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ASPECTS OF BRITISH LIFE

Учебно-методическое пособие по британскому страноведению для студентов факультетов иностранных языков

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Цель данного пособия – предоставить студентам дополнительную информацию для расширения знаний о географии и культуре Великобритании, научить их разбираться в сложных социальных, политических, образовательных и культурных тенденциях современной жизни страны, видеть исторические взаимосвязи и истоки национальных традиций. Задачей пособия является освещение различных аспектов жизни страны изучаемого языка и привитие студентам навыков самостоятельного, критического осмысления фактов. Пособие содержит неадаптированные тексты на английском языке и, следовательно, имеет своей целью способствовать совершенствованию навыков владения иностранным языком и стимулировать более глубокий интерес к основному предмету и британскому страноведению. Пособие может быть использовано как в качестве хрестоматии к лекционному курсу, так и для изучения страноведческой тематики в практическом курсе преподавания английского языка.

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Geographical identities. Political identities. The four nations. The dominance of England. National loyalties. Stereotypes and multiculturalism. Identity in Northern Ireland . Being British.

UK or Britain?

The full title of the country is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The UK is made up of four nations: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. However, a lot of people say 'Great Britain' or 'Britain'. In general, Britain refers to the mainland and Great Britain includes Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. The people who live in the four nations are all British. The individual differences and culture within each are still greatly treasured, particularly in sporting competitions, with the English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish people still retaining their competitiveness and pride in their own nation.

Britain's overseas territories and crown dependencies

Britain has 14 Overseas Territories, spread throughout the globe. They range from the tiny island of Pitcairn, with its 47 inhabitants, set in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, to Bermuda, which has a population of 62,059 and is one of the world's major financial centres. The Overseas Territories are: Anguilla, British Antarctic Territory, Bermuda, British Indian Ocean Territory, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, St Helena and Dependencies (Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha), Turk and Caicos Islands, Pitcairn Island, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, Sovereign Base Areas on Cyprus.

The Crown Dependencies are not part of the United Kingdom but are internally self-governing dependencies of the Crown. The Crown Dependencies are the Isle of Man, the Bailiwick of Jersey and the Bailiwick of Guernsey.

Living in the UK

The UK is an exciting, eclectic, successful and progressive place to live and work in the 21st century. With a population approaching nearly 60 million, the UK is a growing country, offering a wealth of opportunities to people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures from across the world. Consequently, becoming a UK citizen is a much prized possession.

The UK is made up of four nations or countries.

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England

England is a country of great contrast and diversity, both in the places you can go to and in the people you meet. All the regions of England are within easy reach of the exciting capital city, London, famed for first-class culture, fascinating history and pageantry, its world-class restaurants and theatres.

Scotland

Scotland is everything you imagine - whisky, golf, romance of the clans and a wealth of castles and historic sites. The Highlands area is one of the last wildernesses in Europe.

Wales

Wales captivates visitors with its rich character and landscapes. The Welsh speak their own Celtic language as well as English and have their own culture, poetry and song, which they celebrate in concerts and unique summer festivals known as *eisteddfodau.*

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is known for its vibrant cities with shopping, nightlife and festivals, outdoor activities, fabulous food and unspoilt retreats where you can unwind, relax and recharge.
(from Living and Working in the UK by Mathew Collins and Nicky Barclay, How To Books Ltd, 2007)

Britain is often represented by national symbols. The symbols may signify the country as a whole or a region of it. The most obvious are the national flags. Britain's Union Jack contains the intersecting crosses of three of her patron saints: St. George's cross for England, St. Andrews' cross for Scotland and St. Patrick's cross for Ireland. The crosses represent the union of England, Scotland and Ireland (the patron saint of Wales, St. David, is not represented in the Union Jack). St.George is traditionally depicted on horseback slaying a dragon, and is also portrayed on some coins.
There are two personifications of Britain: John Bull and Britannia. John Bull represents a typical Englishman, supposed to have a "bullish" appearance and characteristics. Britannia is a female personification of Britain. She is depicted on coins leaning on a shield and holding a trident in one hand. She represents Britain as a victorious maritime nation.
Britain is also represented by two animals, the lion and the bulldog. The lion represents pride and bravery. It is also a symbol of power and royalty. The bulldog, like John Bull, represents both tenacity and brute force.

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Britain is further represented by different plants and flowers: the rose for England, the leek and daffodil for Wales, the thistle for Scotland and the shamrock for Ireland. Another symbol for Ireland is the harp, which is also regarded as the national musical instrument of Wales. The oak is sometimes depicted as the traditional tree of England.
Well-known and historic buildings also serve as national symbols. In Britain, Tower Bridge, the Houses of Parliament, Big Ben are often used. Other popular symbolic sights are Piccadilly Circus with its statue of "Eros" and Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square.
(from Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopedic Dictionary, OUP, 1993)

Attitudes to national, regional and local identities

Immigration to Britain has often been seen as a threat to British moral, social and cultural values. Yet the British-Irish Isles have always been culturally and ethnically diverse. There are many differences between England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and distinctive ways of life and identities within each nation at national, regional and local levels. The meaning of contemporary 'Britishness' consequently becomes problematic. The history of the British-Irish Isles before the eighteenth century is not about a single British identity or political entity. It is about four different nations and their peoples, who have often been hostile towards one another. 'Britishness' since the 1707 union between England/Wales and Scotland has been largely identified with representative and centralized state institutions, such as monarchy, Parliament, law and Protestant churches, and their values. Concepts of Britishness were more widely used in the nineteenth century and tied to the Victorian monarchy and Britain's imperial, industrial and military position in the world. These elements have since weakened relative to Britain's decline.
Terms such as 'British' and 'Britain' can seem artificial to many people in the contemporary UK population, who have retained different cultural and national identities. Foreigners often call all British people 'English' and have difficulties in appreciating the distinctions, or the irritation of the non-English population at such labelling. The Scots, Welsh and Northern Irish are regarded largely as Celtic peoples (with admixtures over centuries), while the English are considered to be mainly Anglo-Saxon in origin. It is argued that the 'British' today do not have a strong sense of a 'British' identity.
In this view, there needs to be a rethinking of what it means to be British in the contexts of a multinational, multi-ethnic UK and a changing Europe. There has obviously been ethnic and cultural assimilation in Britain over the centuries, which resulted from adaptation by immigrant groups and internal migration between the four nations. Social, political and institutional standardization and a British awareness were established. However, the British identification is often equated with English norms because of England's historical role: political unification

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occurred under the English Crown, UK state power is still mainly concentrated in London, and the English dominate numerically.

English nationalism has historically been the most potent of the four nationalisms, and the English had no real problem with the dual national role. But some now seem to be unsure about their identity in a devolved Britain. The Scots and Welsh are more aware of the difference between their nationalism and Britishness; resent the English dominance; see themselves as different from the English; and regard their cultural feelings as crucial. Their sense of identity is conditioned by the tension between their distinctive histories and a history of centralized government from London.

National identity in the four nations was until recently largely cultural and the British political union was generally accepted, except for some people in the minority Catholic population of Northern Ireland. But political nationalism increased in the 1960s and 1970s in Scotland and Wales. Today, following devolution in 1999–2000, calls for full independence in these two nations are not strong, except from the Scottish National Party (SNP) and (arguably) the Welsh National Party (Plaid Cymru). It has been suggested that Scottish and Welsh devolution may spark a resurgence in English nationalism.

The Welsh, English and Scottish seem increasingly to be defining themselves more in terms of their individual nationalities, rather than as British. A *Sunday Times* poll in 2000 found that schoolchildren clearly saw themselves as English (66 per cent), Scottish (82) or Welsh (79). Some 84 per cent of English children regarded England as their home (rather than Britain) and 75 per cent felt that their nationality was important to them. But there was little interest in the creation of regional English assemblies and little desire for a break-up of the United Kingdom.

However, there are also differences on regional and local levels within the four nations themselves. Some English regions such as the north-east and north-west react against London influences and demand decentralized political autonomy. Since the English are a relatively mixed people, their customs, accents and behaviour vary considerably and some regional identifications are still strong. The Cornish, for example, see themselves as a distinctive cultural element in English society and have an affinity with Celtic and similar ethnic groups in Britain and Europe. The northern English have often regarded themselves as superior to the southern English, and vice versa. On a smaller level, English county and local loyalties (often centred on cities such as Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Birmingham or London) are still maintained and may be shown in sports, politics, food habits, competitions, cultural activities or a specific way of life.

In Wales, there are cultural and political differences between the industrial south (which supports the Labour Party) and the rest of the mainly rural country; between Welsh-speaking Wales in the north-west and centre (which supports Plaid Cymru) and English-influenced Wales in the east and south-west (where the Conservative Party has some support); and between the cities of Cardiff and Swansea. Yet Welsh people generally are very conscious of their differences from

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the English, despite the fact that many Welsh people have mixed English-Welsh ancestry. Their national and cultural identity is grounded in their history; literature; the Welsh language (actively spoken by 19 per cent of the population); sport (such as rugby football); and festivals such as the National Eisteddfod (with its Welsh poetry competitions, dancing and music). It is also echoed in close-knit industrial and agricultural communities and in a tradition of social, political and religious dissent from English norms. Today, many Welsh people feel that they are struggling for their national identity against political power in London and the erosion of their culture and language by English institutions. A limited form of devolution has helped to alleviate these feelings and increase Welsh identity.

Similarly, Scots generally unite in defence of their national identity and distinctiveness because of historical reactions to the English. They are conscious of their traditions, which are reflected in cultural festivals and different legal, religious and educational systems. There has been resentment against the centralization of political power in London and alleged economic neglect of Scotland (although the UK government provides greater economic subsidies per head of population to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland than to England). Devolved government in Edinburgh has removed some of these objections and focused on Scottish identity. But Scots are divided by three languages (Gaelic, Scots and English, the first of these being spoken by 1.5 per cent of the Scottish population or 70,000 people), different religions, prejudices and regionalisms. Cultural differences separate Lowlanders and Highlanders and deep rivalries exist between the two major cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

In Northern Ireland, the social, cultural and political differences between Roman Catholics and Protestants have long been evident and today are often reflected in geographical ghettos. Groups in both communities feel frustration with the English and hostility towards the British government in London. But the Protestant Unionists are loyal to the Crown; regard themselves as British; and wish to continue the union with Britain. Many Catholic Nationalists feel Irish and would prefer to be united with the Republic of Ireland. Devolution in Northern Ireland has not succeeded in eradicating deep-seated differences between the two communities. These features suggest that the contemporary British are a very diverse people with varying identities. It is as difficult to find an English, Welsh, Scottish or Irish person who conforms to all or even some of their assumed national stereotypes as it is to find a typical Briton. Within Britain, ethnic minorities (both white and non-white) may use dual or multiple identities and embrace different loyalties. Many call themselves British or more specifically English, Welsh, Irish or Scottish, while still identifying with their countries of origin or descent. Sometimes they employ their ethnic ties to define themselves as Afro-Caribbean, Black British or British Asians. They may also embrace identities which relate to their religion, for example British Muslims or Hindus and British Jews. But a *Sunday Times* survey in November 2001 suggested that 68 per cent of Muslims considered that being Muslim was more important than being British (14 per cent thought the opposite).

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Foreigners often have either specific notions of what they think the British are like or, in desperation, seek a unified picture of national character, based sometimes upon stereotypes, quaint traditions or tourist views of Britain. The emphasis in this search should perhaps be more upon an examination of ethnic diversity or pluralism in British life. A *British Council/MORI* poll in 1999 found that overseas respondents felt that Britain is a multicultural society though opinion was divided as to whether or not it is also racially tolerant. It found that the countries that are least willing to believe that UK society is racially tolerant are those that are least aware of its multicultural composition. But 'multiculturalism' is a strongly debated issue in Britain. Some critics favour the separate development of cultural groups and the preservation of their ethnic identities. Others argue for assimilation. The latter implies an acceptance of basic common values, including those represented by civic social and political structures, which have primacy over individual cultural identities. These concerns are central to attempts to define 'Britishness'. Surveys suggest there is a popular movement away from the allegedly negative, imperial and English-dominated historical implications of Britishness to a more positive, value-based, inclusive image with which the four nations and their populations can feel comfortable. A Britishness which encompasses opportunity, respect, tolerance, supportiveness, progress and decency is supposed to be attractive to the Celtic nations and ethnic minorities. But these values have to be realized within defining institutional structures.
(from British Civilization by John Oakland, Routledge, 2002)

1. What official, historical and poetic names for Britain and its parts do you know?
2. What national symbols and personifications can you name?
3. Who are the patron saints of the countries making up the UK and what are their symbols?
4. Why is the meaning of Britishness problematic?
5. How have national identities changed in a devolved Britain?

The political setup of the country. Political parties. The monarchy and the government. Parliament and local government. Devolution. Election system. Membership of the EU.

Overview of the UK government

The United Kingdom is a parliamentary democracy. It is also a constitutional monarchy in which ministers of the Crown govern in the name of the sovereign, who is both head of state and head of the government. There is no 'written constitution' in the UK. Instead, the relationship between the state and the people relies on statute law, common law and conventions.

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The UK Parliament makes primary legislation - other than for matters devolved to the Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly - and is the highest authority in the land. It continues to have the supreme authority for government and lawmaking in the UK as a whole.
The executive comprises the government (members of the Cabinet and other ministers responsible for policies), government departments and agencies, local authorities, public corporations, independent regulatory bodies and certain other organizations subject to ministerial control. The judiciary determines common law and interprets statutes. In her role as monarch, the Queen is head of the executive and plays an integral part in the legislature. She heads the judiciary and is both the commander-in-chief of all the armed forces of the Crown and supreme governor of the established Church of England.
Following devolution, the responsibilities of the government's Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland changed considerably, although they retain their positions in the UK Cabinet. They ensure that the reserved interests of the countries they represent are properly considered in central government and they lead the presentation of government policy in their parts of the UK. They are also responsible for safeguarding and promoting the devolution settlements of their respective countries.

The monarchy and government

As a result of a long process of change during which the monarchy's absolute power has been gradually reduced, custom now dictates that the Queen follows ministerial advice from her Prime Minister. Within this framework she performs a range of important duties, such as summoning, proroguing (discontinue a session, parliament, for example) and dissolving Parliament and giving Royal Assent to legislation passed by the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament or the Northern Ireland Assembly.
The Queen formally appoints important office holders, including the Prime Minister and other government ministers, judges, officers in the armed forces, governors, diplomats, bishops and some other senior clergy of the Church of England. In instances where people have been wrongly convicted of crimes, she is involved in pardoning them. She also bestows peerages, knighthoods and other honours on citizens every year. In international affairs the Queen, as head of state, has the power to declare war and make peace, to recognise foreign states, to conclude treaties and to take over or give up territory. The Queen holds Privy Council meetings, gives audiences to her ministers and officials in the UK and overseas, receives accounts of Cabinet decisions, reads dispatches and signs state papers. She is consulted on many aspects of national life and must show complete impartiality in the advice she gives.
The law states that a regent has to be appointed to perform the royal functions if the monarch is totally incapacitated. The regency follows the line of succession, provided that the person concerned has reached the age of 18.

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What Parliament does

The main functions of Parliament are to pass laws, to provide – by voting for taxation - the means of carrying out the work of government, to scrutinise Government policy and administration, including proposals for expenditure, and to debate the major issues of the day. In the course of performing these tasks, Parliament brings the relevant facts and issues to the attention of the electorate.
It is also customary for Parliament to be informed before important international treaties and agreements are finalised and agreed. The making of treaties is, however, a royal prerogative carried out on the advice of the government and, strictly speaking, does not need parliamentary approval.

