

Т. Э. Елисеенко, Т. Т. Царева

# СТРАНОВЕДЕНИЕ ВЕЛИКОБРИТАНИИ



Могилев 2021

**МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ РЕСПУБЛИКИ БЕЛАРУСЬ**

**УЧРЕЖДЕНИЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ  
«МОГИЛЕВСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ  
имени А. А. КУЛЕШОВА»**

**Т. Э. Елисеенко, Т. Т. Царева**

**СТРАНОВЕДЕНИЕ  
ВЕЛИКОБРИТАНИИ**

Курс лекций



**Могилев  
МГУ имени А. А. Кулешова  
2021**

УДК 811.111(075.8)

ББК 81.43.21я73

Е51

*Печатается по решению редакционно-издательского совета  
МГУ имени А. А. Кулешова*

**Р е ц е н з е н т**

учитель английского языка высшей категории

Средней школы № 2 г. Горки

*Н. В. Валюженич*

**Елисеенко, Т. Э.**

Е51 Страноведение Великобритании : курс лекций / Т. Э. Елисеенко, Т. Т. Царева. – Могилев : МГУ имени А. А. Кулешова, 2021. – 52 с.

ISBN 978-985-568-855-7

Курс лекций составлен в соответствии с программой по страноведению и предназначен для учащихся 3 курса педагогического колледжа. Цель курса – расширение кругозора обучающихся, а также формирование их страноведческой ориентации.

Курс состоит из 11 лекций, в которых представлена информация о Великобритании на английском языке – ее истории, географии, образовании и культуре. Каждая лекция содержит теоретический материал, а также практические задания, предназначенные для контроля понимания прочитанного и закрепления материала.

УДК 811.111(075.8)

ББК 81.43.21я73

**ISBN 978-985-568-855-7**

© Елисеенко Т. Э., Царева Т. Т., 2021

© МГУ имени А. А. Кулешова, 2021

## UNIT 1

### A COUNTRY ACROSS THE CHANNEL

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the UK) occupies most of the territory of the British Isles. The British Isles, which include Great Britain, Ireland and a lot of smaller islands (over 5,000), are situated off the north western coast of Europe. From the European continent the British Isles are separated by the English Channel and the North Sea. The English Channel (or La Manche), in its widest part in the west is 220 km wide, and in the narrowest, what is called the Strait of Dover (or Pas de Calais), only 32 km. So, the islands have had an easy and mainly profitable contact with mainland Europe. In the past there were a number of schemes how to connect the two coasts. In 1994 the dream came true: the construction of two-rail tunnel was completed and it was opened for public use. The new transport link did not mean an end to the ferry service, because ferries do a great job taking travelers to more distant ports.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is the official name of the state which is sometimes referred to as Great Britain or Britain (after its major isle), England (after its major historic part) or the British Isles. Politically the British Isles are divided into two countries – the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Irish Republic or Eire that is completely independent. The countries are separated by the Irish Sea.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland consists of four main parts which are: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Their capitals are London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. The United Kingdom is one of the world's smaller countries (it is twice smaller than France or Spain), with an area of 242,495 square kilometres. The capital of the country is London. About 9 million people (2020) live there. The population of the UK is over 67 million people. The British Isles in general, but especially England, form one of the most densely peopled areas in the world.

English is not the only language which people use in the UK. English is the official language. But some people speak Gaelic in western Scotland, Welsh – in parts of northern and central Wales. All three languages are now officially encouraged and taught in schools.

The flag of the United Kingdom, known as the Union Jack, is made up of three crosses. The upright red cross is the cross of St. George, the patron saint of England. The white diagonal cross is the cross of St. Andrew, the

patron saint of Scotland. The red diagonal cross is the cross of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. St. David is the patron saint of Wales.

### Comprehension Check

#### **I. Match the names with their descriptions.**

1. St. George	a) Great Britain, Ireland and a lot of smaller islands;
2. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	b) the patron saint of Wales;
3. the Union Jack	c) the English Channel;
4. St. Patrick	d) the flag of the United Kingdom;
5. St. Andrew	e) the patron saint of Scotland;
6. Eire	f) the official name of the country;
7. St. David	g) the patron saint of Ireland;
8. Pas de Calais	h) the Strait of Dover;
9. La Manche	i) the Irish Republic;
10. the British Isles	j) the patron saint of England.

#### **II. Fill in the blanks with the correct words.**

1. The flag of the United Kingdom is known as the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Politically the British Isles are divided into two countries – the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. From the European continent the British Isles are separated by the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is the official language, but some people speak \_\_\_\_\_ in western Scotland, \_\_\_\_\_ – in parts of northern and central Wales.
5. The narrowest part of the English Channel is called the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **III. Complete the sentences with the correct answer.**

1. The population of the UK is over  
a) 57 million people.  
b) 67 million people.  
c) 76 million people.
2. The British Isles are situated  
a) off the north western coast of Europe.  
b) off the north eastern coast of Europe.  
c) off the south western coast of Europe.

3. The construction of two-rail tunnel was completed and opened for public use

- a) in 1984.
- b) in 1894.
- c) in 1994.

4. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic are separated by

- a) the North Sea.
- b) the Irish Sea.
- c) the English Channel.

5. The flag of the United Kingdom is made up of

- a) five crosses.
- b) four crosses.
- c) three crosses.

#### **IV. Answer the questions.**

1. What are the main countries of the UK and their capitals?
2. What's the population of London and the UK?
3. How many islands are there in the British Isles?
4. What is the role of the Channel Tunnel? Why does the ferry service continue to operate?
5. Why is the British flag called the Union Jack?

#### **V. Project.**

Write an essay (220-250 words) giving a survey of the U.K.'s capital cities: London, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast.

## UNIT 2

### THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE BRITISH ISLES

The British Isles are situated on the continental shelf off the north-west coast of Europe and comprise a group of over 5,000 islands.

Politically the British Isles are divided into two countries – the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, or just the U.K., and the southern part of Ireland, or the Irish Republic, or Eire. The total area of the British Isles is 322,246 sq.km. The total area of the United Kingdom is 248,532 square kilometres (95,960 sq mi). This makes it the 7th largest island country in the world. England is the largest country of the United Kingdom, at 132,938 square kilometres (51,330 sq mi) accounting for just over half the total area of the UK. Scotland at 80,239 square kilometres (30,980 sq mi) is second largest, accounting for about a third of the area of the UK. Wales and Northern Ireland are much smaller, covering 21,225 and 14,130 square kilometres (8,200 and 5,460 sq mi) respectively.

From the European continent the British Isles are separated by the English Channel and the North Sea. The most important sea routes pass through the English Channel and the North Sea linking Europe with the Americas and other continents. The advantageous geographical position of Great Britain created favourable conditions for the development of shipping, trade and economy.

The British Isles, apart from the two largest islands of Great Britain and Ireland, include several other important islands and groups of islands. Off the north-western coast of Great Britain there is a group of islands known as the Hebrides, which are divided into the Inner and Outer Hebrides. They are separated from each other by the Sea of Hebrides and the Little Minch. The main occupation of the people there is farming and fishing.

Off the northern coast of Scotland are the Orkney Islands which comprise about a hundred islands. Most of the residents are engaged in dairy and poultry farming.

The Shetland Islands are situated about 100 km north of the Orkneys. The population is actively engaged in herring-fishing.

In the middle of the Irish Sea lies the Isle of Man. The main occupation of people there is farming, fishing and tourist trade.

Another important island in the Irish Sea is Anglesey situated off the north coast of Wales. It is a place of a very famous village with the longest place name in Great Britain 'Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrob

wllllantysiliogogoch'. The English cannot pronounce it in full so they pronounce only the beginning 'Llanfairpg'. The name is retained due to its unique character and also to attract tourists. The working population is engaged in local industry, fishing and agriculture.

The Isle of Wight lies in the English Channel. With its sunny beaches and pleasant varied countryside the island forms one of the most important tourist resorts in the country. It is linked to London by ferry and rail services.

Also lying in the English Channel off the extreme south-western coast of Great Britain is a tiny group of the Isles of Scilly, another resort area.

The Channel Islands lie to the south-west on the French side of the English Channel. In summer the population increases greatly by holiday-makers who enjoy the warm climate and sand beaches. The farmers produce early fresh vegetables, new potatoes and flowers.

The coastline of the British Isles offers economic advantages, giving the possibility to establish ports, which are important to keep ships safe from storms and give them access deep into the country.

Living on islands, and therefore near the sea, the British naturally grew into a nation of sailors. Their love of the sea led them to become navigators and discoverers of new lands in many parts of the globe.

### **Comprehension Check**

#### **I. Fill in the blanks with the correct words.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is the largest country of the United Kingdom.
2. The UK is \_\_\_\_\_ largest island country in the world.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ Islands are very popular with holiday-makers.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ is linked to London by ferry and rail services.
5. The Inner and Outer Hebrides are separated from each other by the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **II. Are the statements true or false? Correct the false statements.**

1. The citizens of the Isles of Scilly produce early fresh vegetables, new potatoes and flowers.
2. The Channel Islands lie in the English Channel.
3. The total area of the United Kingdom is 248,532 square kilometres (95,960 sq mi).
4. Scotland is the largest country of the United Kingdom.
5. The UK has a lot of economic disadvantages because of its coastline.



### III. Complete the sentences with the correct answer.

- The British are a nation of
  - hunters.
  - sailors.
  - farmers.
- Anglesey is situated off the north coast of Wales
  - in the Irish Sea.
  - in the North Sea.
  - in the Black Sea.
- In the middle of the Irish Sea lies
  - the Isle of Wight.
  - the Orkney Islands.
  - the Isle of Man.
- The sea routes pass through the English Channel and the North Sea linking Europe with
  - Asia and other continents.
  - the Americas and other continents.
  - Australia and other continents.
- The total area of the UK is:
  - 322,246 sq.km.
  - 132,938 sq.km.
  - 248,532 sq.km.

