes so often. Wind, rain, sun, cloud, snow – they can all happen in a British winter – or a British summer.

Hundreds of years ago, soldiers began this custom. They shook hands to show that they did not have a sword. Now, shaking hands is a custom in most countries.

Frenchman shakes hands every time they meet, and kiss each other on both cheeks as a ceremonial salute, like the Russians, while Englishmen shake hands only when they are introduced, or

after a long absence.

Victorian England made nearly as many rules about hand shaking as the Chinese did about bowing. A man could not offer his hand first a lady; young ladies did not shake men's hands at all unless they were old friends; married ladies could offer their hands in a room, but not in public, where they would bow slightly.

I have chosen the topic British customs traditions because I enjoy learning the English language and wanted to know more about British ways of life and traditions. Working on this topic I have to conclusion that British people are very conservative. They are proud pf their traditions and carefully keep them up. It was interesting to know that foreigners coming to England are stuck at once by quite a number of customs and peculiarities.

So I think of Britain as a place a lot of different types of people who observe their traditions.

Sports in Great Britain

England is a sport – loving nation. Sports in England take many forms: organized competitive sports, which attract huge crowds to encourage their favorite team to victory, athletic games player for recreation, and others.

Some sports are called spectator sports, when the number of spectators is greater than number of people playing in the game other sports is galled participant, sports attracting crowds only on special occasions such as tournaments.

The game peculiarly associated with England is cricket. Many other games too are English in origin, but have been accepted with enthusiasm in other countries; cricket has been seriously and extensively accepted only in the Commonwealth, particularly in Australia, India, and Pakistan.

Cricket is slow, and a spectator, sitting in the afternoon sun after his lunch, may be excused for having a little sleep for half an hour. Cricket is marking no progress in popularity. Association football or soccer is very popular. Nearly 40 million spectators each year attend matches between the great professional teams organized by the Football League. The biggest event in England is the Cup Final played at the Empire Stadium, Wimble, in a London suburb.

Rugby football (or rigger) has existed in Britain since the beginning of the 19th century, when a teacher eat Rugby school, while playing football, decided that it would be batter to pick up the ball and run with it.

Rugby football is played with an egg – shaped ball which may be carried and **thrown** (but not forward).

The games of golf and tennis are played by great numbers of people. Golf is played in the countryside. It consists in driving a small ball towards and into holes separated by considerable distances, by means of special golf clubs. The aim is to “go round” using as few strokes a possible.

There are many tennis clubs, but every town provides tennis courts in public parks. The world championship tennis matches held at Wimbledon in London, during June and July.

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