About political parties

The party system, which has existed since the 18th century, depends upon there being organised political groups, each of which presents its policies to the electorate for approval. Most candidates in elections, and almost all winning candidates, belong to one of the main parties.
Since the 1920s, Britain has had a predominantly two-party system. Since 1945, either the Conservative Party, whose origins go back to the 18th century, or the Labour Party, which emerged in the last decade of the 19th century, has held power. The Liberal Democrats were formed in 1988 when the Liberal Party, which also traces its origins to the 18th century, merged with the Social Democratic Party, which was founded in 1981.
Other parties include two national parties, Plaid Cymru, the Party of Wales (founded in 1925), and the Scottish National Party (founded in 1934). Northern Ireland has a number of parties. They include the Ulster Unionists, formed in the early part of the 20th century, the Democratic Unionists, founded in 1971 by a group that broke away from the Ulster Unionists, the Social Democratic and Labour Party, founded in 1970, and Sinn Fein.
All those elected to Parliament and who serve their local community or constituency are paid a salary and can claim expenses. They all use the initials MP (Member of Parliament) after their names to show they are in public office. MPs are elected from 659 constituencies. The party that wins most seats (although not necessarily the most votes) at a general election, or which has the support of a majority of members in the House of Commons, usually becomes the government.
By tradition, the sovereign invites the leader of that party to form a government. About 100 members of the governing party in the House of Commons and the House of Lords receive ministerial appointments (including appointment to the Cabinet) on the advice of the Prime Minister. The largest minority party becomes the official opposition, with its own leader and 'shadow cabinet'.

Political parties in Parliament

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Leaders of the current government and opposition sit opposite one another on the front benches in the debating chamber of the House of Commons. Their supporters, called the 'backbenchers', sit behind them. There are similar seating arrangements for the parties in the House of Lords but those peers who do not wish to be associated with any political party choose to sit on the 'crossbenches'.
The effectiveness of the party system in Parliament relies to a large extent on the relationship between the government and the opposition parties. Depending on the relative strengths of the parties in the House of Commons, the opposition may try to overthrow the government by defeating it on a 'matter of confidence' vote. However, in general, the opposition aims to contribute to the formulation of policy and legislation by constructive criticism, by opposing government proposals with which it disagrees, by tabling amendments to government Bills, and by putting forward its own policies in order to improve its chances of winning the next general election.
The government Chief Whips in the Commons and the Lords, in consultation with their opposition counterparts, arrange the scheduling of government business. Collectively, the Chief Whips are often referred to as 'the usual channels' when the question of finding time for a particular item of business is being discussed.
The Chief Whips and their assistants, who are usually chosen by the party leaders, manage their parliamentary parties. Their duties include keeping members informed of forthcoming parliamentary business, maintaining the party's voting strength by ensuring members attend important debates, and passing on to the party leadership the opinions of backbench members.
Legislation in 2000 made party funding more open. It specifies that: parties can only accept donations of over £200 from 'permissible donors', who are individuals on the UK electoral register, registered companies incorporated in the EU which do business in the UK, registered political parties, or trade unions all donations of over £5,000 to a political party's central organisation must be reported to the Electoral Commission on a quarterly basis, or weekly during a general election campaign all donations of over £1,000 to accounting units, such as a constituency association, must be reported to the Electoral Commission individual MPs and other people elected to office, including MEPs, members of the devolved assemblies of Wales and Northern Ireland and the Scottish Parliament, members of local authorities and the Mayor of London, are subject to similar controls on the source of donations and have to report to the Electoral Commission any donations over £1,000 political parties are subject to a cap on campaign spending applied before a General Election; a party has an allowance of £30,000 for each constituency contested third parties at elections, such as trade unions, are subject to expenditure limits set at 5 per cent of the maximum for political parties.

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Who can vote?

To vote in parliamentary elections in the UK you must be a British citizen, a citizen of another Commonwealth country or of the Irish Republic, as well as being resident in the UK, aged 18 or over, included in the register of electors for the constituency and not subject to any legal incapacity to vote. The right to vote at 18 years was established in 1969. Previously the age to vote was 21 years and was set in 1928. To ensure your name is entered on the electoral register, visit www.electoralcommission.org.uk.

British citizens who live abroad can vote in the UK elections for up to 15 years after leaving.

People not entitled to vote include members of the House of Lords, foreign nationals resident in the UK (other than Commonwealth citizens or citizens of the Irish Republic), some patients detained under mental health legislation, sentenced prisoners and people convicted within the previous five years of corrupt or illegal election practices.

Members of the armed forces, Crown servants and staff of the British Council employed overseas (together with their wives or husbands if accompanying them) may be registered at an address in the constituency where they would be living if they were not serving abroad. British citizens living abroad may apply to register as electors for a period of up to 15 years after they have left the UK.

Government working at a local level

Central government, run by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet of Ministers, makes national policy decisions. However, at a local level, local authorities or councils manage local services for the local communities. Local authorities or councils, which are run by elected members and public officials, make local policies and decisions and have a budget set by central government to spend on local needs. Having a second layer of government at local level demands rigorous arrangements and auditing to ensure public money is spent and managed properly by members who are fairly elected to the roles of councillors. A number of committees are formed within each council to monitor progress, decision-making and spending for such services as schools, environment, planning, etc. Some decisions, such as the acceptance of policies and the budget, are reserved for the full council - this is where all the elected councillors meet to review and discuss plans. However, most decisions relating to the implementation of policy are for the executive (the paid public officials) within each council. The executive is also responsible for preparing the policies and budget to propose to the authority or council. Decisions may be taken by: the executive collectively, individual members of the executive, committees of the executive officers of the authority.

Executives and councils are accountable to the local communities they serve. The executive is also able to delegate decision-making to area committees and to enter into partnership arrangements with other authorities.

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The public, including the press, is admitted to meetings of the executive when key decisions are being discussed. They also have access to agendas, reports and minutes of meetings and certain background papers. In addition, local authorities must publish a forward plan setting out the decisions that will be taken over the coming months. Local authorities may exclude the public from meetings and withhold papers only in limited circumstances.

Local authorities work within the powers laid down under various Acts of Parliament at national government level. Their functions are far-reaching. Some are mandatory, which means that the authority must do what is required by law. Others are discretionary, allowing an authority to provide services if it wishes.

In certain cases, ministers have powers to secure uniformity in standards to safeguard public health or to protect the rights of individual citizens. Where local authorities exceed their statutory powers, they are regarded as acting outside the law and can be challenged in court.

The main link between local authorities and central government in England is the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. However, other departments, such as the Department for Education and Skills, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department of Health and the Home Office, are also concerned with various local government functions.

In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, local authorities now deal mainly with the devolved Parliament and Assemblies. About two million people are employed by local authorities in the UK. These include school teachers, the police, firefighters and other non-manual and manual workers. Education is the largest locally provided service, with 0.9 million full-time equivalent jobs. Councils are individually responsible, within certain legislative requirements, for deciding the structure of their workforces.

Every part of the UK is covered by a local authority fire service. Each of the 59 fire authorities must by law provide a firefighting service and must maintain a brigade to meet all normal requirements.

Each fire authority appoints a Chief Fire Officer, or Firemaster in Scotland, who has day-to-day control of operations.

Local authorities consist of elected councillors, who are voted for in a way broadly similar to that for elections of Members of Parliament, except that proportional representation is used in Northern Ireland. Eligibility rules for voters are also similar to those for UK parliamentary elections, save that citizens of other member states of the EU may also vote.

To stand for election, candidates must either be registered as an elector or have some other close connection within the electoral area of their candidature, such as their principal place of employment.

Councillors are paid a basic allowance, but may also be entitled to additional allowances and expenses for attending meetings or for taking on special responsibilities.

Whole council elections are held every four years in all county councils in England, borough councils in London, and about two thirds of non-metropolitan

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district councils. In all other district councils, including the metropolitan districts, one-third of the councillors are elected in each of the three years when county council elections are not held. However, a few non-metropolitan district councils will soon hold biennial elections, with half of the councillors elected every two years. Whole council elections are every fourth year in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The electoral arrangements of local authorities in England are kept under review by the Boundary Committee for England, established in April 2002 as a statutory committee of the Electoral Commission. Periodic electoral reviews of local authorities are undertaken in Scotland by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland.

Some districts have the ceremonial title of borough, or city, both granted by royal authority. Traditionally, councillors choose a Mayor (in Scotland a Provost) to act as presiding officer and to perform ceremonial duties. In the City of London and certain other large cities, he or she is known as the Lord Mayor. In Scotland, the presiding officer of the council of the four longest-established cities (Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow) is called the Lord Provost.

The Local Government Act 2000 required local authorities in England and Wales to implement new decision-making structures, including the option of a directly elected mayor. Duties of mayors range from ceremonial to executive.

In most authorities the arrangements are based on one of three executive frameworks: a mayor and cabinet, a council leader and cabinet, or a mayor and council manager. Within these options, local authorities have considerable flexibility to work under a constitution that reflects local circumstances. Small shire district councils with a population of fewer than 85,000 have, in addition to executive arrangements, the choice of reforming their existing committee system. The majority of English and Welsh local authorities have opted for a style of executive where the leader of the cabinet is chosen by other councillors.

Provisions in the Local Government Act 2000 require councils in England and Wales to hold binding referendums if, following consultation, local people indicate that they want to elect a mayor directly under the new executive arrangements the Act put in place. Although the government has powers to direct a local authority to hold a referendum in certain circumstances, in June 2002 it announced that it would not intervene in cases where it did not agree with the judgement made by a council following consultation.

Introduction to devolution

The Labour government that came to power in 1997 committed to a decentralisation of power through the establishment of a Parliament and Executive in Scotland, an Assembly in Wales, and a longer-term devolution of power to regional level in England. The Belfast Agreement, reached in Northern Ireland in April 1998, approved in a referendum the following month, also paved the way for constitutional development. Following the 'Machinery of Government changes' in

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June 2003, responsibility for the overall management of relations between the UK Government and the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has moved from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA). The ODPM remains responsible for the English region.
Prime Minister Tony Blair announced on 14 October 2002 that the full-time UK government posts of the Secretary of State for Scotland and Wales, following devolution, were no longer required and their roles could be combined with other posts. The Scottish and Welsh Offices were relocated within the new DCA, together with the Parliamentary Under-Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales.

Scotland and Wales

The highest priority was given to the creation of a Parliament in Scotland and a National Assembly for Wales because the demand for decentralisation in these countries was stronger than in other parts of the UK.
The government published detailed proposals for Scotland and Wales in July 1997 and these were approved by referendums in Scotland and Wales in September of that year. The Scotland Act and the Government of Wales Act both completed their passage through the UK Parliament in 1998 and the first elections to the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales took place on 6 May 1999. The devolution arrangements became fully operational on 1 July 1999.

Northern Ireland

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland suspended the Northern Ireland Assembly on 14 October 2002 and Northern Ireland was returned to direct rule. The Secretary of State, assisted by his team of Northern Ireland Office Ministers, therefore assumed responsibility for the direction and control of the Northern Ireland Departments.
The Northern Ireland Assembly had been one of the new institutions created following the Belfast Agreement of April 1998.
It was an Assembly of 108 members with a similar range of legislative and executive powers to the Scottish Parliament.
The Executive and the institutions were first set up on 2 December 1999, but were suspended when direct rule was re-introduced by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 11 February 2000. The Executive and institutions were re-established following negotiations between all the parties on 29 May 2000. Devolution has been suspended on two further occasions, on 10 August and 21 September 2001, for 24 hours on each occasion.

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England

In England, the government does not plan to impose a uniform system because demand for directly elected regional government varies considerably across the country.
In the first instance, the government has legislated to create Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) to promote economic development similar to Scottish Enterprise and the Welsh Development Agency. This legislation also provides for the establishment of regional chambers made up of members from local authorities in the region as well as including wide regional stakeholders from other sectors to co-ordinate transport, planning, economic development, bids for European funding and land use planning. The RDAs and the regional offices of central government are planned to work with the regional chambers.
The 1999 Greater London Authority Act created the Mayor of London and the London Assembly to restore strategic city-wide government for the capital. The government published the White Paper on regional governance, *Your Region, Your Choice* on 9 May 2002. It proposed to strengthen the existing regional institutions in England, and take forward the government's manifesto commitment on elected regional government.
The Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill was introduced to Parliament on 14 November 2002. The Act received Royal Assent on 8 May 2003. The Act will take forward the commitment in the White Paper on regional governance to allow each of the English regions to establish an elected assembly, if approved in a referendum. This is the first of two pieces of primary legislation which will give effect to the Government's proposals for directly elected regional assemblies. This Act enables those regions that want to hold a referendum to have that chance.

Devolution in Scotland: overview

In a referendum held in September 1997, 74 per cent of those who voted endorsed the UK government's proposals to set up a Scottish Parliament and Executive to administer Scottish affairs. On a second question, on whether to give the new Parliament tax-varying powers, 64 per cent were in favour. The Scottish Parliament has a unique structure and wide responsibilities.
Legislation was introduced in the Westminster Parliament in December 1997 and the following November the Scotland Act 1998 passed into law. Elections to the first Scottish Parliament for almost 300 years were held in May 1999, and it met for the first time in July of that year.
Unlike the Westminster Parliament, the Scottish Parliament does not have a second chamber to revise legislation which comes before it. Detailed scrutiny of Bills is carried out in committees or by taking evidence from outside experts. The House of Lords no longer considers Scottish legislation on devolved matters, although it remains the final court of appeal in hearing civil cases arising from the Scottish courts.

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The Scottish Parliament's 129 members (MSPs) are elected for a fixed four-year term. The Additional Member System of proportional representation is used in Scottish parliamentary elections, giving each voter two votes: one for a constituency MSP and one 'regional' vote for a registered political party or an individual independent candidate.
There are 73 single-member constituency seats and 56 seats representing eight regions (based on the European parliamentary constituencies), with each region returning seven members. These MSPs are allocated so that each party's overall share of seats in the Parliament reflects its share of the regional vote.
In June 2003, the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, announced that the role of Secretary of State for Scotland, to represent Scottish interests in the UK Cabinet, would be combined with other posts within the Cabinet.
The Scotland Office, together with the Wales Office, also moved to be part of the new Department for Constitutional Affairs. At Cabinet level, responsibility for the conduct of Scottish business, and lead responsibility for the representation of Scotland within the government and Parliament, will lie with a senior minister, supported by the staff located within the Department for Constitutional Affairs.
The Scottish Executive, the administrative arm of government in Scotland, has responsibility for all public bodies whose functions and services have been devolved to it, and is accountable to the Scottish Parliament for them.
The First Minister, normally the leader of the party with most support in the Parliament, heads the Scottish Executive. Since the first elections, the Executive has been run by a partnership between Labour and the Liberal Democrats, with the latter having two seats in the Cabinet of the Scottish Parliament, including that of Deputy First Minister. There are 11 Cabinet positions in all plus the nonelected Lord Advocate, the chief law officer.

Responsibilities of the Scottish Parliament

In certain areas, listed below, the Scottish Parliament is able to amend or repeal existing Acts of the UK Parliament and to pass new legislation of its own. The Scottish Parliament has the power to act in a wide number of areas. Responsibility for a number of other issues, including overseas affairs, defence and national security, overall economic and monetary policy, energy, employment legislation and social security, anti-discrimination, asylum and immigration, remains with the UK government and Parliament as 'reserved' matters under Schedule 5 of the Scotland Act 1998.
The Scottish Parliament's areas of responsibility are: education and training, local government, housing, economic development, many aspects of home affairs and civil and criminal law, transport, the environment, agriculture, fisheries and forestry, sport, culture and the arts.

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The Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive: overview

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland suspended the Northern Ireland Assembly on 14 October 2002 and Northern Ireland has been returned to direct rule. Power and responsibility have been devolved to the Northern Ireland community. Prior to its suspension, the first elections for the Northern Ireland Assembly were held in June 1998, using the single transferable vote system of proportional representation. The 18 constituencies were the same as those for the UK Parliament, but each returned six MLAs (Members of the Legislative Assembly), giving the Assembly a total of 108 members.
At its first meeting in July 1998, the Assembly elected, on a cross community basis, a First Minister and a Deputy First Minister, and appointed ten ministers with responsibility for each of the Northern Ireland departments, which together formed the Executive. These 12 ministers made up the Executive Committee, which met to discuss and agree on those issues that cut across the responsibilities of two or more ministers. Its role was to prioritise executive business and to recommend a common position, where necessary. Following devolution, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland - a member of the UK Cabinet whose main function was to ensure that the devolution settlement worked satisfactorily – remained responsible for Northern Ireland Office (NIO) matters not devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly. These included policing, security policy, prisons and criminal justice.
The Assembly has been suspended on previous occasions. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland re-introduced direct control of Northern Ireland on 11 February 2000. The Executive and institutions were re-established following negotiations between all the parties on 29 May 2000. Devolution has been suspended on two further occasions, on 10 August and 21 September 2001, for 24 hours on each occasion. The arrangements for the Executive and the institutions will come back into force if and when the Assembly's current suspension is lifted.