### IV. Answer the questions.

- Which factors influence the advantages of Britain's geographical position?
- How would you call Britain today – an island or peninsula?
- What is the smallest country of the United Kingdom?
- What is the most famous village of GB?
- Why are the British called the nation of sailors?

### V. Draw a sketch map of the British Isles and mark in the following:

- the Welsh, Scottish and Irish borders;
- the capital cities of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland;
- the Isle of Man, the Isle of Wight, the Channel, the Orkney and Shetland Islands and the Hebrides.

## UNIT 3

### THE RELIEF FEATURES OF THE UK

Britain is unpredictable in climate and varied in scenery. In particular, there is a dramatic contrast between 'highland' and 'lowland' Britain. The differences between the two areas affect many aspects of people's lives.

The most precise distinction is geological. The rocks of most of the north and west of Great Britain are harder and older than those of the south and east. These older rocks are covered by large areas of moorland such as the Lake District, the Pennines and much of Scotland and Wales, where the soils are poor, thin and stony. In addition, these areas are wetter and harder to reach than the lower land to the south and east. As a result, these areas of the British Isles are thinly populated.

The south and east are rarely flat, but instead of high continuous moorland there are bands of hills which alternate with areas of lowland. The soils are generally deeper and richer, and the climate is drier and better suited to farming. Human settlement in these areas is dense and more evenly spread.

#### *England*

Though England cannot be considered a very hilly country still it is far from being flat everywhere. The most important range of mountains is the Pennine range, regarded as the 'backbone of England'. It stretches from the Tyne Valley in the north to the Trent Valley in the south – a distance of about 250 km. The highest point is Cross Fell (893 m).

Across the north end of the Pennines there are the grassy Cheviot Hills. The highest point is the Cheviot (816 m) near the Scottish border. The Cheviot Hills serve as a natural borderland between England and Scotland. The region is noted for sheep-breeding.

In north-west England lie the Cumbrian mountains. The highest peak of the Cumbrians is Scafell (978 m). The valleys, which separate the various mountains from each other, contain some beautiful lakes. This is the famous Lake District, the favourite place of holiday-makers and tourists.

#### *Wales*

Wales is a country of hills and mountains deeply cut by river valleys. The mountains cover practically all the territory of the country and are called the Cambrian mountains. The highest peak, Snowdon (1,085 m) is in the north-west, and the whole surrounding area is a National Park noted for its beauty. The region is inhabited by the Welsh who have retained the traditions and language of their Celtic ancestors.

## ***Scotland***

Geographically Scotland may be divided into three major physical regions: the Highlands, the Central Lowlands and the Southern Uplands. The Highlands lie to the west of a line from Aberdeen to the mouth of the river Clyde. The mountains are separated into two parts by the long straight depression known as Glen More, running from north-east to south-west. To the south are the Grampian mountains, which are generally higher than the Northwest Highlands, including Ben Nevis (1,344 m). Glen More contains several lakes, including Loch Ness, which has become world famous for its 'monster'.

The Central Lowlands of Scotland, sometimes known as the Midland Valley, lie between the Highlands and the Southern Uplands. Here stand Scotland's major cities: Edinburgh, the beautiful capital of the country, and the industrial giant, Glasgow, with its major industries of engineering and ship-building. The region is also a major farming area of the country.

The Southern Uplands extend from the Central Lowlands of Scotland in the north to the Cheviot Hills and the Lake District in the south. The present day economy of the region is dominated by agriculture.

## ***Northern Ireland***

Geographically Ireland is an island and a single unit, but politically it is divided into Northern Ireland (which with its capital Belfast is a part of the U.K.) and the Irish Republic (Eire) with its capital Dublin. Geographically Ireland forms a large extensive plain surrounded by a broken belt of mountains, or the uplands.

In Northern Ireland (traditionally called Ulster) the chief mountains are in the extreme north-east. They are the Antrim mountains which rise above 400 metres and are composed of basalt. Off the north coast is the famous Giant's Causeway, where the basalt solidified in remarkable hexagonal columns. It is a major natural spot of beauty which attracts lots of tourists who enjoy the tales about the legendary giants and their exploits.

The Sperrin mountains (500 m) are located in the central part of Northern Ireland, and the Mourne mountains in the extreme south-east.

Lowland Britain, geographically located to the south of the Pennines, offers a striking contrast in many ways. There are few parts where level land is not interrupted by hills. One of the most extensive plains is in the English Midlands, consisting of river valleys and plains interspersed with hills. It is the Midland Plain. Lowland Britain affords best conditions for the development of agriculture, as well as for human settlement.

## **Rivers and Lakes in the UK**

There is a fairly wide network of rivers in the British Isles. The mild climate keeps them free of ice throughout the year.

The largest river in Great Britain is the Severn (350 km) which follows a very puzzling course from central Wales and flows into the Bristol Channel. The Thames (332 km) and the Trent (274 km) flow into the North Sea. Among their important rivers, which flow eastwards to the North Sea are the Ouse, Humber, Tees and Tyne in England, and the rivers Tweed, Forth, Dee and Spey in Scotland. These are the rivers flowing into the Irish Sea: the Mersey and Eden of England, and the Clyde on which Glasgow stands. The longest river in the British Isles is the river Shannon (3384 km) flowing from north to south in the Republic of Ireland.

The largest lake in Great Britain and the biggest inland loch in Scotland is Loch Lomond, covering a surface of 70 sq. km, but the largest fresh water lake of the whole British Isles is Lough Neagh (381 sq. km) in Northern Ireland.

## **Climate and Weather**

Weather is not the same as climate. The weather of the British Isles is greatly variable. No wonder the British never get tired of discussing the weather. The climate of a place or region, on the other hand, represents the average weather conditions over a long period of time.

The climate in the UK is generally mild and temperate due to the influence of the Gulf Stream. The southwestern winds carry the warmth and moisture into Britain. The climate in Britain is usually described as cool, temperate and humid.

The weather is so changeable that the English often say that they have no climate but only weather. Therefore it is natural for them to use the comparison 'as changeable as the weather' of a person who often changes his mood or opinion about something. The weather is the favourite topic of conversation in the UK. As the weather changes with the wind, and Britain is visited by winds from different parts of the world, the most characteristic feature of Britain's weather is its variability.

The English also say that they have three variants of weather: when it rains in the morning, when it rains in the afternoon or when it rains all day long. Sometimes it rains so heavily that they say 'It's raining cats and dogs'.

Rainfall is more or less even throughout the year. In the mountains there is heavier rainfall than in the plains of the south and east. The driest

period is from March to June and the wettest months are from October to January. The average range of temperature (from winter to summer) is from 5 to 23 degrees above zero. During a normal summer the temperature sometimes rises above 30 degrees in the south. Winter temperatures below 10 degrees are rare. It seldom snows heavily in winter, frost is rare. January and February are usually the coldest months, July and August the warmest. Still the wind may bring winter cold in spring or summer days. Sometimes it brings whirlwinds or hurricanes. Droughts are rare.

So, we may say that the British climate has three main features: it is mild, humid and changeable. That means that it is never too hot or too cold. Winters are extremely mild. Snow may come but it melts quickly. In winter the cold is a humid cold, not dry.

### **Comprehension Check**

#### **I. Fill in the blanks with the correct words.**

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ is the largest river in Great Britain.
2. The climate in the UK is generally mild and temperate due to the influence of the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The famous Giant's Causeway is situated in \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Major industries of engineering and ship-building of the UK are in \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The highest peak of Wales is \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **II. Complete the sentences with the correct answer.**

1. The range of mountains regarded as the 'backbone of England' is
  - a) the Cumbrians.
  - b) the Grampian mountains.
  - c) the Pennine range.
2. The climate in the UK is generally mild and temperate due to the influence of
  - a) the Bristol Channel.
  - b) the English Channel.
  - c) the Gulf Stream.
3. The favourite topic of conversation in the UK is
  - a) the money.
  - b) the weather.
  - c) the fashion.

4. Human settlement is dense and more spread in

- a) the south and east of GB.
- b) the north and west of GB.
- c) Scotland and Wales.

5. The longest river in the British Isles is

- a) the Thames.
- b) the Severn.
- c) the Shannon.

### **III. Are the statements true or false? Correct the false statements.**

1. The driest period is from March to June and the wettest months are from October to January.

2. The Trent is the largest river in Great Britain.

3. The Antrim mountains are composed of basalt and situated in Northern Ireland.

4. Geographically Scotland may be divided into four major physical regions.

5. The Cambrian mountains cover practically all the territory of Wales.

### **IV. Answer the questions.**

1. What are the main rivers and lakes of Great Britain?

2. Which factors determine the climate of Great Britain?

3. Why do the Englishmen talk so much about the weather?

4. What areas of the British Isles are less populated? Why?

5. What's the difference between 'highland' and 'lowland' Britain?

### **V. Draw a sketch map of the British Isles and include**

a) the location of the chief mountains of GB;

b) the courses of the rivers Thames, Severn, Trent, Tyne, Clyde;

c) Loch Lomond, Lough Neagh, Loch Ness.

## UNIT 4

### VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE OF THE UK

The humid and mild climate of Great Britain is good for plants and flowers. Some of them have become symbols in the UK. The poppy is the symbol of peace, the red rose is the national emblem of England, the thistle is the national emblem of Scotland and the Edinburgh International Festival. The daffodils and the leek are the emblems of Wales; the shamrock (a kind of clover) is the emblem of Ireland.