Devolved powers and responsibilities

In December 1999, power to run most of Northern Ireland's domestic affairs was fully devolved by the Westminster Parliament to the Northern Ireland Assembly and its Executive Committee of Ministers. The Assembly met in Parliament Buildings at Stormont, Belfast, and was the prime source of authority for all devolved responsibilities. It had full legislative and executive powers within this framework, which meant it could make laws and take decisions on all the functions of the Northern Ireland departments.
The Executive's main function was to plan each year, and review as necessary, a programme of government with an agreed budget. This was subject to approval by the Assembly, after scrutiny in Assembly Committees, on a cross-community basis. MLAs could be on more than one Assembly Committee. The Assembly had

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ten Statutory Committees. Membership of committees was in broad proportion to party strengths in the Assembly to ensure that the opportunity of
committee places was available to all members. Each committee had a scrutiny, policy development and consultation role in relation to its department and a role in the initiation of legislation. A 60-member Civic Forum, whose chairperson was appointed by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, represented the business, trade union, voluntary and other sectors of the Northern Ireland community. It acted as a consultative mechanism on social, economic and cultural matters.

The Northern Ireland Office and the Assembly

The role of the Northern Ireland Office is to support the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in securing a lasting peace, based on the Good Friday Agreement. When power has been devolved to the Northern Ireland Executive, the Secretary of State retains responsibility for constitutional and security issues as they relate to Northern Ireland, in particular law and order, political affairs, policing and criminal justice. Victims issues are handled by the NIO's Victims Liaison Unit and the NIO also has responsibility for matters relating to the licensing and legislation concerning firearms and explosives.
During devolution, economic and social matters are the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Executive. It handles policy relating to: agriculture and rural development, culture, arts and leisure, education, enterprise, trade and investment, environment, finance and personnel, health social services and public safety, higher and further education, training and employment, regional development, social development.

National Assembly for Wales and Welsh Assembly government: overview

In 1997, the Welsh people narrowly endorsed government proposals to devolve certain powers and responsibilities to a National Assembly. Of those who voted, 50.3 per cent were in favour.

The Welsh Assembly has wide-ranging powers and responsibilities

The Government of Wales Act 1998 laid down the necessary statutory framework to establish the National Assembly for Wales, which held its first elections in May 1999 and began functioning as a devolved administration two months later. In February 2002, the National Assembly voted to make clear the difference in roles between ministers and the Assembly as a whole. The Welsh Assembly government develops and implements policy. It is accountable to the National Assembly and is primarily located in Cathays Park, Cardiff. The National Assembly for Wales debates and approves legislation and holds the Assembly Government to account. Its debating chamber and members are located at Cardiff Bay.

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Electors have two votes in Assembly elections: one for their local constituency and one for their electoral region. The Assembly comprises 60 members (AMs): 40 from local constituencies, with the same boundaries as those for Welsh seats in the House of Commons, and 20 regional members. The Assembly is elected by the Additional Member System of proportional representation.
The First Minister, who heads the Assembly government, is supported by a Cabinet of eight ministers in charge of economic development and transport, Assembly business, finance, local government and public services, education and lifelong learning, health and social care, social justice, housing and regeneration, environment, planning and countryside and culture, Welsh language and sport. The Assembly is also responsible for more than 50 public bodies.
These include the Welsh Development Agency, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, the Sports Council for Wales and the Welsh Language Board.
In June 2003, the Prime Minister announced that the role of Secretary of State for Wales, to represent Welsh interests in the UK Cabinet, would be combined with other posts within the Cabinet. The work of the Wales Office also moved to the new Department for Constitutional Affairs.

Powers of the National Assembly for Wales

The National Assembly for Wales only has powers to make secondary legislation, which it uses to meet distinctive Welsh needs. The Welsh Assembly exercises a range of specific responsibilities.
Primary legislation on Welsh affairs continues to be made in the UK Parliament at Westminster.
Within Wales, the Assembly has power to develop and put into practice policies in the following areas: agriculture, forestry, fisheries and food, ancient monuments and historic buildings, culture, economic development, education and training, the environment, health and health services, highways, housing, industry, local government, social services, sport and recreation, tourism, town and country planning, transport, water and flood, defence, the Welsh language.

The UK as a member state of the European Union

As a member state of the European Union, the UK is bound by the various types of European Community (EC) legislation and wider policies that are based on a series of treaties since the 1950s. Almost all UK government departments are involved in EU-wide activities.
The Community enacts legislation that is binding on the national governments of the 25 member states or, in certain circumstances, on individuals and companies within those states. UK government ministers take part in the discussions and decision-making. The final decision is taken collectively by all the member states.
The UK Representative Office (UKREP), based in Brussels, conducts most of the negotiations on behalf of the UK government. Following UK devolution, offices

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were opened in Brussels to promote the interests of Scotland and Wales within the EU. Both work in close co-operation with UKREP.
The Council of the European Union is the main decision-making body. Member states are represented by the ministers appropriate to the subject under discussion. When, for instance, education matters are being discussed, the UK's Secretary of State for Education and Skills attends with his or her European counterparts. The Presidency of the Council changes at six-monthly intervals and rotates in turn among the 25 member states of the Union.
In some cases, Council decisions must be unanimous. In others, they are taken by qualified majority voting (a qualified majority being the number of votes required for a decision to be adopted), with votes weighted according to a country's population - currently ten each for Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Italy, eight for Spain, five each for Belgium, Greece, the Netherlands and Portugal, four each for Austria and Sweden, three each for Denmark, Finland and the Irish Republic, and two for Luxembourg. The threshold for the qualified majority is set at 62 votes out of 87. The European Council usually meets twice a year and comprises the heads of state or government (accompanied by their foreign ministers), the President of the European Commission and one other commissioner. The Council defines general political guidelines. The European Commission is the executive body. It implements the Council's decisions, initiates legislation and ensures that member states put it into effect. Each of the 20 commissioners, who are drawn from all member states (there are two from the UK), is responsible for a specific policy area, for example, education, transport or agriculture. The commissioners are entirely independent of their countries and serve the EU as a whole.
(from Living and Working in the UK by Mathew Collins and Nicky Barclay, How To Books Ltd, 2007)

1. What are the three branches of power in the UK?
2. What are the official and ceremonial duties of the monarch?
3. What are the main functions of Parliament?
4. What political parties in Britain do you know?
5. For elections Britain is divided into areas of roughly equal population. What are they called?
6. What are the functions of the local governments?
7. What are the powers of the devolved parliaments?

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Immigration. The country's social profile. Ethnic minorities. Class.

England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland had more clearly (if not completely) defined identities and geographical areas by the twelfth century. The British state then gradually developed through colonization and political unification. This process was accompanied by fierce and bloody conflicts between the nations, often

resulting in lasting tensions and bitterness. Political and military attempts were made by England to unite Wales, Scotland and Ireland under the English Crown. English monarchs tried to conquer or ally themselves with these other countries as a protection against threats from within the islands and from continental Europe, as well as for increased power and possessions.

Ireland was invaded by Henry II in 1169. Much of the country was then controlled by Anglo-Norman nobles but little direct authority was initially exercised from England. The later colonization of Ireland by the English and the Scots became a source of conflict between the countries. But it also led to Irish settlements in Scotland, London and west-coast ports such as Liverpool. Ireland later became part of the United Kingdom in 1801 but, after a period of violence and political unrest, was divided in 1921–22 into the independent Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland (which is part of the UK).

Wales, after Roman rule, remained a Celtic country, although influenced by Anglo-Norman England. Between 1282 and 1285 Edward I's military campaign brought Wales under English rule, and he built castles and deployed garrisons there. Apart from a period of freedom in 1402–07, Wales was integrated legally and administratively with England by Acts of Union 1536–42.

The English also tried to conquer Scotland by military force, but were repulsed at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. Scotland was then to remain independent until the political union between the two countries in 1707, when the creation of Great Britain (England/Wales and Scotland) took place. But Scotland and England had shared a common monarch since 1603 when James VI of Scotland became James I of England.

England, Wales and Scotland had meanwhile become predominantly Protestant in religion as a result of the European Reformation. But Ireland remained Catholic and tried to distance itself from England, thus adding religion to colonialism as a foundation for future problems.

Britain therefore is not a single, ethnically homogeneous country, but rather a recent and potentially unstable union of four old nations. Great Britain is only slightly older than the USA, and the United Kingdom (1801) is younger. Nor did the political unions appreciably alter the relationships between the four nations. The English often treated their Celtic neighbours as colonial subjects rather than equal partners, and Englishness became a dominant strand in concepts of Britishness, because of the role that the English have played in the formation of Britain.

However, despite the tensions and bitterness between the four nations, there was a steady internal migration between them. This mainly involved movements of Irish, Welsh and Scottish people into England. Relatively few English emigrated to Wales and Scotland, although there was English and Scottish settlement in Ireland over the centuries. Immigration from abroad also continued over the centuries owing to factors such as religious and political persecution, trade, business and employment. Immigrants have had a significant impact on British society. They have contributed to financial institutions, commerce, industry and agriculture, and

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influenced artistic, cultural and political developments. But immigrant activity and success have resulted in jealousy, discrimination and violence from the native population.

In addition to political integration, Britain's growth was also conditioned first by a series of agricultural changes and second by a number of later industrial revolutions. Agriculture started with Neolithic settlers and continued with the Saxons in England who cleared the forests, cultivated crops and introduced inventions and equipment which remained in use for centuries. Their open-field system of farming (with strips of land being worked by local people) was later replaced by widespread sheep-herding and wool production. Britain expanded agriculturally and commercially from the eleventh century, and also developed manufacturing industries. Immigration was often characterized by financial and agricultural skills. Jewish moneylenders entered England with the Norman Conquest, to be followed later by Lombard bankers from northern Italy. This commercial expertise helped to create greater wealth and was influenced by the merchants of the German Hansa League, who set up their trading posts in London and on the east coast of England. Around 1330, Dutch and Flemish weavers arrived, who by the end of the fifteenth century had helped to transform England into a major nation of sheep farmers, cloth producers and textile exporters. Fourteenth-century immigration also introduced specialized knowledge in a variety of manufacturing trades.

Some immigrants stayed only for short periods. Others remained and adapted themselves to British society, while preserving their own cultural and ethnic identities. Newcomers were often encouraged to settle in Britain, and the policy of using immigrant expertise continued in later centuries. But foreign workers had no legal rights, and early immigrants, such as Jews and the Hansa merchants, could be summarily expelled.

Agricultural and commercial developments were reflected in changing population concentrations. From Saxon times to around 1800, Britain had an agriculturally based economy and some 80 per cent of the people lived in villages in the countryside. Settlement was mainly concentrated in the south and east of England, where the rich agricultural regions of East Anglia and Lincolnshire had the greatest population densities. During the fourteenth century, however, the steady increase of people was halted by a series of plagues, and numbers did not start to increase again for another hundred years.

As agricultural production moved into sheep farming and clothing manufactures, larger numbers of people settled around woollen ports, such as Bristol in the west and coastal towns in East Anglia. Others moved to cloth-producing areas in the West Country (south-western parts of England) and the Cotswolds and initiated the growth of market towns. The south midland and eastern English counties had the greatest densities of people, and the population at the end of the seventeenth century is estimated at 5.5 million for England and Wales and 1 million for Scotland.

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Other newcomers continued to arrive from overseas, including gypsies, blacks (associated with the slave trade) and a further wave of Jews, who in 1655 created the first permanent Jewish community. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the country attracted a large number of refugees, such as Dutch Protestants and French Huguenots, who were driven from Europe by warfare, political and religious persecution and employment needs. This talented and urbanized immigration contributed considerably to the national economy and added a new dimension to a largely agricultural population. But, from around 1700, there was to be no more large immigration into the country for the next two hundred years. Britain was exporting more people than it received, mainly to North America and the expanding colonies worldwide.

A second central development in British history was a number of industrial revolutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These transformed Britain from an agricultural economy into an industrial and manufacturing country. Processes based on coal-generated steam power were discovered and exploited. Factories and factory towns were needed to mass-produce new manufactured goods. Villages in the coalfields and industrial areas grew rapidly into manufacturing centres. A drift of population away from the countryside began in the late eighteenth century, as people sought work in urban factories to escape rural poverty and unemployment.

They moved, for example, to textile mills in Lancashire and Yorkshire and to heavy industries and pottery factories in the West Midlands.

The earlier agricultural population changed radically in the nineteenth century into an industrialized workforce. The 1801 census (the first modern measurement of population) gave figures of over 8 million for England, Wales half a million, 1.5 million for Scotland and over 5 million for Ireland. But, between 1801 and 1901, the population of England and Wales trebled to 30 million. The numbers in Scotland increased less rapidly, owing to emigration, but in Ireland the population was reduced from 8 to 4 million because of famine, deaths and emigration. The greatest concentrations of people were now in London and industrial areas of the Midlands, south Lancashire, Merseyside, Clydeside, Tyneside, Yorkshire and south Wales.

The industrial revolution reached its height during the early nineteenth century. It did not require foreign labour because there were enough skilled British workers and a ready supply of unskilled labourers from Wales, Scotland, Ireland and the English countryside. Welshmen from north Wales went to the Lancashire textile mills; Highland Scots travelled to the Lowland Clydeside industries; and Irishmen flocked to England and Scotland to work in the manual trades of the industrial infrastructure constructing roads, railways and canals. These migratory movements promoted conflicts but also assimilation. Industrialization expanded commercial markets, which attracted new immigrants who had the business and financial skills to exploit the industrial wealth. Some newcomers joined City of London financial institutions and the import/export trades, to which they contributed their international connections. Other settlers were involved in a wide range of

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occupations and trades. Immigration to Britain might have been greater in the nineteenth century had it not been for the attraction of North America, which was receiving large numbers of newcomers from all over the world, including Britain. By the end of the nineteenth century, Britain was the world's leading industrial nation and one of the richest. But it gradually lost its world lead in manufacturing industry, most of which was in native British hands.
However, its position in international finance, some of which was under immigrant control, was retained into the twentieth century.