The UK was originally a land of vast forests, mainly oak and beech in the Lowlands and pine and birch in the Highlands, with great stretches of marshland and smaller areas of moors. In the course of time, much forest land was cleared and almost all the Lowlands outside the industrial areas were put under cultivation. Today only about 6 per cent of the total land area remains wooded.

Extensive forests remain in eastern and northern Scotland and in southeastern and western England. Oak, elm, ash, and beech are the commonest trees in England, while Scotland has much pine and birch. The Highlands with thin soil are largely moorland with heather and grasses. In the cultivated areas that make up most of Britain there are many wild flowers, flowering plants and grasses.

The fauna and animal life of the UK is much like that of northwest Europe, to which it was once joined. Many larger mammals such as bear and wolf have been hunted to extinction; others are now protected by law. About 50 land mammals are still found in the UK. There are many foxes. Otters are common along rivers and streams, and seals are live along parts of the coast. Hedgehogs, hares, rats and mice are numerous. Deer live in some of the forests in the Highlands of Scotland and in England. There are several small lizards, two or three kinds of snakes, and several kinds of frogs and toads.

Some 230 kinds of birds live in the UK, another 200 are regular visitors, and many are songbirds. The most numerous are blackbird, sparrow and starling. Robin Redbreast is the national bird of the UK. The number of ducks, geese and other water fowl has diminished during recent years. Partridges, pheasants and other large and rare birds are protected by law. Gulls and other sea birds nest near the coast.

The rivers and lakes abound in salmon, trout, perch, pike, roach, dace, and grayling. There are more than 21,000 species of insects.

## **Comprehension Check**

### **I. Fill in the blanks with the correct words.**

1. There are more than 21,000 species of \_\_\_\_\_ in GB.
2. Some of \_\_\_\_\_ have become symbols in the UK.
3. The fauna and animal life of the UK is much like that of northwest \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is the national bird of the UK.
5. Deer live in the Highlands of \_\_\_\_\_ and in \_\_\_\_\_.

### **II. Match the words with their descriptions.**

1. the poppy	a) the emblem of Ireland
2. an insect	b) an animal that feeds its young on milk
3. the shamrock	c) the emblem of Scotland
4. the red rose	d) the symbol of peace
5. moorland	e) the emblems of Wales
6. the thistle	f) the emblem of England
7. a mammal	g) a type of very small animal
8. the daffodil and leek	h) land which consists of moors

### **III. Are the statements true or false? Correct the false statements.**

1. The whole territory of Scotland is covered with forests.
2. Many larger mammals such as bear and wolf are now protected by law in GB.
3. Some 200 kinds of birds live in the UK.
4. The rivers and lakes abound in salmon, trout, perch, pike, roach, dace, and grayling.
5. Oak, elm, ash, and beech are the commonest trees in Wales.

### **IV. Answer the questions.**

1. What are the national emblems of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?
2. What are the commonest trees in England and Scotland?
3. What is the emblem of the Edinburgh International Festival?
4. What mammals live in the UK?
5. What birds inhabit the UK?

### **V. Compare the vegetation and wildlife of the UK and Belarus.**



## UNIT 5

### THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

In theory, the constitution has three branches: *Parliament*, which makes laws, *the government*, which 'executes' laws i.e. puts them into effect, and *the law courts*, which interpret laws. Although the Queen is officially head of all three branches (legislative, executive, judicial), she has little direct power.

The British Parliament has two parts: the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The functions of parliament are: making laws; providing money for government, through taxation; examining government policy, administration and spending; debating political questions.

The House of Commons plays the major role in lawmaking. It consists of Members of Parliament (called MPs for short), each of whom represents an area in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. MPs are elected at a general election. Parliamentary elections must be held every five years, but the Prime Minister can decide on the exact date within those five years. The minimum voting age is 18, and the voting is taken by secret ballot. The election campaign lasts about three weeks. The election is decided on a simple majority – the candidate with most votes wins.

The British parliamentary system depends on political parties. The political parties choose candidates in elections. The party which wins the majority of seats forms the Government and its leader usually becomes the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister has some functions: leading the majority party, running the Government, representing the nation in political matters, appointing Cabinet Ministers and other ministers. The Prime Minister chooses about 20 MPs from his or her party to become the Cabinet of Ministers. Each minister is responsible for a particular area of the government. The second largest party becomes the official opposition with its own leader and 'Shadow cabinet'. Leader of the Opposition is a recognized post in the House of Commons.

#### **The House of Commons**

The House of Commons is made up of 650 elected members, known as Members of Parliament. The chief officer of the House of Commons is the Speaker. He is elected by the House at the beginning of each Parliament. His chief function is to preside over the House in its debate. When elected, the Speaker must not belong to any party. MPs sit on two sides of the hall, one side for the governing party and the other for the opposition. The first

two rows of seats are occupied by the leading members of both parties (called 'front-benchers'), the back benches belong to the rank-and-file MPs ('back-benchers'). Each session of the House of Commons lasts for 160-175 days. Parliament has intervals during its work. MPs are paid for their parliamentary work and have to attend the sittings. MPs have to catch the Speaker's eye when they want to speak, then they rise from where they have been sitting to address the House and must do so without either reading a prepared speech or consulting notes.

Although there is some space given to other than government proposals, the lion's share of parliamentary time is taken by the party in power. A proposed law, a bill, has to go through three stages in order to become an Act of Parliament. These are called readings. The first reading is a formality and is simply the publication of the proposal. The second reading involves debate on the principles of the bill, its examination by a parliamentary committee, and the third reading – a report stage, when the work of the committee is reported on to the House. This is usually the most important stage in the process. The third reading is often a formality too; if six members table a motion, then there has to be a debate on the third reading. If the majority of MPs still vote for the bill, it is sent to the House of Lords for discussion. When the Lords agree, the bill is taken to the Queen for Royal assent. All bills must pass through both houses before being sent for signature by the Queen, when they become Acts of Parliament and the Law of the Land.

### **The House of Lords**

The other House of Parliament is the House of Lords. The House of Lords has more than 1,000 members, although only about 250 take an active part in the work of the House. Members of the House of Lords (peers) are not elected. About 70 per cent of them are 'hereditary peers' because their fathers were peers before them. The other 30 per cent are 'life peers'. Whose titles are not passed on to their children. They are officially appointed by the Queen, on the advice of the Government, for various services to the nation. The chairman of the House of Lords is the Lord Chancellor and he sits on a special seat called the Woolsack, a symbol surviving from the fourteenth century when wool was England's staple trade.

The members of the House of Lords debate a bill after it has been passed by the House of Commons. Changes may be recommended, and agreement between the two Houses is reached by negotiations. The Lords' main power consists of being able to delay non-financial bills for a period

of a year, but they can also introduce certain types of bill. The House of Lords is the only non-elected second chamber in the parliaments of the world, and some people in Britain would like to abolish it.

The division of Parliament into two Houses goes back over some 700 years when a feudal assembly assisted the King. In modern times, real political power rests with the elected House although members of the House of Lords may occupy important cabinet posts.

### **Comprehension Check**

#### **I. Fill in the blanks with the correct words.**

1. The House of Commons consists of \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ is elected by the House at the beginning of each Parliament.
3. Elections are by secret \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The chairman of the House of Lords is the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. A bill has to go through \_\_\_\_\_ in order to become an Act of Parliament.

#### **II. Are the statements true or false? Correct the false statements.**

1. The Queen is the head of the state, her power isn't limited.
2. The election campaign of MPs lasts about three weeks.
3. The party which wins the minority of seats forms the Government.
4. The chairman of the House of Lords is the Lord Chancellor.
5. If the majority of MPs vote for the bill, it is sent to the House of Lords for discussion.

#### **III. Complete the sentences with the correct answer.**

1. The leader of the majority party is appointed by
  - a) the Prime Minister.
  - b) the Queen.
  - c) Parliament.
2. MPs are elected at a general election which is usually held
  - a) every four years.
  - b) every five years.
  - c) every six years.
3. The Prime Minister chooses about \_\_\_\_\_ from his or her party to become the Cabinet of Ministers.

- a) 20 MPs;
- b) 30 MPs;
- c) 40 MPs.

4. The first two rows of seats are occupied by the leading members of both parties and are called

- a) 'back-benchers'.
- b) 'middle-benchers'.
- c) 'front-benchers'.

5. All bills must pass through both houses before being sent for signature by

- a) the Prime Minister.
- b) the Queen.
- c) the Speaker.

#### **IV. Answer the questions.**

1. What is the difference between a life peer and a hereditary peer?
2. What is 'the Woolsack'?
3. What is 'a reading' in Parliament?
4. Which of the two Houses of Parliament has more power?
5. What is the difference between a Bill and Act of Parliament?

”

#### **V. Points for discussion.**

1. List some similarities and differences between the UK parliamentary system and your own.

2. What is the equivalent of MPs in Belarus? What does their work involve? List their responsibilities and write a short paragraph describing their work.

## UNIT 6

### THE UNITED KINGDOM AS A CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is one of the few developed countries of the world where a constitutional monarchy has survived with its ages-old customs, traditions and ceremonies. This means that it has a monarch (a king or a queen) as its Head of State. The monarch reigns with the support of Parliament. The powers of the monarch are not defined precisely. Everything today is done in the Queen's name. It is her government, her armed forces, her law courts and so on. She approves the appointment of the Prime Minister. Everything is done however on the advice of the elected Government, and the monarch takes no part in the decision-making process.