Immigration from 1900

Immigrants historically had relatively free access to Britain. But they could be easily expelled; had no legal rights to protect them; and restrictions were increasingly imposed upon them. But the 1871 census showed that the number of people in Britain born outside the British Empire was only 157,000 out of a population of some 31.5 million.
Despite these low figures, immigration and asylum seekers caused public and political concern, which continued through the twentieth century. In the early years of the century, Jews and Poles escaped persecution in Eastern Europe and settled in the East End of London, which has always been an area of immigrant concentration. Demands for immigration control grew and an anti-foreigner feeling spread, fuelled by the nationalism and spy mania caused by the First World War (1914–18). But laws (such as the Aliens Act of 1905), which were designed to curtail foreign entry, proved ineffective. By 1911 the number of people in Britain born outside the empire was 428,000 or 1 per cent of the population. Despite legal controls, and partly as a result of the 1930s world recession and the Second World War, refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe and immigrants entered Britain. After the war, Poles, Latvians, Ukrainians and other nationalities chose to stay in Britain. Later in the twentieth century, political refugees arrived, such as Hungarians, Czechs, Chileans, Libyans, East African Asians, Iranians, Vietnamese and other Eastern Europeans, in addition to Italian, French, German, Irish, Turkish, Cypriot, Chinese and Spanish economic immigrants. These groups today form sizeable ethnic minorities and are found throughout the country. Such newcomers have often suffered from discrimination, some more than others, since racism is not a new phenomenon in Britain. But public and political concern then turned to the issues of race and colour, which were to dominate the immigration debate and focused on non-white Commonwealth immigration. Before the Second World War, most Commonwealth immigrants to Britain came from the largely white Old Commonwealth countries of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and from South Africa. All Commonwealth citizens were allowed free access and were not treated as aliens. But from the late 1940s, people from the non-white New Commonwealth nations of India, Pakistan and the West Indies came to Britain (sometimes at the invitation of government agencies) to fill the vacant manual and lower-paid jobs of an expanding economy. West Indians worked in public transport, catering, the

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Health Service and manual trades in London, Birmingham and other large cities. Indians and Pakistanis later arrived to work in the textile and iron industries of Leeds, Bradford and Leicester (which may be the first British city to have a non-white majority population). By the 1970s, non-white people became a familiar sight in other British towns such as Glasgow, Sheffield, Bristol, Huddersfield, Manchester, Liverpool, Coventry and Nottingham. There was a considerable dispersal of such immigrants throughout Britain, although many tended to settle in the central areas of industrial cities. These non-white communities have now increased and work in a broad range of occupations. Some, particularly Indian Asians and black Africans, have been successful in economic and professional terms. Others have experienced considerable problems such as low-paid jobs, unemployment, educational disadvantage, decaying housing in the inner cities and racial discrimination. It is argued that Britain possesses a deep-rooted (or institutional) racism based on the legacy of empire and notions of racial superiority, which continues to manifest itself and has hindered the integration of the non-white population into the larger society. Many young non-whites who have been born in Britain feel particularly bitter at their experiences and at their relative lack of educational and employment possibilities and advancement.

So many New Commonwealth immigrants were coming to Britain that from 1962 governments treated most Commonwealth newcomers as aliens and followed a two-strand policy on immigration. This consisted, first, of Immigration Acts to restrict the number of immigrants entering the country and, second, of Race Relations Acts to protect the rights of those immigrants already settled in Britain. Race Relations Acts make it unlawful to discriminate against persons on grounds of racial, ethnic or national origin in areas such as education, housing, employment, services and advertising. Those who suffer alleged discrimination can appeal to Race Relations Tribunals, and anti-discrimination bodies have also been established, culminating with the Commission for Racial Equality in 1976. This body, which is not without its critics, works for the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity.

There is still criticism of the immigration laws and race-relations organizations. Some people argue that one cannot legislate satisfactorily against discrimination, and others would like stricter controls. The concerns of some white people are made worse by racialist speeches; the growth of extreme nationalist parties such as the National Front and the British National Party; and racially inspired violence. Non-white citizens, on the other hand, often feel that they too easily and unfairly became scapegoats for any problems that arise. Some become alienated from British society and reject institutions such as the police, legal system and political structures. Government policies since the 1940s have not always helped to lessen either white or non-white anxieties. Immigration and race remain problematic. They are complex matters; are exploited for political purposes from both the right and the left; and can be over-dramatized. Many non-white immigrants and their British-born children have slowly adapted to the larger society, whilst retaining

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their ethnic identities. Britain does have a relatively stable diversity of cultures and the highest rate of intermarriage and mixed-race relationships in Europe, with one in eight children under five having parents from different ethnic backgrounds. But outbreaks of racial tension, violence and harassment do occur, and there are accusations that the police and the courts ignore or underplay race crimes. A central concern for some people is that race problems are not being openly and fairly debated.

In 1999–2000, 93.3 per cent of Britons were classified as white and 6.7 per cent belonged to non-white groups of whom 46 per cent were born in Britain. Non-whites therefore constitute a relatively small proportion of the total British population and 49 per cent of them live in London (as opposed to 10 per cent of the white population).

The non-white population was earlier largely composed of immigrant families or single people. But this structure has changed as more dependants join settled immigrants, as British-born non-whites develop their own family organizations and as more people intermarry. The term 'immigrant' has now lost some of its earlier significance and the emphasis has switched to debates about what constitutes a 'multi-ethnic society'. Apart from a few categories of people who have a right of abode in Britain and are not subject to immigration control, all others require either entry clearance or permission to enter and remain. Generally speaking, such newcomers (apart from short-term visitors) need a work permit and a guaranteed job if they hope to stay in the country for longer periods of time. But dependants of immigrants already settled in Britain may be granted the right of entry and permanent settlement.

There are also many other ethnic minority communities in Britain, which are usually classified as white. Immigration from the Republic of Ireland continues; the Irish have historically been a large immigrant group; and there are some 800,000 people of primary Irish descent. Movement from the Old Commonwealth countries (such as Australia, Canada and South Africa) has increased slightly, while that of other Commonwealth citizens has dropped following entry restrictions. There has been an increase in immigrants from European Union countries (such as Germany, Spain, Italy and France), who have the right to seek work and reside in Britain, with sizeable numbers from the USA and Middle East.

There are legal distinctions between immigration (a controlled entry system often based on economic factors) into Britain and political asylum (fleeing from persecution). In 2000, 125,000 immigrants were accepted for permanent settlement (more than in previous years). They came from Africa, the Indian subcontinent, the rest of Asia and non-EU Europe, with many being dependants of settled immigrants. This suggests that a significant immigration continues, despite restrictive legislation.

But the Labour government evaluated the rules for the admission of asylum seekers following public concern and controversy about the increasing numbers entering Britain and suspicions that many were economic migrants rather than being genuinely in humanitarian need. In 2001, the top six countries from which

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registered asylum seekers came to Britain were Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Iran. However, it is estimated that there may be one million illegal asylum seekers and immigrants in Britain. On the other hand, the country's economy is dependent upon immigrant labour to compensate for a declining birth rate and it is argued that immigration and asylum regulations need to be realistically reformed.

Opinion polls for some years had suggested that race relations, immigration and asylum were of less concern for British people than they were from the 1940s to the 1980s. A *MORI* poll in 1995 found that 78 per cent of respondents said that they were not at all prejudiced against people of other races. But a *Guardian* newspaper poll in 2001 said that 70 per cent of its readers thought that race relations were not getting better in Britain.

A *MORI* poll in June 2001 reported that actual worries about immigration and race relations have increased from 3 per cent in 1996 to 19 per cent in 2001.

Acceptance for settlement does not mean automatic citizenship. Naturalization occurs only when certain requirements have been fulfilled, together with a period of residence. New conditions for naturalization and redefinitions of British citizenship are contained in the Nationality Act of 1981. This Act has been criticized by some as providing further restrictions on immigration procedures.

However, it is important that emigration from Britain is considered if the immigration/race debate is to be kept in perspective. Historically, there has usually been a balance of migration, with emigration cancelling out immigration in real terms. But there have been periods of high emigration. Groups left England and Scotland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to become settlers and colonists in Ireland and North America. Millions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries emigrated to New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Canada, other colonies and the USA. But in 1998, there was a net gain of 181,000 to the population as more people entered the country than left. More entrants were from the Old Commonwealth and the EU than in previous years.

Population movements from 1900

Industrial areas with heavy population densities developed in the nineteenth century. But considerable population shifts occurred in the twentieth century, which were mainly due to economic and employment changes. There was a drift of people away from industrial Tyneside and South Wales during the 1920s and 1930s trade depressions as coal production, steel manufacture and other heavy industries were badly affected. Since the 1950s there has been little increase in population in industrial areas of the Central Lowlands of Scotland, Tyneside, Merseyside, West Yorkshire, south Wales and Northern Ireland, which have seen a run-down in traditional industries and rises in unemployment. Instead, people moved away from these regions, first to the English Midlands with their diversified industries and then to London and south-east England where employment opportunities (despite fluctuations) and affluence were greater. The reduction of

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the rural population and the expansion of urban centres continued into the twentieth century. But, by the middle of the century, there was a movement of people away from the centres of big cities such as London, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and Leeds. This was due to bomb damage during the Second World War, slum clearance and the need to use inner-city land for shops, offices, warehouses and transport utilities. So-called New Towns in rural areas and council housing estates outside the inner cities were specifically created to accommodate the displanted population. Road systems were built with motorways and bypasses to avoid congested areas, and rural locations around some cities were designated as Green Belts, in which no building was permitted.

Many people choose to live some distance from their workplaces, often in a city's suburbs, neighbouring towns (commuter towns) or rural areas. This has contributed to the decline of inner-city populations, and one British person in five now lives in the countryside with the rest in towns and cities. Densities are highest in Greater London and in south-east England and lowest in rural regions of northern Scotland, the Lake District, Wales and Northern Ireland. The latest figures suggest an increasing movement of people to rural areas. This has been accompanied by population losses in and company relocations from large cities, particularly London.

In 1999–2001 the population of the United Kingdom was 59,501,000, which consisted of England with 49,753,000, Wales with 2,937,000, Scotland with 5,119,000 and Northern Ireland with 1,692,000. These figures give a population density for the United Kingdom of some 600 persons per square mile (242 per sq km), well above the European Union average. England has an average density of some 940 persons per square mile (381 per sq km) and this average does not reveal the even higher densities in some areas of the country, such as London, the West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Tyne and Wear, Edinburgh and Cardiff. Within Europe, only the Netherlands has a higher population density than England.

The British population grew by only 0.3 per cent between 1971 and 1978, which gave it one of the lowest increases in Western Europe. A similarly low growth rate is forecast in the twenty-first century, with the population expected to be 60.4 million by 2011 and 61.8 million by 2021.

But the non-white ethnic minorities are growing fifteen times faster than the white population and are also much younger. It is estimated that the counties of southern and central England will have the highest population growth up to 2011 and that the heaviest population losses will occur on Tyneside and Merseyside.

(from British Civilization by John Oakland, Routledge, 2002)

Social class

Class in Britain has been variously defined by material wealth; ownership of the means of production as against the sellers of labour; education and job status; accent and dialect; birth and breeding; and sometimes by lifestyle. Historically, the

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British class system was divided into upper, middle and working classes. Earlier, hierarchies based on wealth, the ownership of property, aristocratic privilege and political power were rigidly adhered to. But a middle class of traders, merchants and skilled artisans began to make inroads into this system. Industrialization in the nineteenth century further fragmented class divisions. The working class divided into skilled and unskilled workers and the middle class split into lower, middle and upper sections, depending on job classification or wealth. The upper class was still largely defined by birth, property and inherited money.

The spread of education and expansion of wealth to greater numbers of people in the twentieth century allowed more social mobility (moving upwards out of the class into which one was born). The working class was more upwardly mobile, the upper class (owing to a loss of aristocratic privilege) merged more with the middle class and it was felt that the old rigid class system was breaking down. But class structures still exist, although the proportions of people belonging to the various levels have changed substantially.

Some researchers now employ a six-class model based on occupation, income and property ownership, such as:

Higher-grade professional, managerial and administrative workers (e.g. doctors and lawyers)

Intermediate professional, managerial and administrative workers (e.g. school teachers and sales managers)

Non-manual skilled workers (e.g. clerks)

Manual skilled workers (e.g. coal-miners)

Semi-skilled workers (e.g. postmen)

Unskilled workers (e.g. refuse collectors, cleaners and labourers)

In addition, a further group (the underclass) has been used in recent years. This consists of people who fall outside the usual classes and includes the unemployed, single-parent families, the very poor and those with alternative lifestyles.

This model indicates two social/occupational groupings in contemporary Britain: a 'middle class' made up of classes 1, 2 and 3 and a 'working class' consisting of classes 4, 5 and 6. Research indicates that the British population today largely consists of a middle class (60 per cent) and a working class (40 per cent). The working class has shrunk and there has been more upward mobility, with people advancing socially due to economic progress and changes in occupational structures. Polls suggest that the British themselves feel that they are becoming more middle-class and it is argued that many people have the sort of lifestyle, jobs and income which classify them as middle-class. It also seems that class is now as much a matter of different social habits and attitudes as it is of occupation and money. The old gaps between the classes have lessened and class today is a more finely graded hierarchy dependent upon a range of characteristics. But inequalities of wealth, difficulties of social mobility for some people, poverty and questions of prestige remain.

(from British Civilization by John Oakland, Routledge, 2002)

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1. How did settlement and immigration in Britain take place?
2. How did the patterns of population distribution in Britain change?
3. Is it correct to describe contemporary Britain as a ‘multi-ethnic’ and ‘multinational’ society?
4. How is social class defined?

Family. Divorce. Cohabitation. The workforce.

Changing family and demographic structures

The provision of contemporary social services, in both public and private sectors, is conditioned by changes in family structures, demographic factors (such as increases in life expectancy and an ageing population), governmental responses to social needs and the availability and cost of services. It is argued that, as new social structures have emerged, the traditional British family is falling apart; failing to provide for its elderly and disabled; suffering from social and moral problems; lacking parenting skills; and looking automatically to the state for support. The nuclear family (two parents and children living together) has been reduced, but it still accounts for a majority of households. Marriage has decreased in popularity in Britain and in 2000 it accounted for 55 per cent of the adult population. In 1998 there were 305,000 marriages (one of the lowest annual figures in the twentieth century) and two in five of these were remarriages of one or both parties. Only a quarter of first marriages now have a religious ceremony, while most remarriages are civil. More people are delaying marriage until their late twenties (average age twenty-eight for men and twenty-six for women) for a variety of reasons, such as career considerations.

Statisticians predict that, for the first time since 1801, married couples will in future be outnumbered by those people who never marry. The number of married adults will fall from 55 per cent at present to 48 per cent by 2011 and 45 per cent by 2021. The proportion of unmarried men will increase more than the proportion of unmarried women; the rise in cohabiting couples (heterosexual or lesbian and gay couples living together outside marriage) will not compensate for the decrease in married couples; and divorce rates will decline correspondingly. This suggests that many more adults will be living alone. There has already been a significant increase in one-person households with no children. These are people of all ages who live alone and may be unmarried, divorced, separated, widows or widowers. They are nearly one in three (29 per cent) of all households, more than double the proportion in 1961.

Four out of ten marriages end in divorce, although there was a decrease in 1998 to 12.9 per 1,000 married people. Britain has the highest divorce rate in the European Union; remarriages are at greater risk than first marriages; and people who marry under twenty-one are the most susceptible to divorce. The average length of marriages ending in divorce is ten years; the average divorce age is thirty-seven for

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women and thirty-nine for men; and divorce affects a considerable number of children under sixteen. The trauma is increased by the confrontational nature of the divorce system, with conflicts over property, financial support and custody of children.

Over the past twenty years, there has been a big increase in cohabitation. There are 1.6 million cohabiting couples in England and Wales and the number is expected to rise to 2.93 million over the next twenty-five years. Many of these relationships are stable and long term and eight out of ten resulting births are registered by both parents, rather than by one as many previously were.

Non-matrial (or illegitimate) births arising from cohabitation and single mothers are 39 per cent of live births. This (particularly the number of under-eighteen mothers which is the highest in Europe) has caused controversy on moral and cost grounds. Illegitimacy retains some of its old stigma. But the legal standing of such children has been improved by removing restrictions in areas such as inheritance.

There were 700,000 live births in Britain in 1999 which outnumbered deaths at 629,000. But the average family size has declined and is below 2.1 children per family, or the level necessary to replace the population in the long term. Family size is expected to decline to 1.8 children per woman for women born after 1970 and pensioners will exceed the number of children in the population by 2008. There are several reasons for the low birth rate. Child-bearing is being delayed, with women having their first child on average at twenty-eight. Some women are delaying even longer for educational and career reasons, and there has been an increase in the number of single women and married couples who choose to remain childless, or to limit their families. Contraception has become more widespread, voluntary sterilization of both sexes is more common and legal abortions have increased.