In Britain they look to the Queen not only as their head of the state, but also as the 'symbol of their nation's unity'. The Queen personifies the State, she is head of the executive, an integral part of legislature, head of the judiciary, the commander-in-chief of all armed forces, the 'supreme governor' of the established Church of England, the Anglican church and the personal Head of the Commonwealth.

The United Kingdom is governed by Her Majesty's Government in the name of the Queen. Although the Queen is deprived of actual power, she has retained many important, though formal, functions. These include opening and closing Parliament; appointing every important office holder, including government ministers, judges, diplomats and bishops; approving the appointment of the Prime Minister; giving her Royal Assent to bills; giving honours such as peerages, knighthoods and medals. The Queen has, in international affairs, the power to declare war, make peace, to recognize foreign states and governments, etc.

Once the British Empire included a large number of countries all over the world ruled by Britain. The process of decolonization began in 1947 with the independence of India, Pakistan and Ceylon. The age of colonialism was over and the British Empire came to an end. The nations that wanted independence were granted it.

The Commonwealth of Nations is an association of sovereign states that have, at some time in the past, been ruled or are still being 'ruled' by Britain. All members recognize the British Monarch as Head of the Commonwealth. There are a total of 54 countries (2020) located in various parts of the world. Today this alliance includes: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, the Bahamas,

Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Brunei, Cameroon, Canada, Cyprus, Dominica, Fiji Islands, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Kingdom, Vanuatu, Western Samoa, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Trade and cultural exhibitions and conferences of professional and unofficial medical, cultural, sports, educational and economic organizations are ways in which frequent contacts are made.

### **The Main Political Parties**

Political parties first emerged in Britain at the end of the 17th century. The Conservative and Liberal Parties are the oldest and until the end of the 19th century they were the only parties elected to the House of Commons. The main British political groupings today are the Conservative and Labour Parties and the Party of Liberal Democrats. There are some other parties: the Scottish National Party, the Democratic Unionist Party, Sinn Féin, Plaid Cymru, etc.

*The Conservative Party* was founded in 1834 from the Tory Party and was one of two dominant political parties in the 19th century, along with the Liberal Party. The word 'tory' means an Irish highwayman and was applied to the conservatives by their opponents but later they adopted the name to describe themselves.

The Tories have been in government since 2010 and as of 2021, hold an overall majority in the House of Commons with 364 Members of Parliament.

The party is British unionist, opposing Irish reunification, Welsh and Scottish independence and historically supported the continuance and maintenance of the British Empire. Party members have differing views on the European Union, with Eurosceptic and pro-European wings but recently the party has taken on a strongly eurosceptic position, embracing the slogan "Get Brexit Done" following the referendum on European Union membership held under Conservative government.

Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher, David Cameron, Theresa May and Boris Johnson are the most notable conservative Prime Ministers. Today the Conservative Party can be described as the party of the middle and upper classes.

*The Liberal Party* (1859) was one of the two major political parties in the United Kingdom with the opposing Conservative Party in the 19th and

early 20th centuries. The Tories called the Liberals 'Whigs'. A 'Whig' was a Scottish preacher who could go on for 4 or 5 hours at a time preaching moralising sermons. In the middle of the 19th century the Liberals had a Parliamentary majority. The Liberal Party represented the trading and manufacturing classes. But at the end of the 19th century and in the first two decades of the 20th one, the Liberals lost the support of working-class voters. In 1988 the Liberal Party made an alliance with Social Democrats and the Party of Liberal Democrats was formed.

*The Labour Party*, formed in 1900, was the one which drew away working people's support. It was founded by the Trades Unions. In 1981 the right-wing members of the Labour Party broke away to form a new organization, the Social Democratic Party.

Because of the electoral method in use only two major parties obtain seats in the House of Commons. People belonging to smaller political parties join one of the larger parties and work from within to make their influence felt.

### **Comprehension Check**

#### **I. Fill in the blanks with the correct words.**

1. The Queen reigns with the support of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. An association of former members of the British Empire and Britain is called the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The oldest political parties in Britain are the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Parties.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ Party is called 'Whigs'.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ Party is called 'Tories'.

#### **II. Complete the sentences with the correct answer.**

1. There are \_\_\_\_\_ MPs in the House of Commons.
  - a) 346;
  - b) 364;
  - c) 344.
2. The Liberal Party made an alliance with Social Democrats and the Party of Liberal Democrats in
  - a) 1978;
  - b) 1988;
  - c) 1998.

3. The Commonwealth includes \_\_\_\_\_ countries located in various parts of the world.

- a) 54;
- b) 64;
- c) 46.

4. The process of decolonization began in

- a) 1945;
- b) 1946;
- c) 1947.

5. The Conservative Party was founded in \_\_\_\_\_ and the Liberal Party in \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) 1859 / 1843;
- b) 1844 / 1895;
- c) 1834 / 1859.

**III. Are the statements true or false? Correct the false statements.**

- 1. A monarch is the Head of State in a constitutional monarchy.
- 2. The Commonwealth is an association of free states.
- 3. The Queen can't declare war, make peace and recognize foreign states and governments.
- 4. All members of the Commonwealth were British colonies in the past.
- 5. Recent years the Tories have a slogan "Get Brexit Done".

**IV. Answer the questions.**

- 1. Which are the two largest political parties in the UK?
- 2. What differences can you find between them (parties)?
- 3. Which party did Margaret Thatcher belong to?
- 4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a monarchy?
- 5. How do small parties operate in the House of Commons?

**V. Points for discussion.**

- 1. If you were a British voter, which party do you think you would vote for and why?
- 2. Can you see any advantages in being a member of the Commonwealth?
- 3. From your own information and the information on the internet, what reasons can you find for, and against, continued British membership of the European Union?



## UNIT 7

### THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BRITISH NATION

#### **Ancient and Roman Britain**

The English, Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish are different from each other, and there are some reasons for this.

In prehistoric times Britain was joined to the rest of Europe. The first people, and many animals, came there over dry land. Towards the end of the Ice Age the low-lying land areas became covered with water, and thus the present English Channel was formed. The hunters of the New Stone Age crossed the sea to Britain to the west of the Channel and settled along the Western shores in their search of food.

The first inhabitants of the island are the Iberian or Megalithic people, who lived mainly in the western part of the country. They are thought to have come from the region of the Mediterranean Sea (the Iberian peninsula where Spain is located) somewhere after 3000 B.C. (before Christ). Soon after 2000 B.C. another people entered the country from the east of Europe. The two peoples intermixed. The ancient people left behind impressive monuments of which Stonehenge and Avebury are most remarkable.

The arrival of the Celts from Central Europe after 800 B.C. opened up a new and important page of British history. The name 'Britain' comes from the name of a Celtic tribe known as the Britons who settled in the country. The Celts spoke the Celtic language. The influence of the Celts was greatest in Wales, Scotland and Ireland, due to this, these parts of Britain are very different from England in language, custom, traditions.

Julius Caesar, the Roman ruler, first invaded Britain in 55 B.C. Caesar's first expedition was not successful, because his force was small, and the Celts fought well. So in the following year, that is in 54 B.C., he invaded the country with a larger army of 25,000 men. This time the expedition was successful, and the Celts were defeated. But Caesar did not stay in Britain. He left the country with many slaves and other riches, and he received a promise from the Celts that they would pay a regular tribute to Rome.

Some 90 years later, that is in A.D. 43 (Anno Domini) the country was conquered by the Romans. This occupation of Britain continued to the beginning of the 5th century (about 410). Many towns were built by the Romans which were connected by good roads. Some of these roads still exist to this very day. Most British towns with names ending with 'chester'

were, in Roman times, fortified camps. The largest of the towns was called Londinium. It began life as a Roman fort at a place where it was possible to cross the river Thames.

### **The Anglo-Saxons, Danes and Normans**

After the departure of the Romans at the beginning of the 5th century, the Celts remained independent for some time, but quite soon the country began to be attacked by Germanic tribes from the continent. They were the Jutes, the Saxons and the Angles. The Jutes and the Angles came from the Jutland peninsula (today southern Denmark) and the Saxons from the territory between the Rhine and Elbe rivers (northern Germany).

The Jutes landed in Kent (the south-east) somewhere in 450. They were followed by the Angles and the Saxons so that by the end of the 5th century the greater part of the country (with the exception of Wales, Cornwall and Scotland) became occupied by the invaders. The Angles settled mainly to the north of the Thames, and quite soon the country began to be called 'the land of the Angles', later 'Engla-land' and as you easily see England. The Saxons settled in the south, south-west and partially east forming the ancient kingdoms of Wessex, Sussex and Essex. The Anglo-Saxons and Jutes were close to each other in speech and customs, and they gradually formed into one people referred to as the Anglo-Saxons.

Although the German invaders occupied most of the British Isles, certain areas remained unconquered. They were Wales, Cornwall, the northern part of Britain, Ireland. Many of the Celts who survived after the attacks of the Germanic tribes fled to these parts of the country. The northern part of Britain was the home of the Picts and Scots. After the conquest of the Picts by the Scots in the 9th this northern territory came to be called Scotland and a united Scottish kingdom was formed in the 11th century.

The Saxon kingdoms fought one against the other, at times one kingdom would become stronger, then another, but at the beginning of the 9th century Wessex became the leading kingdom and united the rest of England in the fight against the Danes, who came from present-day Denmark. Since 829 the greater part of the country was united under the name England.

An important event which contributed to the unification of the country and the development of culture was the adoption of Christianity in England in 664. Christianity began to spread in England much earlier. It is connected with the name of St. Augustine who founded the Church of England in 597.