Increased divorce and individual lifestyles have led to a threefold growth in the number of one-parent families with dependent children since 1961. It is estimated that some 2 million children are being raised in 1.3 million one-parent units (22 per cent of all families with dependent children), where 89 per cent of the parents are women. Of the women bringing up one-parent families 16 per cent are single, 34 per cent are divorced, 22 per cent are separated and 17 per cent are widowed. Many of these families (with the highest proportion being in inner London) often have reduced living standards and are dependent upon Social Security benefits. The proportion of married women in employment is now some 49 per cent, more women are returning to work more quickly after the birth of a child and women make up 45 per cent of the workforce. But although Britain has a high percentage of working mothers and wives, provisions for maternity leave and child-care are the lowest in Europe. The nuclear, one-parent and cohabiting family units have to cope with increased demands upon them, which may entail considerable personal sacrifice. Families carry out most of the caring roles in British society, rather than state professionals. Only 5 per cent of people over sixty-five and 7 per cent of disabled adults live in state or private institutions. Most handicapped children and adults are cared for by their families and most of the elderly are cared for by

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families or live alone. This is a saving to the state without which the cost of state health and welfare care would rise. But the burden upon families will grow as the population becomes more elderly, state provision is reduced and the disabled (6 million adults) and disadvantaged increase in numbers. There are demands that more government aid should be given to careers, families and local authorities to lighten their burden.

Some one in six of the population are now over sixty-five and 7 per cent are over seventy-five. Life expectancy of men is 75 years and women eighty years, so that there are more women among the elderly. However, the number of older people in the population is expected to grow less quickly than in recent years. The picture that emerges from these statistics is one of smaller families; more people living alone; an increase in one-parent families and non-marital births; high divorce rates; more people living longer and contributing to an ageing population; more working mothers and wives; more cohabiting couples; and a decrease in marriage. These features influence the contemporary state and private provisions for Social Security, health, social services and housing.

(from British Civilization by John Oakland, Routledge, 2002)

The workforce and employment

The potential workforce in 2001 was 29.6 million, of whom 27.9 million were in employment. The first figure also includes the self-employed (3.2 million), the unemployed, the armed forces and people on work-related training programmes.

Despite twentieth-century occupational changes, the majority of British people, whether part-time or full-time, are employed by an organization. It may be a small private firm, a large company, a public sector industry or service, or a multinational corporation. Most people are workers who sell their labour in a market dominated by concerns which own and control production and services. The class-defining boundaries of employees and employers have remained constant and the top 1 per cent of British society still own more than 18 per cent of marketable wealth and the top 10 per cent have 49 per cent. But the deregulated and mobile economy has created very different work patterns. Manufacturing has declined; service trades have increased; self-employment has risen; managerial and professional fields have expanded; and there are more part-time (6.8 million in 2001) and temporary jobs. Manual jobs have decreased in number; non-manual occupations have increased; the working class has been eroded by salaried jobs; and the workforce has become more ‘white-collar’ and better educated.

Women in 2001 were 45 per cent of the labour force and are the principal breadwinner in 30 per cent of households. But a majority of female workers are low-paid, part-time and often unprotected by trade unions or the law. Although women form a 52 per cent majority of the population and are increasing their numbers in higher education (where they are a majority of students), the professions and white-collar jobs, they have problems in progressing to the senior

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ranks. Yet in 1996, three out of every ten new businesses were started by women and in the service sector it was almost five out of ten. Since the 1960s, women have campaigned for greater equality with men in job opportunities and rates of pay. Legislation has attempted to redress the balance with varying degrees of success. Equal Pay Acts stipulate that men and women who do the same or similar kinds of work should receive the same wages. The Sex Discrimination Act makes it unlawful for the employer to discriminate between men and women when choosing a candidate for most jobs. The Equal Opportunities Commission monitors this legislation and brings cases when there have been breaches of the Acts. But the average weekly wage of women is still only 79 per cent of the average paid to men, particularly in industry and the service sector.

There has been a recent need for more women to enter the workforce at all levels, in order to compensate for a reduced birth-rate and the shortage of labour. This situation requires improved financial, social and child-care benefits for women to enable them to work, as well as more flexible employment arrangements. Some employers and the government are responding positively in these areas and Britain now seems to be more egalitarian on women's work than it has been.

Unemployment has dropped steadily from 1993 (although rising in 2001 to 3.2 per cent of the workforce). But it is proportionally high in Northern Ireland, the English Midlands, Merseyside, north-east England, Scotland, South Wales and localized areas of the big cities and countryside.

Since the late 1980s it has also affected the normally affluent south of England and includes professional and higher-grade workers. The creation of jobs is important for political parties. The Labour government introduced (1997) a Welfare to Work programme. Companies willing to create jobs for the unemployed are given subsidies, and the unemployed may also be placed in training and employment-related schemes under bodies such as the Training and Enterprise Councils. These train the workforce, in the hope that permanent jobs may be found for them. Young people between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, who become unemployed on leaving school, do not receive Social Security benefits and must undertake a training scheme or further education. The training programmes have been criticized and there is no guarantee that trainees will obtain a job afterwards. But the government argues that their policies have succeeded in getting more people into stable employment. Although the British workforce is now more mobile, deregulated and flexible, many vacant jobs are low-paid and part-time. Others are in technical and skilled areas, for which the educational systems have not adequately provided. Traditional apprenticeships have been greatly reduced and technical education suffers from a lack of investment and facilities.

Although Conservative governments established technological colleges in the major cities (financed jointly by government and private companies), firms in 2001 were experiencing skills shortages and many had unfilled vacancies. Despite the success of some programmes, Britain lacks adequate training schemes for the unemployed and young people in those technical areas which are essential for a

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modern industrial state. According to the World Economic Forum's 1997 global competitiveness report, Britain ranked 23rd out of 53 countries for the quality of its employee training. Traditional manufacturing industry has been progressively reduced in Britain. But an industrial infrastructure will continue to be important. It will not be as labour-intensive as in the past, because of technical advances. High-technology industry and service trades are set to expand. It is also likely that opportunities for professional and skilled workers in managerial, supervisory, personal and financial services will increase. But employment and a trained workforce will still be problems in this postindustrial society and will entail revisions of the work ethic and concepts of leisure, as well as more flexible employment and child-care arrangements. At present, only 13 per cent of parents can afford to use formal child-care services all the time, and parents themselves have to pay three quarters of the cost of care.
(from British Civilization by John Oakland, Routledge, 2002)

1. What are the main tendencies concerning family life in the UK?
2. How have women's roles changed?
3. What is characteristic of Britain's labour market?

Social security and healthcare. Housing. Social services and charities.

State provision for social security, health care, personal social services and housing are very much taken for granted by the British today. They also feature prominently in lists of people's concerns and directly affect the daily lives of Britons of all ages. But it was not until the 1940s that the state accepted overall responsibility for providing basic help nationally for all its citizens. Previously, there had been few such facilities and it was felt that the state was not obliged to supply social services. British social amenities developed considerably from the mid twentieth century as society and government policies changed. They are now divided between state (public) and private sectors. The state provides services and benefits for the sick, retired, disabled, elderly, needy and unemployed. They are organized by devolved and local authorities throughout Britain under the central direction of the UK Department of Health and the Department of Work and Pensions. The costs of this welfare state are funded mainly by taxation and partly by a National Insurance Fund to which employers and employees contribute.
In the private sector, social and health services are financed by personal insurance schemes and by those people able to pay for such facilities out of their own income or capital. There are also many voluntary organizations which continue the tradition of charitable help for the needy and depend for their funding upon donations from the public. Conservative governments (1979–97) introduced reforms in the state sector in order to reduce expenditure, improve efficiency, encourage more self-provision and target benefits to those most in need. Such policies were widely attacked and it was argued that they were based on a market orientation and a return to the old mentality on social services. The Labour

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government also tried to reform the hugely expensive welfare state by encouraging people to insure themselves against unemployment and sickness and to provide for their own pensions and care in old age. It introduced reforms to help families, reduce poverty and exclusion, and made efforts to get the unemployed into work. These policy changes suggested that the state in future may be unable (or unwilling) to meet the financial costs of social services without increases in income tax. People were being encouraged to build their own welfare plans, and government's role may lay in directing such aid rather than its funding and provision. This showed the difficulty of reconciling public services demand with a 'market economy' and of deciding how much dependence there should be upon the state. The Labour government also intended to involve the private sector more in the provision and management of public services. But there was public and trade union opposition to this policy, which was generally perceived as the 'privatization' of social services.

Social services history

Historically, state social services were non-existent for most of the British population. The churches, charities, the rural feudal system and town guilds (organizations of skilled craftsmen) did give some protection against poverty, illness and unemployment. But this help was limited in its application and effect. Most people were therefore thrown upon their own resources, which were often minimal, in order to survive. In Elizabeth II's reign (1558–1603), a Poor Law was established in England, by which the state took over the organization of charity provisions from the church. Similar schemes existed in Wales, Scotland and Ireland. They operated at the local level, and parishes were responsible for their poor, sick and unemployed, providing housing, help and work relief. The Poor Law was the start of state social legislation throughout Britain.
But it was grudging, limited in its effects and discouraged people from relying on it. Poverty and need were considered to be the result of an unwillingness to work and provide for oneself. The state was not supposed to have extensive responsibility for social services. These attitudes persisted in later centuries. But urban and rural poverty and need continued. Conditions worsened in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries under the industrial revolutions as the population increased rapidly. The urban workforce had to work long hours in often bad conditions in low-quality factories for low wages. Families frequently inhabited slums of overcrowded, back-to-back dwellings which lacked adequate sewerage, heating or ventilation. The situation of many rural agricultural workers was just as bad. Public health became an inevitable problem, and the poor conditions resulted in infectious epidemics in the nineteenth century, such as diphtheria, typhoid, tuberculosis and smallpox. Some diseases remained endemic in the British population into the twentieth century because of bad housing and the lack of adequate health and social facilities. The old Poor Law was replaced by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 in England and Wales (later in Scotland). This was

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designed to prevent the alleged abuse of parish social relief. It created a system of workhouses in which the destitute and needy could live. But the workhouses were unpleasant places and people were discouraged from relying upon them. They were dreaded by the poor and accepted as a last alternative only when all else failed. Since nineteenth-century Britain was subject to economic slumps and unemployment, the workhouse system resulted in misery and the separation of families. Successive governments until the nineteenth century also refused to allow workers to organize themselves into trade unions, through which they might agitate against their working and living conditions. This forced workers into establishing their own social and self-help clubs in order to provide basic protection for themselves. Some employers were more benevolent than others and provided good housing and health facilities for their workforces. But these examples were few, and life continued to be harsh for many people. The social misery of the nineteenth century persuaded some towns to establish local boards to control public health and initiate health schemes. But a public health apparatus was not created until 1848 and an effective national system was not in place until 1875. Other legislation was passed to clear slum areas, but large-scale clearance was not achieved until the middle of the twentieth century. Reforms relating to housing, health, factory and mine conditions, sanitation and sewerage, town planning and trade unionism were implemented in the nineteenth century. But they were limited in their effects and have been described as paternalistic in their intention. The social welfare problems of the nineteenth century were considerable, and the state's failure to provide major help against illness, unemployment and poverty made the situation worse. Social reformers, who promoted legislation which gave some relief from the effects of nineteenth- century industrialization, had to struggle against the apathy and hostility of vested interests in Parliament and the country.
However, small victories had been won and it was slowly admitted, if not universally, in the early twentieth century that the state had social responsibility for the whole of society. The progressive Liberal government between 1906 and 1914 introduced reform programmes on old age pensions, national insurance, health, employment and trade unionism. These formed the basic structures of the future welfare state. But they affected only a minority of people, and the state was unwilling or unable to introduce further provisions in the early twentieth century. The financial and physical exhaustion resulting from the 1914–18 World War and the economic crises of the 1920s and 1930s halted social services expansion. But the underlying need for more state help continued. The model for a welfare state appeared in the Beveridge Report of 1942. It recommended that a comprehensive system of Social Security and free health care for all should be established to overcome suffering and need. It was intended that the system would be largely financed by a national insurance scheme, to which workers would contribute, and out of which they and their families would receive benefits when required. Although Conservative governments passed some of the legislation to implement these proposals, it was the Labour government from 1945 to 1951 that radically altered the social and health systems and created the present welfare state.

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Social Security

The Social Security system provides benefits for British people and is operated by Department of Work and Pensions agencies throughout the country. It is the government's most expensive programme (30 per cent of public spending – £101 billion) and is financed from taxation and contributions by employers and workers over sixteen to the National Insurance Fund.
This means that Social Security gives benefits to workers who pay contributions to the National Insurance Fund; income-related benefits to people who have no income or whose income falls below certain levels and who need assistance; and other benefits which are conditional on disability or family needs, such as non-contributory Disability and Attendance Allowances.
The contributory system gives, for example, state retirement pensions for women at sixty and men at sixty-five (to be equalized at sixty-five from 2010); maternity pay for pregnant working women; sick pay or incapacity benefit for people who are absent from work because of illness or who become incapable of work; and a Jobseeker's Allowance for those who become unemployed (dependent upon their actively seeking work). Income-related benefits are also provided by the state. For example, *Income Support* depends upon savings and capital and is given to some 5.6 million people in financial need, such as one-parent families, the elderly and long-term sick, disabled and unemployed. It covers basic living requirements, although the sums are relatively low. It also includes free prescription drugs, dental treatment, opticians' services and children's school meals. The *Working Families' Tax Credit* is a benefit whereby families with children and at least one parent in low-paid work receive a tax credit through workers' pay packets to increase their earnings. It includes the same extra benefits as Income Support and is dependent upon income, savings and capital. *Housing Benefit* is paid to people on Income Support and other low-income claimants (4.2 million in 2001) and covers the cost of rented accommodation. A tax-free *Child Benefit* (£15 per week for the eldest child and £10 for other children) is paid to each mother for each of her children up to the age of eighteen, irrespective of family income. In the past, people in great need were also able to claim non-contributory single payments, such as the cost of clothes, cookers and children's shoes, in the form of grants or loans. But these have now been sharply cut and replaced by a Social Fund, to which people have to apply. The Fund is being applied restrictively and has been widely attacked as an example of government's alleged reduction of Social Security aid. Social Security does provide a degree of security. It is supposed to be a safety-net against urgent needs, but this does not prevent hardship. Some 27 per cent of British people are on income-related benefits of one kind or another. It is also estimated that a quarter of the population (including 4.5 million children) exist on the poverty line, which is sometimes measured as half the average national income. But accurate figures of poverty are difficult to find, because of the variable presentation of official statistics and because there are different definitions of what constitutes poverty.

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Social Security is very expensive and will become more so as the population ages and as the numbers of the sick, poor, disadvantaged and unemployed persist. It is very complicated with its array of benefits and subject to fraud, particularly in the cases of Income Support and Housing Benefit.

The National Health Service (NHS)

A Labour government created the National Health Service (NHS) in 1947. It was based on the Beveridge Report recommendations and replaced a private system of payment for health care by one of free treatment for all. The medical profession wished to retain private medicine and opposed the establishment of the NHS. But this was countered by the Labour government. The NHS was originally intended to be completely free, and this ideal, to a large extent, has been achieved. Hospital and most medical treatment under the NHS is free for British and EU citizens. The NHS provides a range of medical and dental services for the whole country based on hospitals, doctors, dentists, nurses, midwives, ambulance services, blood transfusion and other health facilities. But some charges are now made. For example, prescriptions, which are written notes from a doctor enabling patients to obtain drugs from a chemist, have to be paid for, as do some dental work, dental checks and eye tests. Such payments are dependent upon employment status, age and income. Children under sixteen, people on Social Security benefits and old age pensioners receive free prescriptions. The NHS is financed from taxation. It costs £43.4 billion per year (15 per cent of government spending) and the NHS is the biggest single employer of labour in Western Europe. Yet state health expenditure in Britain is only 6 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) and lower than in many other major western countries, which have a greater mixture of the public and the private in their total health spending.
The UK government is responsible for the NHS through the Department of Health in England and devolved bodies in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Doctors

Most people who require healthcare will first consult their local NHS funded doctor, who is a GP or non-specialist general practitioner: of these there are about 35,000 in Britain. Doctors have an average of about 2,000 registered patients on their panel (or list of names), although they will see only a small percentage of these on a regular basis. The majority of GPs are now members of group practices, where they share larger premises, services and equipment. However, a patient will usually be on the panel of one particular doctor, who will often be a personal choice. An alternative to seeing a doctor is to make use of the new NHS Direct service, which allows one to seek advice on the telephone from nurses. There are conflicting reports on this service's effectiveness.