With the adoption of Christianity many churches and monasteries were built. Among them Glastonbury later became the largest abbey in Britain. The monasteries also served as centres of education in Wessex.

In the 9th century the country had to struggle with new invaders. They were the Danes who attacked England and the Northmen from Scandinavia who invaded Scotland and Ireland.

At first they acted as pirates attacking the country and robbing it but later they came in great numbers conquering one territory after another. The kingdom of Wessex alone was left to resist them. It was lucky for Wessex to have a very talented king who organized the struggle against the Danes. This was Alfred who ruled from 871 to 901, and who eventually defeated the Danes making them sign a peace agreement. Though the country was divided into two parts – one under Saxons, and the other – the north-east – under the Danes, peace was won, and later the English took over the land occupied by the Danes.

The last of the invaders to come to Britain were the Normans from France. In 1066 Duke William of Normandy, who claimed the English throne, defeated the English in 1066 and established his rule in the country as king of England. He is known as William the Conqueror. The Normans settled in the country, and the French language became the official language of the ruling class for the next three centuries. This explains the great number of French words in English.

England began to spread its power. Wales was the first to be conquered by England. Before they were conquered by the English in the 13th century the different Welsh tribes were continually fighting one another. In 1282 Prince Llewelyn was killed in battle and the King of England, Edward I started a successful campaign to conquer Wales.

At the same time Edward I of England made his eldest son, his heir, bear the title Prince of Wales in 1301. Though Wales was conquered by England, the Welsh continued to struggle for their independence. At the beginning of the 15th century there was a great rising, but the situation was seriously changed when in 1485 the English throne passed to Henry VII of the Welsh House of Tudor. In 1536 and 1542 Henry VIII brought Wales under the English parliament through special Acts of Union. Since the 16th century Wales has been governed from London.

Scotland managed to be independent for quite a long time, though the English tried hard to conquer it.

In 1603 Queen Elizabeth I died and, as she had no children, was

succeeded by James Stuart, James VI of Scotland, who became James I of England. He was the son of Mary Queen of Scots, cousin of Elizabeth I. With this union England, Wales and Scotland became known as Great Britain. However, Scotland continued to be quite independent in the 17th century. The final unification took place in 1707, when both sides agreed to form a single parliament in London for Great Britain, although Scotland continued to keep its own system of law, education and have an independent church. Today Scotland is part of the United Kingdom.

### **The Irish**

Ireland was England's first colony, and this must never be forgotten when speaking of Anglo-Irish relations.

The problem of Northern Ireland is closely connected with religion, because the Irish people can be divided into two religious groups: Catholics and Protestants.

In 1169 Henry II of England started an invasion of Ireland. In the 16th century Henry VIII of England quarreled with Rome and declared himself head of the Anglican Church, which was a Protestant Church. Ireland remained Catholic, and did not accept the change. So Henry VIII tried to force Irish Catholics to become Anglican. He also punished them by taking a lot of their land. This policy was continued by his daughter Elizabeth I. The northern province of Northern Ireland became the centre of resistance, which was crushed by the English in 1607. After these events Northern Ireland became an area of settlement by Protestant from Scotland and England. The Irish Catholics were driven from their lands. As a result the population in Northern Ireland became Protestant in majority. But the Irish Catholics never gave up their struggle for independence and their rights.

One of the greatest tragedies of the 19th century was the Great Hunger of 1845-49 when because of the bad potato harvest one million people died and more than one million emigrated to the United States of America. The Irish people have never forgotten that the British government had not done enough to help the poor people during the hunger.

After a long and bitter struggle the southern part of Ireland finally became a Free State in 1921. Northern Ireland where the Protestants were in majority remained part of the United Kingdom. The Irish Free State declared itself a republic in 1949, and is now known as the Irish Republic or Eire. It is completely independent, and its capital is the city of Dublin.

Many years ago all Irish people spoke Gaelic (a Celtic language) and today this language is still spoken in some parts of Ireland, especially in

the west, although English is spoken by all Irish people with an accent and dialect quite different from the English in Britain.

There have been many waves of immigration into Britain. The immigrants came from: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Germany, Poland, West Indies, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, some countries of Africa.

Today Britain is a multiracial society which benefits from the influences of different peoples and cultures.

### **Comprehension Check**

#### **I. Fill in the blanks with the correct words.**

1. The first people who inhabited the island were the \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ people.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ made the Celts to pay a regular tribute to Rome.
3. The name Britain comes from the name of a Celtic \_\_\_\_\_ known as the Britons.
4. The kingdom of Wessex wasn't conquered thanks to king \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ were the last of the invaders to come to Britain from \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **II. Complete the sentences with the correct answer.**

1. The influence of the Celts was greatest
  - a) in the south-east of the country near London.
  - b) in Wales, Scotland and Ireland.
  - c) during the invasion of the Romans.
2. At the beginning of the 5th century the Celts were attacked by
  - a) the Normans.
  - b) the Danes.
  - c) Germanic tribes.
3. The Saxon kingdoms fought one against the other, but at the beginning of the 9th century
  - a) Wessex became the leading kingdom which united all the country in the struggle against the Danes.
  - b) the Danes occupied all England under their rule.
  - c) peace was established as a result of the adoption of Christianity.
4. There is a great number of French words in English
  - a) because they were borrowed by the English when Christianity spread in England.

b) due to the influence of the Celts.  
c) because French became the official language in Britain after the Norman invasion.

5. Prince Llewelyn headed the struggle against the English

a) and defeated them at Caernarfon.

b) and was killed in battle in 1282 which led to conquest of the country.

c) and successfully defended Wales against the English.

### **III. Are the statements true or false? Correct the false statements.**

1. India was England's first colony.

2. Caesar's second expedition in Britain was successful.

3. All the people in Scotland speak the Gaelic language.

4. Of the three Germanic tribes the first to come to Britain were the Saxons.

5. As a result of the Great Hunger of 1845–49 one million people died and more than one million emigrated to the USA.

### **IV. Answer the questions.**

1. What two countries are located in Ireland?

2. Where did the Anglo-Saxons and Jutes come from?

3. Was the influence of the Romans positive or negative for the development of Britain?

4. What are the reasons of the conflict in Northern Ireland?

5. Where did the Protestants in Ireland come from?

### **V. Points for discussion.**

1. What invasions has Belarus suffered in the past 2,000 years? What effects have these invasions had?

2. Are there any immigrants in Belarus? Have there been any problems associated with immigrants? If so, what should be done to solve these problems?

3. Do many people from Belarus go to live and work in other countries? Are they treated well?

## UNIT 8

### BRITISH CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

Britain is full of culture and traditions which have been around for hundreds of years. Knowing and understanding one country's customs and traditions allows us to have a deeper understanding as to why people live such lives, say such things or do such actions.

#### **Cheese Rolling**

Cheese rolling is an unusual British tradition that involves a ball of Double Gloucester cheese and a crowd that is willing to chase it for fun. It takes place on Cooper's Hill in Gloucestershire, England, with a slope so steep the participants have no choice but to stumble their way down to the finish line where, hopefully, the cheese awaits. The cheese rolling event takes place every Spring Bank Holiday Monday of the year. Local participants and visitors from all over the world gather at 12 in the afternoon to participate in or witness this sport which dates back to the 15th century when people are assumed to do similar activities as harvest rituals, among other theories.

#### **Morris Dancing**

Morris dancing is both art and history in motion. It usually involves dancing with sticks, handkerchiefs or swords in a style that is depicted mainly by location. This type of dance is typically performed on specific occasions and seasons such as early summer for Oxfordshire and during Christmas and New Year for Yorkshire.

#### **Pub Culture**

The term pub is a short term for 'public house.' True to its word origin, a British pub is a place in the neighbourhood where people gather for drinks and discussions after the daily grind. One of the great things about the pub culture is that you can strike up a conversation with a stranger and even make new friends.

#### **Afternoon Tea**

Afternoon Tea is probably one of the typically British things to partake, afternoon tea has become a socially-acceptable and rather a delightful excuse to meet people for 'some grub' from 2 until 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The common afternoon tea comprises of select teas, traditional scones, simple sandwiches and petite cakes. Complementing the pastries is clotted cream and fruit jams, amongst others. The birth of the afternoon tea happened in the year 1840 when Anna Russell, the seventh Duchess of

Bedford, would request for snacks in between lunch and dinner. It became a repeated occurrence, and she began inviting friends over to relish the treats with her.

### **Regatta**

The regatta is a boat race between the rowing teams of Oxford and Cambridge Universities. The contest dates back to 1829 as a result of a challenge between two friends, Charles Wordsworth (Oxford) and Charles Merrivale (Cambridge.) Now, the race is held annually sometime during the Easter vacation on the River Thames in southwest London. The racecourse is known as the Championship Course. It is almost 7 kilometres long and is located between Putney and Mortlake.

### **The Queen's Speech**

The Queen's Speech is a speech made by the reigning monarch at the state opening of the Parliament. Here, the queen addresses the legislature and speaks about the government agenda. The speech is usually penned by the monarch's advisors, with the queen having the final decision on its contents. There have been instances that the queen will not be able to deliver her speech for some reason. In the United Kingdom, the reigning monarch can freely choose a delegate to represent her through the speech.

One of the British Christmas traditions is the Queen's Speech on Christmas Day around 3 pm. This is when the reigning monarch will send her/his festive wishes and message to the public from the comfort of her own British palace or castle.

### **Christmas**

Christmas celebrated on 25th December is a big holiday for the British people. The season is lovely, and since Thanksgiving is not an occasion for celebration in England, Christmas comes early for the British people. Nativity plays and carols are traditional along with City centres everywhere decorated with Christmas trees. The most famous Christmas tree can be found lit in all its glory at Trafalgar Square in London. Santa Claus is called Father Christmas and will appear in the night, on Christmas Eve. Christmas lunch or dinner served on Christmas Day consists of roast turkey, baked potatoes, carrots, parsnip, mini sausages, Brussels sprouts and Yorkshire pudding. Christmas crackers are another tradition with each guest or family member receiving one.

### **Boxing Day**

Boxing Day is the day after Christmas, December 26th. It is counted as an official bank holiday in the UK and Ireland. A lot has been thought



of to have birthed such unusual British tradition and celebration, one of which is the idea that this day is allotted for gift-giving to the less fortunate or – simply put – people not of equal ranking. What really happens during this day nowadays, though, is that people gather to relish the leftovers from yesterday's festivities. It is also said to be the time to relax and rest from the holiday prances and parties.

### **Sports**

A lot of famous sports that are now widely enjoyed actually have British roots. These are: cricket, football, lawn tennis, rugby, golf, etc. The most popular sport in the UK is football. Each country has its own national team. They compete with other teams from around the globe in different world tournaments such as the well-known FIFA World Cup. As people take the utmost pride in their countries being represented, fans tend to get all worked up with the competitions. Aside from the international arena, football is also celebrated in local areas, with people playing in their local parks all across the land. Football may be famous in England, but it isn't its national sport: cricket is.

### **Red Phone Box**

Probably one of the most recognizable British icons out there is the red telephone box. It was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in 1924 and was launched by the post office as the K2 two years after. It was later on redesigned to the K6 in honour of King George V's silver jubilee. This version is probably the most identifiable of all the models. Due to the rise in the ownership of mobile phones among the population, the usage of the red telephone box has greatly declined over the past years. With the desire to preserve British heritage in mind, the K6 has now welcomed more diverse purposes for its space. From being a salad stop to housing a library of books, ingenious ways are sprouting up to save this icon from total extinction.

### **British Transport**

**Bus.** Quick, cheap and iconic – if you are looking to find those three adjectives in one mode of transport, the British double-decker bus is for you. It offers efficient travel, a cheap sightseeing deal and a classic way of doing so.

**Cab.** They say a trip to the UK isn't complete without hailing a black cab. It may be significantly more expensive than buses, though.

**Train.** UK's railway system is the oldest in the world. Almost every town is connected or accessible by train. Different companies manage the networks. Riding the train is probably the most scenic mode of travel to go.

**Tube.** The tube, or the London Underground Railway System, connects all the main areas in London. Though it tends to be very crowded during rush hour, it still is the most efficient way of roaming around London.

### **British Food**

**Fish and chips.** It consists of fish that is fried in batter and accompanied by potato chips. Fresh cod is the most common fish used for this dish. These were traditionally served wrapped in old newspaper, until a more hygienic paper replaced the wrap.

**Roast dinner** (or classically known as Sunday roast) has become one of the staple British food. It consists of roast meat, vegetables and a variety of accompaniments such as Yorkshire pudding and English mustard. The term Sunday roast came from the said origin of this dish, wherein it is believed to be the traditional meal of British families after attending church on Sundays.

### **The Curry**

Britain's love for curry is truly remarkable. It has been highly popularized by Queen Victoria herself. As the Queen was fascinated by the Indian culture, it is only natural for her famous Indian servant, Abdul Karim, to introduce good curry to her. A lot of authentic Indian restaurants have sprung up since then. National Curry Week is celebrated in Britain every October. "

### **A Good Cuppa Tea**

The British population is one of the largest tea consumers in the world. Before, it was a drink only enjoyed by the upper-class. However, as the eighteenth century entered, every social class has made drinking tea a part of their daily habit. The perfect way to brew a good cup of tea is debatable up to this day. Even scientists released their own take of 'a good cuppa tea.' The methods vary from the type of pot used to the proper steeping time. Adding milk to one's tea is also a huge subject being discussed upon. The British Empire Tea Bureau released an instructional film about the proper serving of tea in the late 1940s. The instructions are as follows:

- Always use good-quality tea.
- Use freshly-drawn water.
- Warm the pot.
- Measure tea carefully in the correct proportion to the water.
- Use just-boiled water.
- Let the tea infuse properly before serving.
- Adding milk is a must for a good brew!

## **Highland Games**

The Highland Games are proudly Scottish. They include competitions on hammer throwing, hill racing and tug of war – to name a few. It incorporates culture in sports, too, organizing band performances and other affairs to go with the games. These include bagpiping and drumming, pet dressing and Highland dancing. The largest highland games assembly in the world is the Cowal Highland Gathering held in Argyll, Scotland. It is estimated the number of guests amounts to 23,000 visitors.

## **Horse Racing**

Because horse breeding has long been part of the British legacy, it is only natural to have horse racing as an esteemed part of the society. In fact, it is the second-largest spectator sport in Britain. Horse racing events include the Royal Ascot, Grand National and the Cheltenham Festival. The history of racing horses dates back to the 12th century when the English knights carried Arab horses on their way back from the Crusades. These horses, crossbred with the English horses, gave birth to the Thoroughbred horse which is the breed being used in racing in the UK.

## **Bonfire Night**

Bonfire night is a celebration in Britain commemorating the failure of the plan to assassinate King James I in 1605. This plan is known as the Gunpowder plot. One prominent member of the English Catholics who collaborated for the plan was Guy Fawkes. That is why Bonfire night is considered synonymous to Guy Fawkes Night. This event is celebrated on November 5. On this night, bonfires are lit and people gather to enjoy treats warmed by the fire. Fireworks also fill the night sky as different forms of entertainment keep the crowd occupied. An effigy of Guy Fawkes is burned and destroyed during the celebration.

## **Kilts and Tartans**

Kilts and tartans are part of Scotland's national costume. These are made out of locally dyed plaid woven to intricate designs.

**Tartans.** These are fabrics with colourful backgrounds as a base. Vertical and horizontal stripes of different shades adorn the whole fabric.

**Kilts.** These are also called big or small wraps, depending on the size of the garment. It is a small part of the tartan and is worn around the waist. A piece of the same fabric is also pinned over the shoulder.

Nowadays, kilts and tartans are worn at weddings, Highland games and ceilidh [ˈkeɪli] (a social event full of dancing, singing and storytelling.)

## **British Pop Culture**

The UK has a rich pop culture that is influential not only in Britain but also in the international scene. British pop culture imports talents that transcend varied forms of media. Below are some of the most prominent contributions of Britain to the pop world:

**The Beatles.** They were a rock band hailing from Liverpool, England. The band is comprised of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr. The Beatles are responsible for the pop hits such as Blackbird and I Want to Hold Your Hand.

**Harry Potter.** This famous book (and film) character is the brainchild of English writer J.K. Rowling. Harry Potter is the lead character of a seven-part series that won awards and acclamations from awarding bodies and the reading public. The first book written of him is entitled Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone.

## **Comprehension Check**

### **I. Fill in the blanks with the correct words.**

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ event takes place every Spring Bank Holiday Monday of the year.
2. The most popular sport in the UK is \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ consists of roast meat, vegetables and a variety of accompaniments.
4. Bonfire night is considered synonymous to \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ were a rock band hailing from \_\_\_\_\_, England.

### **II. Complete the sentences with the correct answer.**

1. Nowadays, kilts and tartans are worn
  - a) at Universities.
  - b) at football matches.
  - c) on special occasions, such as weddings.
2. Highland Games are held in
  - a) England.
  - b) Wales.
  - c) Scotland.
3. Britain's love for curry was popularized by
  - a) Queen Victoria.
  - b) Queen Elizabeth I.
  - c) Queen Elizabeth II.

4. Cabs in the UK are

- a) yellow.
- b) red.
- c) black.

5. The \_\_\_\_\_ is held annually sometime during the Easter vacation on the River Thames in southwest London.

- a) regatta;
- b) FIFA World Cup;
- c) Cowal Highland Gathering.

**III. Are the statements true or false? Correct the false statements.**

1. Horse racing is the second-largest spectator sport in Britain.

2. J.K. Rowling is the lead character of a seven-part series of books 'Harry Potter'.

3. At Christmas night bonfires are lit and people gather to enjoy treats warmed by the fire.

4. An instructional film about the proper serving of tea was released by the British Empire Tea Bureau.

5. Yorkshire pudding is a common takeaway food in the UK.

**IV. Answer the questions.**

1. When is morris dance performed?

2. What British tradition(s) do you find dangerous?

3. How do British people celebrate Christmas?

4. Are the British great lovers of sport? Why / Why not?

5. What British customs and traditions do you find strange?

**V. Points for discussion.**

1. Would you like to participate in celebration of any British holiday?

2. Describe your favourite British holiday / custom / tradition.

3. What are the main Belarusian holidays? How do you celebrate them?

## UNIT 9

### BRITISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The educational system of Great Britain has developed for over a hundred years. It is a complicated system with wide variations between one part of the country and another. Three partners are responsible for the education service: – the Department of Education and Science (DES), local education authorities (LEAs), and school themselves.

The great majority of children attend Britain's state schools. No tuition fees are payable in any of them. Others go to private schools where parents have to pay for their children.

In most primary and secondary state schools boys and girls are taught together. Most independent schools for younger children are also mixed, while the majority of private secondary schools are single-sex.

State schools are almost all day schools, holding classes between Mondays to Fridays. The school year normally begins in early September and continues into the following July. The year is divided into three terms of about 13 weeks each.

Compulsory education begins at the age of 5 in England, Wales and Scotland, and 4 in Northern Ireland.