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Hospitals

If patients require further treatment or examination, the GP refers them to specialists and consultants, normally at local NHS hospitals (or NHS Trusts). NHS Trust hospitals are funded by contracts with the local Primary Care Groups. But they are 'self-governing' and largely manage their own affairs. These hospitals have about 370,000 beds and provide medical, dental, nursing and midwifery staff. Britain has some very modern hospitals and facilities, and more hospitals are being constructed. But it also has many buildings which were erected in the nineteenth century and which are in urgent need of modernization and repair. There is a shortage of beds in some hospitals, wards and hospitals are being closed, and waiting times for admission to hospital as well as for treatment in accident and emergency departments increased in 2001. The blame for this situation is variously placed on spending cuts, a government unwillingness to spend more money on health or managerial inability to organize the funds which do exist.

The state of the NHS

The NHS has an ambivalent position in the public mind. On the one hand, it is praised for its work as a free service and its achievements. It is considered a success in terms of consumer demand. Today people are in general receiving help when they need it and many who would previously have died or suffered are surviving and being cared for. Standards of living and medicine have risen, better diets have been devised and there is a greater health awareness in the population at large. On the other hand, the NHS is criticized for its alleged inefficiency, inadequate standards, treatment discrepancies throughout the country and bureaucracy. Its objectives are considered too ambitious for the money spent on it. The media constantly draw attention to shortcomings and forecast breakdown. Workers in the NHS, such as doctors, nurses and non-medical staff, complain about low pay, long hours, management weaknesses, levels of staffing (with a severe shortage of doctors and nurses) and cuts in services. Such critics often seem to suggest that many of the problems could be solved simply by injecting more finance into the NHS. Rising costs and increased demand arguably contribute to alleged underfunding. The NHS is in many ways a victim of its own success and of the demands that the British place upon it as of right. It is inevitable that a free, consumer-led service will require increasing levels of expenditure, better management of existing resources or alternative funding. Yet despite problems and undoubted pressures, much of the NHS works well and gives value for the money spent on it. There are many suggestions as to how the NHS can be improved. Increasing government spending on the NHS may increase taxation. Charges could be made for some services, but this hits the principle of free health care, although a *MORI* poll in May 2001 showed that 66 per cent of respondents were prepared to pay for some NHS care if it meant an overall better service. Better management of existing funds might make some savings, but not enough. Combining a public

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service with private insurance would not include poorer people, who would still depend upon a free NHS.

The private medical sector

It is argued that health care should not be a question of who can pay for it, but a responsibility of the state. However, the public sector has problems, and attempts have been made to involve the private sector in providing health care.
The previous Conservative government encouraged the growth of private health institutions, private medical insurance and partnership between the public and private sectors on a commercial basis. Its Private Finance Initiative allowed new health facilities to be built, maintained and owned by the private sector. These are then leased to the NHS, which provides clinical services and controls planning and clinical decisions. The Conservatives saw the private sector as complementary to the NHS. It would release pressure on state funds; give choice to patients; allow the sharing of medical resources; provide flexible services; result in cost-effective co-operation with the NHS; and allow treatment of NHS patients at public expense in the private sector.
The social services provide facilities in the community for assisting people such as the elderly, the disabled, the mentally ill, families, children and young people. Trained staff, such as district visitors and social workers, cater for these personal needs. The services are organized by local government authorities with central government funding (£10 billion in England). But it is argued that social services need extra money to address the problems that they face. An increasing pressure is being put upon the social services, families and carers as the elderly population grows and the ranks of the disadvantaged rise. For example, the number of public residential and nursing homes for the elderly is insufficient for the demand, and some private homes close because of cost. In both cases, people may be forced to sell their homes to cover the expense. Care services for the elderly and infirm face a severe staff shortage unless higher pay and better training for care workers are introduced.
The previous Conservative goverment introduced a ‘Care in the Community’ programme, parts of which are being developed by the Labour government. The aim is to give financial and material support to families and carers looking after elderly or disabled relatives in the latters’ own homes, or for handicapped children and adults in the family home. It also allows mental hospital patients who do not need constant care to be moved to the community under social services supervision and for some elderly and disabled people to be cared for in their own homes by social services. The aim is to prevent the institutionalization of people and to give them independence. The scheme is financed by central government and operated by local government authorities. But it has had difficulties, for example mentally ill and handicapped patients becoming homeless or housed in inadequate temporary accommodation and elderly people receiving inadequate attention and help. It is argued that local authorities need more support and that a greater

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awareness of implementation problems is required if the policy is to be more successful.
The personal social services also cater for people with learning disabilities, give help to families and provide day care facilities for children. Children in need are also supposed to be protected in residential care accommodation, and local authorities facilitate fostering and adoption services. But there have been a number of serious cases in recent years which have focused on abuse in children's homes.

The private social services (voluntary) sector

While there were substantial improvements in state social services in the twentieth century, there is still a shortage of finance and resources to support the needy in a comprehensive fashion. It is therefore important that voluntary charities and agencies have continued. They are a complementary welfare service to the state facilities and provide an essential element in the total aid pattern. The state system would be unable to cover all needs without them. Most of the voluntary agencies have charitable status, which means that they receive tax concessions on their income, but receive no (or very little) financial support from the state. However, some groups, such as those dealing with drug and alcohol addiction, do receive financial grants from central and local government. There are many thousands of voluntary organizations in Britain, operating at national and local levels and varying considerably in size. Some are small and collect limited amounts of money from the public. Others are very large, have professional staffs and receive millions of pounds from many different sources. Some groups, such as Oxfam (for the relief of famine) and the Save the Children Fund, have now become international organizations.
The following are examples of the voluntary agencies. Barnado's provides care and help for needy children; The Church of England Children's Society cares for children in need and is Britain's largest adoption agency; the Cancer Research Fund gathers finance and carries out research into potential cures for cancer; the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) provides medical and veterinary aid for people's pets; the Samaritans give telephone help to the suicidal; women's groups have founded refuges for abused women; and Help the Aged campaigns for the elderly.

Housing

Housing in Britain is divided into public and private sectors. Of the 25 million domestic dwellings, the majority are in the private sector, with 68 per cent being owner-occupied and 11 per cent rented out by private landlords. Some 21 per cent are in the public, subsidized sector and are rented by low-income tenants from local government authorities or housing associations (non-profit-making bodies which manage and build homes for rent and sale with the aid of government grants).

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In both public and private sectors, over 80 per cent of the British population live in houses or bungalows (one-storey houses) and the remainder in flats and maisonettes. Houses have traditionally been divided into detached (22 per cent), semi-detached (30) and terraced housing (28), with the greater prices and prestige being given to detached property. Public-sector or social housing in England is controlled centrally by the Department of the Environment and by devolved bodies in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Much of this housing has historically been provided by local authorities with finance from local sources and central government. But the provision and organization of such properties by local government has declined in recent years and more has been taken over by housing associations. The previous Conservative government encouraged the growth of home ownership in the housing market, as part of its programme to create a property- and share-owning democracy in Britain. In the public sector, it introduced (1980) a right-to-buy policy by which local government sells off council housing to sitting tenants at below-market prices. This policy has increased the number of home-owners by over one million and relieved local authorities of the expense of decoration, upkeep and repair. The Labour Party, after initially opposing the policy, accepted it, mainly because it proved attractive to tenants.

The Conservatives were critical of local government housing policies. They wanted local authorities to divest themselves of housing management. Instead, they would work with housing associations and the private sector to increase the supply of low-cost housing for rent without providing it themselves. However, the Labour government returned some control over housing policies to local government.

But the construction of new publicly funded houses has been reduced and the private sector is not building enough low-cost properties. Critics argue that Conservative government housing policies contributed to a serious shortage of cheap rented accommodation in towns and rural areas for low-income groups, single people and the unemployed, at a time when demand is growing. The biggest increase is expected in the number of one person households, which are projected to grow from 5.8 million in 1996 to 8.5 million by 2021 or 71 per cent of the total increase in the number of households.

Home ownership in the private sector has increased by 10 per cent since 1979. The normal procedure when buying a house or flat is to take out a loan on the security of the property (a mortgage) from a building society, bank or other financial institution. The amount of money advanced on a loan depends mainly on the borrower's salary and it is usual to borrow three times one's gross annual salary. This long-term loan is usually paid off over a twenty-five-year period and includes interest. House prices can vary considerably throughout the country, with London and south-east England having the highest prices and northern England, Scotland and Wales having the lowest. Prices increased dramatically at the beginning of the 1970s and much property speculation occurred. Price increases then stabilized for some years at 7–10 per cent each year.

But there was a price boom from 1986 to 1988, followed by high interest rates and an increase in mortgage foreclosures. This means that, when people cannot afford

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to continue their repayments on the loan, the lending institution takes over the property and the occupier becomes homeless. The number of foreclosures has now been reduced. There was also a fall in house prices, a property slump and a growth in negative equity (where the loan or mortgage is higher than the value of the property) which was only slowly reversed from 1994 as interest rates were reduced and the property market slowly recovered. Since then, house prices have increased dramatically, particularly in south-east England, but slowed down in 2001.

British homes still have variable construction standards. Many are old and cold; are frequently badly built; and lack central heating and adequate insulation. But there has been some improvement in housing standards in recent years, and most new houses have a high percentage of the basic amenities. Greater attention has been paid to insulation, energy-saving and quality. However, as building costs rise and available land becomes scarcer, the trend in new property construction has been towards flats and smaller rooms in houses. Nevertheless, there are still districts, particularly in the centres of the big cities, where living conditions are bad and the equivalent of contemporary slums. Nearly half of the property in the inner-city areas was built before 1919 and, in spite of large-scale slum clearance in the 1950s and 1960s, much existing housing here is in barely habitable shape. Some recently completed high-rise blocks of council flats and estates in the public sector have had to be demolished because of defective and dangerous structures. According to the National Housing Forum, one in thirteen British homes (or 1.8 million) is unfit for human habitation. Twentieth-century town renovation and slum clearance policies from the 1930s were largely devoted to the removal of the populations of large city-centres to new towns, usually located in the countryside, or to new council estates in the suburbs. Some of the new towns, such as Crawley and Stevenage, have been seen as successes, although they initially had their share of social and planning problems. The same cannot be said of many council estates, which have tended to degenerate very quickly. The bad design of some housing estates, their social deprivation and lack of upkeep are often blamed for the crime and vandalism which affect some of them. However, some local councils are now modernizing decaying housing stock, rather than spending on new development, in an attempt to preserve local communities. Similar work is also being done by housing associations (with government grants) and by private builders.

The provision of sufficient adequate and varied housing in Britain, such as one-bedroom properties for young and single persons, has been a problem for many years. People on low wages, whether married or single, are often unable to afford the cost of a mortgage for suitable private property.

One of the factors causing the difficulty for young people in affording first homes, particularly in rural areas within (ever-increasing) commuting distance of London, is the desire of affluent people for homes – or second homes – in the country. It is also difficult for them to obtain council housing because of long waiting lists, which contain people with priority over them. The right-to-buy policy has reduced the number of available council houses and flats for low-income groups and the unemployed. An alternative for many was either to board with parents, or to rent

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property in the private sector. Young people in Britain tend to leave the family home at a relatively early age, and there is much more house-sharing among young people than in many other countries.

Attitudes to the social services

Opinion polls consistently show that a large majority of British people feel a concern for and dissatisfaction with the condition of the National Health Service. They place a high priority for increased public spending on health and medical provisions. They do not consider that the NHS is as well run as other institutions and there has been growing support for a comprehensive, better-funded state healthcare service. There has also been opposition to reforms in the NHS, with fear expressed about the possible privatization of health services. But a *MORI/British Council* poll in 1999 found that 65 per cent of overseas respondents believe that Britain has a good healthcare service.

However, doctors and nurses always head the lists of those professionals with whom Britons are most satisfied (89 per cent in October 2001), despite recent medical scandals concerning negligence and incompetence. Concern is also felt about the provision of public housing, Social Security benefits, the personal social services and community care. Most people, at least in response to poll questions, indicate that they would be willing to pay higher taxes in order to ensure better social and health welfare.

There is also some support for the idea that a proportional amount of income tax could be earmarked as being directly applicable to the public services. An alternative to public services being funded completely by taxation is the Public–Private Partnership schemes favoured by the Labour government. These involve the private sector in the organization of public services. A *MORI* poll in July 2001 found that only one in nine respondents believes that extending private sector involvement will improve public services. A *MORI* poll in September 2001 found that 64 per cent of respondents felt that public services, such as health, should be entirely or mostly provided by the public sector.

On being asked how public services could be improved, 64 per cent of respondents thought that better pay and conditions should be given to public sector workers; 43 per cent believed that there should be more public sector workers; and 42 per cent considered that there should be more investment in new buildings and equipment for public services. These results show that a majority of British people support the idea of free public services funded by taxation. Trade union leaders suggest that the Labour government could be on a collision course with the public if it pushes ahead with public–private partnerships in the public services. A *MORI* poll in October 2001 found that only 42 per cent of respondents felt that Labour government policies in general would improve the state of public services.

(from British Civilization by John Oakland, Routledge, 2002)

1. How has the provision of social services changed overtime?

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2. What is the structure and state of the National Health Service?
3. What are some of the best known charity organizations in Britain?
4. What are the different types of housing in Britain and the mechanics of buying property?

Education. Levels. Quality. Overview of major developments. The state school system. The private sector. Examinations. Higher and further education.

British education operates on tree levels: schools, higher education and further/adult education. Schools are mainly mixed-sex, although there are some single-sex schools, and are divided into state (maintained from public funds) and independent (privately financed) sectors (the latter mainly in England). But there is no common educational organization for the whole country. Northern Ireland, Scotland and England/Wales have somewhat different school systems. Further/adult and higher education generally have the same structure throughout Britain and are mostly state-funded.
The quality of British education concerns parents, employers, politicians and students. School inspectors have criticized standards in English, Mathematics, Technology and writing and reading skills. In 1997, the *World Economic Forum* claimed that Britain ranked 32nd out of 53 countries in the quality of its primary and secondary schools. A 1997 *National Institute of Economic and Social Research* study showed that British thirteen-to-fourteen-year-olds were one year behind most European countries and even further behind Japan, Korea and Singapore. Later, in 2001, the *Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)* reported that Britain was slipping down the global league table of secondary schools (19th out of 28), defined by good passes in national examinations. Britain also had some of the worst pre-school education and child-care in the western world, with a lack of high-quality nurseries, low-qualified and underpaid staff and poor working conditions. *A National Skills Task Force* in 2000 reported that 7 million adults (nearly one in five) in Britain were functionally illiterate. It is argued that low standards of literacy and numeracy stem from decades of inadequate school education. But the *OECD* said that Britain leads the world in higher education, defined as having the highest proportion (35.6 per cent) of university graduates aged twenty-one, largely because of short (three-year) degree courses. However, in Britain itself there is criticism of degree standards, some university courses and varying performances between different universities.
But British education should not be seen in a wholly negative light. School examination results have improved in recent years, although some critics attribute this to lower standards. Many schools, teachers and students in the state and independent sectors produce excellent work, as do the universities. It is the failing and underperforming state schools and universities which catch the media headlines, although many of the schools have now improved. The Labour government in 1997 prioritized education, promised to focus on its quality and to make it a lifelong learning experience. But, while there has been improvement in

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literacy and at the primary school level, secondary school education still has weaknesses and the public are dissatisfied with Labour progress in raising educational standards.