There are special schools adapted for the physically and mentally handicapped children. The compulsory period of schooling here is from 5 to 16. Special schools and their classes are more generously staffed than ordinary schools and provide physiotherapy, speech therapy and other forms of treatment.

**NURSERY EDUCATION.** Education for the under-fives, mainly from 3 to 5, is not compulsory and can be provided in nursery schools and nursery classes attached to primary schools. The children spend most of their time in some sort of play activity. Many children attend pre-school playgrounds, mostly organized by parents, where children can go for a morning or afternoon a couple of times a week.

**PRIMARY EDUCATION.** The primary school usually takes children from 5 to 11. The primary school may be divided into two parts – infants and juniors. At infants school (5-6) children usually stay with the same teacher for the first two years. Reading, writing and arithmetic are taught for about 20 minutes a day during the first year, gradually increasing to about 2 hours in the last year. Much time is spent in modeling from clay or drawing, reading or singing. Junior level begins at the age of seven and

education becomes more formal. The usual age for transfer from primary to secondary school is 11.

**SECONDARY EDUCATION.** Nearly all state secondary schools are comprehensive, it means that the schools take children of all abilities and provide a wide range of secondary education for all or most of the children in a district within the 11- to 18-year age range.

In very few areas, children are selected according to levels of academic attainment, and depending on their results in an exam (the 11+), go either to a grammar school, which offers academic courses for selected students aged 11-18, or to a secondary modern, which provides a more general education with a practical bias for students up to 16.

Secondary schools are allowed to leave school after completing General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exams at 16, but are encouraged to stay on until 18 to take 'A' levels. Pupils going on to higher education or professional training usually take 'A' level examinations in two or three subjects. These require two more years of study after GCSE, either in the sixth form of a secondary school, or in a separate sixth-form college.

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS.** Private education in public schools still plays a very important part in British society. About seven per cent of children attend independent or private schools. Though limited in number the public schools are the largest and most important of the independent (private) schools. They accept pupils at about 12 or 13 years of age usually on the basis of a strict selection. They are fee-paying and very expensive. Many of the teachers, who are mostly male and called 'masters', stay at the same school all through their working lives, and don't count their hours of work.

Most public schools were founded in Victorian times, but many of them are several hundred years old. The nine most ancient and aristocratic remain among the most important public schools: Eton (1440), Harrow (1571), Winchester (1382), Westminster (1560), St. Paul's (1509), Merchant Taylor's (1561), Rugby (1567), Charter House (1611) and Shrewsbury (1552). The oldest of the public schools were founded to give free education to clever boys whose parents could not afford to educate them privately. Today these schools depend on the fees paid by the pupils' parents.

The public schools are mostly boarding schools, where the pupils live and study, though many of them also take some day-pupils. Parents who wish to send their children to a public school often send them first to a

preparatory school. It's an independent school for children aged 8 to 13, whom it prepares for the public schools. At 13 pupils take the Common Examination for Entrance to Public Schools, or simply Common Entrance exam.

Independent schools 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.

### **Comprehension Check**

#### **I. Fill in the blanks with the correct words.**

1. There are special schools in GB adapted for the physically and mentally \_\_\_\_\_ children.
2. At \_\_\_\_\_ classes children spend most of their time in some sort of \_\_\_\_\_ activity.
3. At \_\_\_\_\_ schools boys and girls are taught together.
4. Today \_\_\_\_\_ depend on the fees paid by the pupils' parents.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ education begins at the age of 5 in England, Wales and Scotland, and 4 in Northern Ireland.

#### **II. Complete the sentences with the correct answer.**

1. The compulsory period of schooling at special schools is from  
a) 5 to 16.  
b) 7 to 16.  
c) 9 to 16.
2. Children from 3 to 5 can attend pre-school playgrounds, organized by  
a) the Department of Education and Science.  
b) local education authorities.  
c) children's parents.
3. Pupils going on to higher education or professional training usually take  
a) the GCSE.  
b) Common Entrance exam.  
c) 'A' level examinations.
4. Junior level begins at the age of  
a) seven.  
b) six.  
c) five.



5. \_\_\_\_\_ schools offer academic courses for selected students aged 11-18.

- a) Boarding;
- b) Grammar;
- c) Secondary modern.

**III. Are the statements true or false? Correct the false statements.**

- 1. The teachers of state schools are called 'masters'.
- 2. The public schools are mostly boarding schools, where the pupils live and study.
- 3. The oldest of the public schools were founded to give education to cleverest boys whose parents could pay for their education.
- 4. Almost all state secondary schools are comprehensive, it means that the schools take children of all abilities and provide a wide range of secondary education for all children in a district.
- 5. Three partners are responsible for the education service in GB.

**IV. Answer the questions.**

- 1. How is nursery education organized in the UK?
- 2. At what age do children start primary education?
- 3. What is the major difference between state and private education?
- 4. What are the most ancient and aristocratic public schools in GB?
- 5. What is GCSE, Common Entrance exam and 'A' level examinations?

**V. Points for discussion.**

- 1. Do you think secondary education should be selective or comprehensive? What are the advantages and disadvantages of both systems?
- 2. Do you think education should be free? Are there any advantages in a fee-paying system?
- 3. What are your views of boarding schools? Would you like to study at one of them? Why/ Why not?

## UNIT 10

### **BELARUSIAN AND BRITISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

#### **The System of Education in Belarus**

Great Britain and Belarus differ in their languages, traditions and culture, but their educational systems have much in common.

The system of education in the Republic of Belarus is based on national traditions and global trends in education area. These guarantee equal access to all education stages, unification of the requirements, continuity of all training stages and state financial support.

Today Belarusian educational system includes pre-school education (kindergarten); primary general education; basic general education; secondary general education; secondary special education; higher education and postgraduate education.

Pre-school education is not compulsory in Belarus but around 70% of children attend kindergarten before they start school. These institutions are for children under six years. Children who attend kindergarten learn social skills when they play with other children. Such children are better prepared for primary school. Children are taught pre-reading and pre-writing skills as well as basic mathematics and also discipline. The public kindergartens are free of charge but parents should cover meal's cost.

Most children in Belarus start school at the age of 6. The school year is divided into 4 terms, at the end of each pupils have holidays. School begins on 1 September for all grades and lasts at the end of May.

School education in Belarus consists of primary, basic and secondary school. The five-year basic secondary school is compulsory. Upon completion of 9th form pupils have to take the examinations to receive the certificate of basic education. Basic school graduates can continue their studies at colleges, where they can get vocational training and secondary general education or they can continue their education in schools, gymnasiums or lyceums.

At the end of 11th form (secondary general education) students sit the final examination and if successful receive the certificate of general secondary education.

Belarus has one of the highest student-to-population ratios in Europe. The higher education system in Belarus is seen as prestigious due to its high quality and affordability.

There are three main types of higher education establishments in Belarus: university, academy and institute. Students can choose to study full time, at evening classes or by correspondence.

### **The System of Education in the United Kingdom**

There are about 40,000 schools in Britain. Education in Great Britain is compulsory and free for all children between the ages of 5 and 16. There are many children who attend a nursery school from the age of 3, but it is not compulsory. In nursery schools they learn some elementary things such as numbers, colours, and letters. Apart from that, babies play, have lunch and sleep there. Whatever they do, there is always someone keeping an eye on them.

Compulsory education begins at the age of 5 when children go to primary school. Primary education lasts for 6 years. It is divided into two periods: infant schools (pupils from 5 to 7 years old) and junior schools (pupils from 7 to 11 years old). In infant schools children don't have real classes. They mostly play and learn through playing. But when pupils are 7, real studying begins. Now they have real classes, when they sit at desks, read, write and answer the teacher's questions.

Compulsory secondary education begins when children are 11 or 12 and lasts for 5 years. Children study English, Mathematics, Science, History, Art, Geography, Music, a foreign language and have lessons of Physical training. Religious education is also provided. English, Mathematics and Science are called "core" subjects. At the age of 7, 11 and 16 pupils take examinations in the core subjects.

There are 3 types of state secondary schools in Great Britain. They are:

- 1) comprehensive schools, which take pupils of all abilities without exams. In such schools pupils are often put into certain sets or groups, which are formed according to their abilities for technical or humanitarian subjects;
- 2) grammar schools, which give secondary education of a very high standard. Entrance is based on the test of ability, usually at 11. Grammar schools are single-sexed schools;
- 3) modern schools, which don't prepare pupils for universities. Education in such schools gives good prospects for practical jobs.

After five years of secondary education, at the age of 16, pupils take the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination. When they are in the third or in the fourth form, they begin to choose their exam subjects and prepare for them.

After finishing the fifth form pupils can make their choice: they may either leave school and go to a Further Education College or continue their education in the sixth form. Those who stay at school after GCSE, study

for 2 more years for 'A' (Advanced) Level Exams in two or three subjects which is necessary to get a place at one of British universities.

There are also about 500 private schools in Great Britain. Most of these schools are boarding ones, where children live as well as study. Education in such schools is very expensive, that's why only 5 per cent of schoolchildren attend them. Private schools are also called preparatory (for children up to 13 years old) and public schools (for pupils from 13 to 18 years old). Any pupil can enter the best university of the country after leaving this school. The most famous British public schools are Eton, Harrow and Winchester.

After leaving secondary school young people can apply to a university, a polytechnic or a college of further education.

### **Comprehension Check**

#### **I. Fill in the blanks with the correct words.**

1. The school year in Belarus is divided into    terms.
2.            education in GB begins at the age of 5 when children go to primary school.
3. At the age of 7, 11 and 16 pupils in the UK take examinations in           ,            and           , they are called "core" subjects.
4. Most of private schools in Great Britain are           .
5. At the end of 11th form students in Belarus sit the        examination and receive the            of                       education.