School history

The complicated nature of British (particularly English) schooling and current educational controversies have their roots in school history. To simplify matters, this section concentrates on the largest school element, that of England and Wales, with comparative references to Scotland and Northern Ireland. State involvement in education was late and the first attempt to establish a national system of state-funded elementary schools came only in 1870 for England and Wales (1872 for Scotland and 1923 for Northern Ireland). But it was not until 1944 that the state supplied both primary and secondary schools nationally which were free and compulsory. However, some church schools have long existed. After England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales were gradually converted to Christianity in the fifth and sixth centuries, the church's position in society enabled it to create the first schools. These initially prepared boys for the priesthood. But the church then developed a wider educational role and its structures influenced the later state system. Other schools were also periodically established by rich individuals or monarchs. These were independent, privately financed institutions and were variously known as high, grammar and public schools: they were later associated with both the modern independent and state educational sectors. But such schools were largely confined to the sons of the rich, aristocratic and influential. Most people received no formal schooling and remained illiterate and innumerate for life. In later centuries, more children benefited as the church created new schools; local areas developed secular schools; and schools were provided by wealthy industrialists and philanthropists for working-class boys and girls. But the minority of children attending such institutions received only a basic instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic. The majority of children received no adequate education. By the nineteenth century, Britain had a haphazard school structure (except for Scotland). Protestant churches lost their domination of education and competed with the Roman Catholic Church, Nonconformist churches and other faiths. Church schools guarded their independence from state and secular interference and provided much of the available schooling. The ancient high, grammar and public schools continued to train the sons of the middle and upper classes for professional and leadership roles in society. But, at a time when the industrial revolutions were proceeding rapidly and the population was growing, the state did not provide a school system which could educate the workforce. Most of the working class still received no formal or adequate education. However, local and central government did begin to show some regard for education in the early nineteenth century. Grants were made to local authorities for school use in their areas and in 1833 Parliament funded the construction of school buildings. But it was only in 1870 that the state became more actively involved. An Education Act (the Forster Act)

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created local school boards in England and Wales, which provided schools in their areas. State elementary schools now supplied non-denominational training and the existing religious voluntary schools served denominational needs.
By 1880 this system provided free and compulsory elementary schooling in most parts of Britain for children between the ages of five and ten (twelve in 1899). The Balfour Act (1902) later made local government responsible for state education and gave funding to voluntary schools. But, although schools provided elementary education for children up to the age of thirteen by 1918, this was still limited to basic skills. Adequate secondary school education remained largely the province of the independent sector and a few state schools. But people had to pay for their services. After a period when the old public (private) schools had declined in quality, they revived in the nineteenth century. Their weaknesses, such as the narrow curriculum and indiscipline, had been reformed by progressive headmasters such as Thomas Arnold of Rugby and their reputations increased. The private grammar and high schools, which imitated the classics-based education of the public schools, also expanded. These schools drew their pupils from the sons of the middle and upper classes and were the training grounds for the established elite and the professions. State secondary school education in the early twentieth century was marginally extended to children whose parents could not afford school fees. Scholarships (financial grants) for clever poor children and some state funding for secondary schools were provided, and more state secondary schools were created. But this state help did not appreciably expand secondary education, and in 1920 only 9.2 per cent of thirteen-year-old children in England and Wales were able to enter secondary schools on a non-fee-paying basis. The school system in the early twentieth century was still inadequate for the demands of society, working-class and lower middle- class children lacked extensive education and hard-pressed governments avoided any further large-scale involvement until 1944.

The 1944 Education Act

In 1944, an Education Act (the Butler Act) reorganized state primary and secondary schools in England and Wales (1947 in Scotland and Northern Ireland) and greatly influenced future generations of schoolchildren. State schooling became free and compulsory up to the age of fifteen and was divided into three stages: primary schools (five–twelve years old), secondary schools (twelve–fifteen) and further post-school training. A decentralized system resulted, in which a Ministry of Education drew up policy guidelines and local education authorities (LEAs) decided which forms of schooling would be used in their areas. Two types of state schools resulted from the Act: county and voluntary. Primary and secondary county schools were provided by LEAs in each county. Voluntary schools were mainly those elementary schools which had been founded by religious and other groups and which were now partially financed or maintained by LEAs, although they retained their religious affiliation. Non-denominational schools thus coexisted with voluntary schools. This situation continues today: most

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state non-denominational schools are controlled by LEAs and voluntary (faith) schools are controlled by religious groups.
Most state secondary schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland were divided into grammar schools and secondary modern schools. Some grammar schools were new, while others were old foundations, which now received direct state funding. Placement in this secondary system depended upon an examination result. The eleven-plus examination was adopted by most LEAs, consisted of tests which covered linguistic, mathematical and general knowledge and was taken in the last year of primary school at the age of eleven. The object was to select between academic and non-academic children and introduced the notion of 'selection' based on ability.
Those who passed the eleven-plus went to grammar school, while those who failed went to the secondary modern school. Although schools were supposed to be equal in their respective educational targets, the grammar schools were equated with a better (more academic) education; a socially more respectable role; and qualified children (through national examinations) for the better jobs and entry into higher education and the professions. Secondary modern schools were based on practical schooling, initially without national examinations. The intention of the 1944 Act was to provide universal and free state primary and secondary education. Day-release training at local colleges was also introduced for employed people who wanted further education after fifteen, and local authority grants were given to students who wished to enter higher education. It was hoped that such equality of opportunity would expand the educational market, lead to a better-educated society, encourage more working-class children to enter university and achieve greater social mobility. However, it was felt in the 1950s that these aims were not being achieved under the selective secondary school system. Education became a party-political battlefield. The Labour Party and other critics maintained that the eleven-plus examination was wrong in principle; was socially divisive; had educational and testing weaknesses; resulted in middle-class children predominating in grammar schools and higher education; and thus perpetuated the class system. Labour governments from 1964 were committed to abolishing the
eleven-plus, selection and the secondary school divisions. They would be replaced by non-selective 'comprehensive schools' to which children would automatically transfer after primary school. These would provide schooling for all children of all ability levels and from all social backgrounds. The battle for the comprehensive and selective systems was fierce. Although more schools became comprehensive under the Conservative government from 1970, it decided against legislative compulsion. Instead, LEAs were able to choose the secondary education which was best suited to local needs. Some decided for comprehensives, while others retained selection. But the Labour government in 1976 intended to establish comprehensive schools nationwide. Before this policy could be implemented, the Conservatives came to power in 1979. The state secondary school sector thus remains divided between the selective and non-selective options since a minority of LEAs in England and Wales do not have comprehensives and there are some

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166 grammar schools left. Scottish schools have long been comprehensive, but Northern Irish schools are divided into selective grammars and secondary moderns. The comprehensive/selection debate continues. Education is still subject to party-political and ideological conflict. Opinion polls suggest that only a minority of parents support comprehensive education and a majority favour a selective and diverse system of schools with entry based on continuous assessment, interviews and choice. It is often argued that the long-running arguments about the relative merits of different types of schooling have not benefited schoolchildren or the educational system.

The state school system

State education in the UK is free and compulsory for children between the ages of five and sixteen. The vast majority of children are educated in state primary and secondary schools. But the state system is complicated by remnants of the 1944 Act and a diversity of school types throughout the country.

In England and Wales, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) initiates policy (with Wales having some devolved responsibility) and the LEAs retain decentralized choice to organize school planning in their areas with finance provided by central government. The LEAs have traditionally left academic organization of schools to head teachers and staff. Many state schools have boards of unpaid governors, who are local citizens prepared to give help and guidance and who may be involved in the hiring of head teachers and teachers. Following earlier Conservative reforms, head teachers now have financial control over and responsibility for their school budgets and management; school governors have greater powers of decision-making; and parents have a greater voice in the actual running of schools, as well as a right to choose a particular school for their children. These reforms have meant a shift from purely educational to management roles within state schools and involve increased burdens of time and administration.

The LEAs have lost some authority in the state school sector but the Labour government has tried to find a new role for LEAs in England and Wales which would oversee admissions policies for all types of state schools. State schooling before the age of five is not compulsory in Britain and there is no statutory requirement on the LEAs to provide such education. But more parents (particularly those at work) are seeking school provisions for young children and there is concern about the lack of opportunities. At present, 64 per cent of three- and four-year-olds benefit from a state nursery education, while others attend private playgroups. The Labour government wants to expand state nursery education. Pupils attend primary school in the state sector from the age of five and then move to secondary schools normally at eleven until the ages of sixteen to eighteen. Over 87 per cent of state secondary pupils in England and all state secondary pupils in Wales attend comprehensives. There are only a small number of grammar (166) and secondary modern schools left in the state system. The continued existence of

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these schools depends partly upon local government decisions, partly upon parent power and partly upon Labour government policy. Comprehensive school pupils are of mixed abilities and come from a variety of social backgrounds in the local area. There is still much argument about the quality and performance of the system. Some critics maintain that bright academic children suffer, although 'streaming' into different ability classes occurs and examination results can be excellent.

The Labour government has introduced 'setting', which divides children into ability and interest classes. Arguably, therefore 'selection' continues within the comprehensives. There are some very good comprehensive schools, which are not necessarily confined to privileged areas. But there are also some very weak and failing ones, which suffer from a variety of social, economic and educational problems.

In an attempt to encourage diversity, the Conservative government established some fifteen secondary-level state-funded privately operated City Technology Colleges specializing in science, technology and mathematics. The Labour government from 1999 has also promoted school diversity and standards rather than having only one type of comprehensive school and has involved the private sector in school organization. It has created publicly funded privately operated City Academies which will replace failing and underperforming schools; some 530 secondary-level Specialist Schools which concentrate on the sciences, modern foreign languages or the arts; and Beacon Schools which are singled out as best performing schools and are supposed to serve as examples of best practice for other schools. It also controversially intends to increase the number of voluntary schools controlled by faiths (for example, Church of England, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh). It seems as if selective criteria for entry to some schools (particularly the specialist and faith schools) will be necessary. This is seen as a withdrawal from comprehensive principles and the creation of a two-tier school education.

Scotland has an ancient independent LEA educational system, with schools, colleges and universities which are among the oldest in Europe. Its state school system is comprehensive and non-selective. Children transfer from primary to secondary education at twelve and may continue until eighteen. The Scottish 'public schools' are state and not private institutions (although a few independent schools do exist). In *Northern Ireland* the state schools are mostly divided on religious grounds into Catholic and Protestant and are often single-sex. However, there are some tentative movements towards integrated co-educational schools. The comprehensive principle has not been widely adopted and a selective system with an examination at eleven gives entrance to grammar schools, which 40 per cent of the age group attend. Performances at these schools have been generally superior to their counterparts in England and Wales, although examination results in the other secondary schools are comparatively poor.

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The independent (fee-paying) school sector

The independent school sector exists mainly in England, is separate from the state school system and caters for some 6 per cent of all British children, from the ages of four to eighteen at various levels of education. There are 2,400 independent schools with over 563,500 pupils. Its financing derives from investments and the fees paid by the pupils' parents for their education, which vary between schools and can amount to several thousand pounds a year. The independent sector is dependent upon its charitable and tax-exempt status to survive. This means that the schools are not taxed on their income if it is used only for educational purposes. There are a minority of scholarship holders, whose expenses are covered by their schools. Some 250 public schools (private, not state), such as Eton, Harrow and Winchester, are the most famous of the independent schools, and are usually defined by their membership of the Headmasters' Conference. They were originally created (often by monarchs) to provide education for the sons of the rich and aristocratic. Such schools are mainly boarding establishments, where the pupils live and are educated during term time, although many of them now also take day-pupils who do not board in.

Pre-preparatory (4–8)
Preparatory (8–13)
Public schools (13–18)
Other independent schools (11/13–18)

Public and other independent schools play a significant role in British education, and many leading figures have been educated at them. Entry today is competitive, normally by an entrance examination, and is not confined to social class, connections or wealth, although the ability to pay the fees is important. Independent preparatory schools (primary level) prepare their pupils for independent secondary school entrance and parents who decide to send their children to an independent school will often give them a 'prep school' education first. Independent schools can vary considerably in quality and reputation. The sector has grown and has an attraction despite its size and increasing school fees. Insurance schemes for the payment of fees give opportunities for independent education to the less affluent. But some parents make great financial sacrifices so that their children can be independently educated. Opinion polls often suggest that many parents would send their children to an independent school if they could afford it because of the quality of the education and because such schooling may give social advantages in later life. The independent sector is criticized for being elitist, socially divisive and based on the ability to pay for education. In this view it perpetuates the class system. The Labour Party in opposition historically argued for the abolition of independent schools and the removal of their tax and charitable status, which the Labour government is currently evaluating. But independent schools are now firmly established and for many provide an element of choice in what would otherwise be a state monopoly on education.

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School organization and examinations

The school day in state and independent schools usually runs from 9.00 a.m. until 4 p.m. and the school year is divided into three terms (autumn, spring and summer). Classes in British schools used to be called ‘forms’ and in secondary schools were numbered from one to six. But most schools have adopted year numbers from 7 to 11 in secondary schools, with a two-year sixth form for advanced work.

A reduced birth rate in recent years led to a decrease in the number of schoolchildren, resulting in the closure of schools in rural and urban areas. Numbers have since increased and the Labour government is committed to reducing average class size for primary schools to below thirty, although many secondary schools have classes with over thirty pupils. Most teachers are trained at the universities and other colleges. There is a serious shortage of teachers in Britain in all subjects, but especially in mathematics, technology, physics and foreign languages. Potential teachers increasingly see the profession as unattractive and many practising teachers leave for better-paid jobs or retire early. Teachers at present are suffering from low morale after battles with the government over pay, conditions and educational reforms, and from what they perceive as the low status afforded them by government and the general public. The teaching profession has become very stressful and subject to greater pressures, such as assaults upon teachers by pupils and increased bureaucracy. The quality of teaching in state schools has attracted much criticism in recent years and the Labour government is committed to raising standards, removing incompetent and underperforming teachers and closing ‘failing schools’. However, the effect of alleged spending cuts in education has been considerable, with GDP public expenditure on education in Britain being below that of many comparable countries. This has prevented the building and modernization of schools, especially in inner-city areas. It has also resulted in reduced services and a shortage of books and equipment for pupils, teachers and libraries. Previous Conservative governments introduced school reforms, which still remain under Labour. Attainment tests were set to establish what children should be reasonably expected to know at the ages of seven, eleven and fourteen. The progress of each schoolchild can then be measured against national standards, assessed and reported. But many teachers were opposed to the extra work involved, doubted the validity of the tests and have boycotted them in recent years. Another radical reform was the creation of a National Curriculum in England and Wales (with similar developments in Northern Ireland but not Scotland). The aim was to create a curriculum which was standardized, centrally devised and appropriate to the needs and demands of the contemporary world. It covers all age groups and includes the ‘core subjects’ of English, mathematics, science, technology, physical education and religious education. History, geography, music and art are taught in the earlier stages of the curriculum before becoming optional, while a modern foreign language is added later. This reform has generated much controversy, opposition, difficulties of implementation and

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problems about the content and scope of course material (such as a recent additional subject called 'citizenship').

The National Curriculum (which is not applicable to independent schools although they follow the subject structure) is tied to a system of examinations at the secondary level. They may be taken in all types of schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The main examinations are the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), which is taken usually by sixteen-year olds; Advanced Subsidiary (AS) qualifications in the first year of the sixth form; and the General Certificate of Education at Advanced Level (GCE A-level), which is normally taken at the end of the second year in the sixth form by eighteen-year olds. Results in all exams tend to be better in single-sex girls' schools.

The GCSE is taken in a range of subjects, the questions and marking of which are undertaken by independent examination boards whose standards have attracted criticism in recent years. In addition to written examinations, project work and continuous assessment of pupils are taken into account in arriving at a final grade. It can be taken in any subject(s) according to individual choice. But most candidates will attempt six or seven subjects and the basic subjects required for jobs and further education are English, mathematics (or a science) and a foreign language. The GCSE was intended as a better evaluation of pupils' abilities than pure examinations and would give prospective employers some idea of the candidate's ability. But, although standards continue to improve, a third of students did not achieve high passes and some 8 per cent did not pass a single subject in 1999.