#### **II. Complete the sentences with the correct answer.**

1. At the age of 16, pupils in the UK take the        examination.
  - a) 'A' Level;
  - b) GCSE;
  - c) final.
2. At the end of the 9th form pupils in Belarus have to take the examinations to receive
  - a) the certificate of basic education.
  - b) the certificate of general secondary education.
  - c) the General Certificate of Secondary Education.
3. In the UK compulsory education begins at the age of 5 when children go to
  - a) nursery school.
  - b) secondary school.
  - c) primary school.

4. There are 3 types of state secondary schools in Great Britain:

- a) comprehensive, public, grammar.
- b) grammar, independent, boarding.
- c) comprehensive, grammar, modern.

5. Before going to school children in Belarus attend

- a) kindergartens.
- b) nursery schools.
- c) pre-school playgrounds.

### **III. Are the statements true or false? Correct the false statements.**

1. At infant schools in the UK children have real classes, when they sit at desks, read and write.

2. Basic school graduates in Belarus can continue their studies at universities.

3. Pre-school education in Belarus and the UK is not compulsory.

4. The educational system of Belarus is based on national traditions and global trends in education area.

5. Great Britain and Belarus differ in their languages, traditions and culture, but have the same educational system.

### **IV. Answer the questions.**

1. What are the main stages of Belarusian educational system?

2. Why is the higher education system in Belarus seen prestigious?

3. Where do Belarusian basic school graduates can continue their education?

4. Name the types of the state secondary schools in Great Britain. How do they differ from each other?

5. When do British pupils have to take examinations in core subjects?

### **V. Points for discussion.**

1. What are the main differences between Belarusian and British educational system?

2. What can you advise a person who wants to enter a university in Belarus / the UK?

3. Today some young people think that having a good education is not very important. Do you agree with them?

## UNIT 11

### HIGHER EDUCATION IN GREAT BRITAIN

Higher education is mostly provided by the Universities. The academic year in Britain's universities is divided into three terms.

There are about 150 universities in Britain. The oldest and best-known universities are located in Oxford, Cambridge, London, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Bristol, Birmingham and Southampton.

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. Universities are autonomous and enjoy complete academic freedom, appointing their own staff and deciding which students to admit. Students, who have been accepted by universities receive a grant from their local authority, which cover the cost of the course, and may cover living expenses, books and travel.

The universities determine the length and the content of their courses. Most courses last three or four years. Medical and veterinary courses last five years. They lead in most cases to BA (Bachelor of Arts), BSc (Bachelor of Science), BEd (Bachelor of Education), Higher National Diploma (HND), Higher National Certificate (HNC). BA, BSc and BEd require three or four years, HND requires two years and HNC requires one year. There are various postgraduate degrees, including Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy.

The two intellectual eyes of Britain – Oxford (1167) and Cambridge (1209) Universities – date from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

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

In the nineteenth and 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.

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.

The creation of the Open University in the 1960s marked the new era in higher education. It is intended for people who study in their own free time and who 'attend' lectures by watching television and listening to the radio, using specially written texts, videos, computers and the internet. They keep in touch by phone and letter or the internet with their tutors and attend summer schools.

The best universities, in view of "The Times" and "The Guardian", are The University of Oxford, The University of Cambridge, London School of Economics, London Imperial College, and London University College.

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.

When they first arrive at college, first year university students are called 'freshers'. A fresher's life can be exciting but terrifying for the first week.

Often freshers will live in a Hall of Residence on or near the college campus, although they may move into a rented room in their second or third year, or share a house with friends. Many freshers will feel very homesick for the first week or so, but living in hall soon helps them to make new friends.

During the first week, all the clubs and societies hold a 'freshers' fair' during which they try to persuade the new students to join their society.

On the day that lectures start, groups of freshers are often seen walking around huge campuses, maps in hand and a worried look on their faces. They are learning how difficult it is to change from a school community to one of many thousands. They also learn a new way of studying. As well as lectures, there are regular seminars, at which one of a small group of students (not more than ten) reads a paper he or she has written. The paper is then discussed by the tutor and the rest of the group. Once or twice a term, students will have a tutorial. This means that they see a tutor alone to discuss their work and their progress. In Oxford and Cambridge, and some other universities, the study system is based entirely around such tutorials which take place once a week. Attending lectures is optional for 'Oxbridge' students!

The normal length of the degree course is three years, after which the students take the Degree of Bachelor of Arts (BA). 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. The university's earliest charter is dated to 1213.

There are now thirty-nine colleges, some of them only for men, some only for women and others 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. Teaching members of the colleges (i.e. fellows and tutors) are known as dons, although the term is rarely used by the university itself. The university maintains the largest university library system in the UK. Oxford maintains a number of museums and galleries open for free to the public. The Oxford University Press is the world's second oldest and currently the largest university press by the number of publications. More than 6,000 new books are published annually.

Twenty-eight British prime ministers have attended Oxford, including Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair, David Cameron, Theresa May and Boris Johnson.

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

On the banks of the Cam willow trees droop 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 Peterhouse, 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 mathematicians, scientists, politicians, layers, philosophers, writers, monarchs and other heads of state. There are 121 Nobel laureates, 11 Fields Medalists, 7 Turning Award winners and 14 British prime ministers. University alumni have won 194 Olympic medals.

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 University Press, a department of the university, is the oldest university press in the world and currently the second largest university press in the world. Cambridge's libraries, of which there are 116, hold a total of around 16 million books, around nine million of which are in Cambridge University Library.

### **Comprehension Check**

#### **I. Fill in the blanks with the correct words.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are the oldest and most prestigious universities in Great Britain.
2. The academic year in Britain's universities is divided into \_\_\_\_\_ terms.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ universities were founded in the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ University is intended for people who study in their own free time.
5. The graduates of the \_\_\_\_\_ University have won 194 Olympic medals.

#### **II. Complete the sentences with the correct answer.**

1. The postgraduate degrees are
  - a) Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science.
  - b) Doctor of Philosophy and Bachelor of Education.
  - c) Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy.
2. Oxford and Cambridge are collectively called
  - a) Cabbage.
  - b) Bridgefox.
  - c) Oxbridge.

3. Every college of Oxford and Cambridge universities is governed by
  - a) a Master.
  - b) the staff.
  - c) a Tutor.
4. The most famous college of Cambridge University is
  - a) Peterhouse College.
  - b) King's College.
  - c) Robinson College.
5. Universities choose their students according to good A-level results in at least two subjects and also
  - a) interviews.
  - b) traits of character.
  - c) family's background.

### **III. Are the statements true or false? Correct the false statements.**

1. Universities have complete academic freedom, they can appoint their own staff and decide which students to admit.
2. Medical and veterinary courses of university last five years.
3. Further education colleges have strong ties with commerce and industry.
4. Oxford and Cambridge are both independent universities.
5. The Oxford University Press is the world's first oldest and currently the largest university press by the number of publications.

### **IV. Answer the questions.**

1. Which examinations do you need to go to a British university?
2. What famous people studied at Oxford and Cambridge?
3. How are the first-year students called?
4. Where do students live during their studying?
5. What degrees do British universities offer?

### **V. Points for discussion.**

1. Is it a good thing to leave home at the age of 18? What are the advantages and disadvantages?
2. Many British people believe that if you do nothing more than study hard at university, you will have wasted a great opportunity. What do they mean and do you agree?
3. How do British universities differ from universities in Belarus? What do you like and dislike about the British system?

## LIST OF SOURCES

1. Kozikis D.D., Medvedev G.I., Demtchenko N.V. British Studies. – Mn, 2007.
2. Kozikis D.D., Baranovsky L.S. How do you do, Britain. – Mn., 2008.
3. Susan Sheerin, Jonathan Soath, GillianWhite. Spotlight on Britain. Oxford University Press.
4. Paul Harvey, Rhodri Jones. Britain Explored. – Longman, 1992.
5. Oschepkova V.V., Shustilova I.I. Britain in Brief. – M., 1997.

## CONTENTS

UNIT 1. A Country Across the Channel .....	3
UNIT 2. The Geography of the British Isles.....	6
UNIT 3. The Relief Features of the UK.....	9
UNIT 4. Vegetation and Wildlife of the UK .....	14
UNIT 5. The System of Government.....	16
UNIT 6. The United Kingdom as a Constitutional Monarchy.....	20
UNIT 7. The Formation and Development of the British Nation.....	24
UNIT 8. British Customs and Traditions .....	30
UNIT 9. British Educational System .....	37
UNIT 10. Belarusian and British Educational System .....	41
UNIT 11. Higher Education in Great Britain .....	45
List of Sources .....	50

Учебное издание

**Елисеенко Татьяна Эдуардовна**  
**Царева Татьяна Тимофеевна**

**СТРАНОВЕДЕНИЕ**  
**ВЕЛИКОБРИТАНИИ**

Курс лекций

Технический редактор *И. И. Толкачева*  
Компьютерная верстка *С. А. Кирильчик*

Подписано в печать 28.09.2021. Формат 60x84/16  
Гарнитура Times New Roman. Усл.-печ. л. 3,1.  
Уч.-изд. л. 3,4. Тираж 30 экз. Заказ № 322.

Учреждение образования “Могилевский государственный университет  
имени А. А. Кулешова”, 212022, Могилев, Космонавтов, 1.  
Свидетельство ГРИИРПИ № 1/131 от 03.01.2014 г.

Отпечатано в отделе оперативной полиграфии  
МГУ имени А. А. Кулешова, 212022, Могилев, Космонавтов, 1.