The GCE A-level is associated with more academic children, who are aiming for entry to higher education or the professions and who spend two years on their studies in the sixth form or in sixth-form colleges. Good passes are now essential because the competition for popular courses in the universities and other colleges has become stiffer. This system was controversially changed in 2000 by the Labour government, which wanted to broaden the syllabus. Four AS level subjects are taken in the first year in addition to key skills tests, before a concentration on three A2 (A-level) subjects, and pupils may mix arts and science subjects. AS subjects may serve as a lower-level alternative for students who do not wish to go on to A2 levels. The standards achieved continue to rise. But there is continuing discussion about the format and content of A-levels, and the new system has been criticized for over-examining students, reducing the time for other school activities and leading to teacher overwork.

Alternative examinations are General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) which are mainly taken by young people in full-time education between the ages of sixteen and nineteen and provide a broad based preparation for a range of occupations and higher education; and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) which are job-specific examinations. Scotland does not have a statutory national curriculum and pupils take the National Qualification at the age of sixteen. Those between sixteen and eighteen take the reformed Scottish Highers. GCSE, AS, A-level and alternative examination results by pupils are the basis of school 'league

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tables', instituted by the previous Conservative government. Examination results and marks at individual schools are published so that parents and pupils can judge a school's performance. The exercise has been criticized for its methodology and creating a 'results mentality'. But it is now firmly established and influential.

Higher education

Should a pupil obtain the required examination results at A- or alternative levels, and be successful at interviews, he or she may go on to an institution of higher education, such as a university or college. The student, after a prescribed period of study and after passing examinations, will receive a degree and become a graduate of that institution. In the past only a small proportion of the age group in Britain proceeded to higher education, in contrast to the higher rates in many major nations. But, following a recent rapid increase in student numbers (with the ratio of female to male students being three to two), the numbers are now 33 per cent in England and Wales, 40 per cent in Scotland and 45 per cent in Northern Ireland. The Labour government wishes to raise these figures to one half of those aged between eighteen and thirty by 2010.

The universities

There were 23 British universities in 1960. After a period of expansion in the 1960s and reforms in 1992 when existing institutions such as polytechnics were given university status, there are now some 87 universities and 64 institutions of higher education, with 1.3 million full-time students in 1999. The Open University and the independent University of Buckingham are additional university-level institutions. The universities can be broadly classified into four types. The ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge (composed of their many colleges) date from the twelfth century. But until the nineteenth century they were virtually the only English universities and offered no places to women. However, other older universities were founded in Scotland, such as St Andrews (1411), Glasgow (1450), Aberdeen (1494) and Edinburgh (1583).
A second group comprises the 'redbrick' or civic universities such as Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester, which were created between 1850 and 1930. The third group consists of universities founded after the Second World War and in the 1960s. Many of the latter, such as Sussex, York and East Anglia, are associated with towns rather than big cities. The fourth group comprises the 'new universities' created in 1992 when polytechnics and some other colleges attained university status. The competition to enter universities is now very strong in popular subjects, and students who do not do well at A- or equivalent levels may be unable to find a place. Some 17 per cent of students now drop out of higher education because of work, financial or other problems. But the majority aim for a good degree in order to obtain a good job, or to continue in higher education by doing research (masters' degrees and doctorates).

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The bachelor's degree (Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science, BA or BSc) is usually taken in final examinations at the end of the third year of study, although some degree courses do vary in length in different parts of Britain (such as Scotland with a four-year MA degree). The degree is divided into first-, second- and third-class honours. Some degrees depend entirely upon the examination results, while others include continuing assessment over the period of study. Universities are supposed to have uniform standards, although there are centres of excellence in particular subjects and there has been recent criticism about levels in some universities and some subjects. Students can choose from an impressive array of subject areas and teaching is mainly by the lecture system, supported by tutorials (small groups) and seminars. The student–lecturer ratio at British universities has increased because of expanded recruitment. Most students tend to live on campus in university accommodation, while others choose to live in rented property outside the university. Until recently few British students chose universities near their parents' homes and many seemed to prefer those in the south of England. But financial reasons now persuade many students to live at home or locally.

Universities are independent institutions created by royal charter, enjoy academic freedom, appoint their own staff, award their own degrees and decide which students to admit. But they are in practice dependent upon government money. This derives mainly from finance (dependent upon the number of students recruited) given by government to Universities Funding Councils for distribution to the universities through university Vice-Chancellors who are the chief executive officers of the universities.

Both Conservative and Labour governments have been concerned to make the universities more accountable in the national interest; have tightly controlled their budgets; and have encouraged them to seek alternative private sources of finance from business and industry. The universities have lost staff and research money; have been forced to adopt more effective management and accounting procedures; must market their resources more efficiently; must attract and recruit students in order to obtain government finance; must pay greater attention to teaching and research performance; and must justify their positions financially and educationally. Government consequently intervenes more closely in the running of the universities than in the past. Such policies have provoked considerable opposition from the universities, which argue that the recent large expansion of student numbers has not seen an equivalent rise in funding or staff salaries. But they are being forced to adapt rather than continue to lose staff, finance and educational programmes. It is also argued that expansion has led to universities taking poorly qualified students to fill their places, who then drop out because of work pressure.

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Other higher education colleges

The 1970s saw the creation of colleges (or institutes) of higher education, often by merging existing colleges with redundant teachers' training colleges or by establishing new institutions. They now offer a wide range of degree, diploma and certificate courses in both science and the arts, and in some cases have specifically taken over the role of training schoolteachers.
They used to be under the control of their local authorities, but the Conservative government granted them independence and some have achieved university status.
A variety of other institutions also offer higher education. Some, such as the Royal College of Art, the Cranfield Institute of Technology and various Business Schools, have university status, while others, such as agricultural, drama and art colleges such the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA) and the Royal College of Music, provide comparable courses. All these institutions have a strong vocational aspect to their programmes which fills a specialized role in higher education.

Student finance

In the past, British students who gained a place at an institution of higher education were awarded a grant from their local education authorities. The grant was in two parts: one, it covered the tuition fees of a first degree course (paid directly to the institution); and, two, it covered, after means testing of parents' income, maintenance expenses such as the cost of rent, food and course books during term time.
The Labour government radically changed this situation from 1998 by abolishing the student grant. Students now have to pay tuition fees of £1,075 in 2001–02 (except in Scotland) and provide for their maintenance expenses, usually through loans from the Student Loan Company. They start to pay back their loans when they reach certain salary levels. Students are means-tested on their parents' income and those from less affluent backgrounds (some 50 per cent) may not have to pay the full or any tuition fees. Other students now have to finance their own higher education; some are in financial difficulties; and most will finish their studies with an average debt of about £12,000. However, these changes in funding have not resulted (2001) in a reduction of students applying for university entry, except for mature students. But the Labour government is re-evaluating student finance because of its alleged detrimental effect on students from poor homes, with a possible return to a grant system.

The Open University

The Labour Party broached the idea of the Open University in the 1960s. It would be a non-residential service, which used television, radio, specially produced books, audio/video cassettes and correspondence courses to teach students of all

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ages. It was intended to give opportunities (or a ‘second chance’) to adults who had been unable to take conventional higher education. It was hoped that the courses might appeal to working-class students who had left school at the official school-leaving age and who wished to broaden their horizons. The Open University opened in 1969 and its first courses started in 1971. It now caters for undergraduate, postgraduate and research students in a wide range of subjects. About 7,000 students of all ages and from very different walks of life receive degrees from the Open University each year. First (bachelors’) degrees are awarded on a system of credits for each course completed and now include students from the European Union, Gibraltar, Slovenia and Switzerland. Dedication, stamina and perseverence are necessary to complete the long, part-time courses of the Open University. Students, who are often employed, follow their lessons and lectures at home. Part-time tutors in local areas mark the students’ written work and meet them regularly to discuss their progress. There are also special weekend and refresher courses throughout the year, which are held at universities and colleges, to enable students to take part in intensive study. The various television programmes and books associated with the Open University programmes are widely exported throughout the world. The Open University is generally considered to be a cost-effective success, has provided valuable alternative educational opportunities for many people and has served as a model for other countries.

Further, adult and lifelong education

An important aspect of British education is the provision of further and adult education, whether by voluntary bodies, trade unions or other institutions. The present organizations originated to some degree in the thirst for knowledge which was felt by working-class people in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, particularly after the arrival of elementary state education and growing literacy. Today a wide range of educational opportunities are provided by self-governing state-funded colleges of further education and other institutions. These offer a considerable selection of subjects at basic levels for part- and full-time students. Some students may study in the evenings or on day-release from their employment. Such studies for students over sixteen are often work-related, include government training programmes and have close ties with local commerce and industry.

Adult education is provided by these colleges, the universities, the Workers’ Educational Association (WEA), evening institutes, local societies and clubs. Adult courses may be vocational (for employment) or recreational (for pleasure), and cover a variety of activities and programmes.

Some 4 million students of very varying ages are taking further and adult education courses in one form or another. In the past a relatively low percentage of the sixteen to twenty-four age group in Britain were in further and higher education, compared to the much larger percentages in Japan, the USA and Germany. Although the figures have now improved considerably, it is still a matter of

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concern that too few people are being educated or trained further after the age of sixteen. This is particularly true at a time when there will be an increasing shortage of well-qualified people in the future workforce, especially in vocational technical fields. Nevertheless, there has been a recent expansion of continuing-education projects and a range of programmes specifically designed for employment purposes and to provide people with access qualifications for further training. The Labour government sees further and adult education as part of a lifelong learning process, which it wants to prioritize. The aim is to encourage the continuous development of people's skills, knowledge and understanding. But further education is suffering at present from a lack of resources and funding, and inspectors found in 2001 that a third of further education colleges were inadequate and had low standards.

Attitudes to education

Concerns about the quality of British education and educational policy at all levels are consistently voiced by a majority of respondents to public opinion polls. They think that state schools are not run well and that more money should be spent on education generally. The Labour government has responded by giving more funding to the system and by tinkering with its structures. But serious dissatisfaction continued to be voiced in the polls in 2000–01, and education is likely to continue as a major problem in British life. There have been continuous and vigorous debates about the performance and goals of British education at all levels since the 1970s. Traditionalist critics, who want disciplined learning programmes, feel that state comprehensive schools and 'creative/progressive' methods of child centred teaching are not producing the kind of people needed for contemporary society. It is argued that pupils lack the basic skills of numeracy and literacy and are unprepared for the realities of the outside world.
Employers frequently criticize both schools and higher education for the quality of their products.
(from British Civilization by John Oakland, Routledge, 2002)

1. What explains the complicated nature of British schooling?
2. What is the structure of state secondary education in Britain?
3. When was the first national curriculum set up?
4. What exams do most school children take at the age of 15-16?
5. What is the sixth form?
6. What exams are taken by people around the age of 18 to continue education?
7. What is the structure of British higher education?
8. What is the first university degree?
9. What is the most advanced degree for research?

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Religion and Beliefs. The established churches. Attitudes and tendencies.

There is a paradox about religion in Britain. On the one hand this is officially a Christian country, where Church and state are linked. On the other hand, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs form quite a large part of the population, and the British pride themselves on tolerance and adaptability.
Many small religious groups and sects appear to be growing, while most young people have no religious beliefs at all.
There are two established or state churches in Britain: the Church of England, or Anglican Church as it is also called, and the Church of Scotland, or Kirk.
(The word 'kirk' is sometimes used for a Scottish church, especially one belonging to the Church of Scotland. It is also a colloquial term sometimes used for the Church of Scotland itself, especially by people who do not belong to it.)
The religious situation in Britain was partly the result of a historical accident. King Henry VIII wanted to divorce his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, in order to marry again, but the Pope would not agree. So, in the early 1530th, Henry broke away from Rome, and the Church of England became independent. It was still Catholic, but it then began to adopt many of the new Protestant ideas from Germany, such as man's ability to speak to God without the intercession of priests.
Under Queen Elizabeth I, the Church became officially Protestant and Roman Catholics were persecuted – they were forced to go to Protestant church services, and most of their money was confiscated. Even today a Catholic may not become king or queen.
The link between Church and state is something unique to Britain; no other Western country has anything quite like it. The Queen is not only the symbolic head of state, but she is also the head of the Church of England; British coins have a portrait of the monarch with the letters FD (from the Latin fidei defensor, Defender of the Faith). In most modern countries there is a strict separation between the government and religion.
The monarch is crowned by the senior Anglican cleric, the Archbishop of Canterbury, but if the monarch renounced Supreme Governorship of the Church, this ceremony might be abandoned or radically changed.
As Head of the Church of England, the monarch appoints the archbishops, bishops and deans of the Church, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, who might well not be an Anglican. The Prime Minister makes a recommendation from two nominee candidates, put forward by a special Crown Appointments Commission (composed of bishops, clergy and lay members of the Church). All Anglican clergy must take an oath of allegiance to the Crown. Thus Church and Crown in England are closely entwined, with mutual bonds of responsibility.
The most senior spiritual leaders of the Church of England are the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is 'Primate of All England', and the Archbishop of York, who is 'Primate of England'. They are heads of the two ecclesiastical provinces of England, Canterbury and York. Both provinces are divided into dioceses, each

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under a bishop. Canterbury is the larger province, containing 30 dioceses, while York contains only 14. The choice of Canterbury and York is historical. Canterbury is the site of where St.Augustine reestablished the Christian church in England at the end of the 6th century. The see of York was founded in the early 7th century by an envoy of St.Augustine to this capital of Northumbria.

The senior bishops are those of London, Durham and Winchester. Twenty-six senior bishops are members of the House of Lords where they are known as the 'Lords Spiritual'.

Each diocese is composed of parishes, the basic unit of the Church's ministry. Each parish has a vicar, or sometimes a team of vicars, if it includes more than one church.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is head of the Anglican 'Communion'. This Communion is composed of the various independent churches which have grown out of the Church of England in various parts of the world. In fact England accounts for only 2 of the 28 provinces of the Anglican Church. In theory, about 40% of the English might say they were members of the Church of England. It is a small proportion of the 70 million active Anglicans worldwide. More Nigerians, for example, than English are regular attenders of the Anglican Church. It is said that most of the 'ruling establishment' of Washington belong to the Episcopal Church, the Anglican Church of the United States.

Once in every 10 years the Archbishop of Canterbury invites all the bishops of the Anglican Communion to a conference at Lambeth in London to exchange views and debate issues of concern. The Lambeth Conference provides an opportunity for the sister churches from every continent to meet and share their different concerns and perspectives.

Despite the name 'Canterbury', the official residence of the head of the Church of England is Lambeth Palace in London.

The Church of England is frequently considered to be a 'broad' church because it includes a wide variety of belief and practice. For example, the nature of its religious services varies quite widely from church to church, depending partly on the inclinations of the local priest and partly on local tradition.

Three main strands of belief can be identified. One strand is evangelical, or 'low church'. This places great emphasis on the contents of the Bible and is the most consciously opposed to Catholicism. It prefers plain services with a minimum of ceremony.

In contrast, the belief of the 'Anglo-Catholic' or 'high church' strand are virtually identical to those of Catholicism – except that it does not accept the Pope as the ultimate authority. High church services are more colourful and include organ music and elaborate priestly clothing. Both these strands are traditional in their outlook.

There is also a liberal wing, which is willing to question some of the traditional Christian beliefs, is more inclined to view the Bible as merely a historical document, is more tolerant towards homosexuality and was the first to support moves to ordain women priests.

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In 1992, by just two votes more than the required two-thirds majority, the General Synod of the Anglican Church voted to allow the ordination of women priests. The debate in the Synod had lasted more than 6 hours, and had been going on for years before that, both inside and outside the church all over the country. In 1994 the first women priests were ordained. Those who support this development believe that it will help to give the Church of England a greater relevance to the modern world and finally bring it up to date. (Unlike the Catholic Church, it has always allowed its clergy to be married.) Some who were opposed to the change have not accepted the Synod's decision, and there are a few local cases of attempts to set up a rebel church.

Some members of the Anglican Church (about 200 clergy) have decided to 'go over to Rome' – that is to join the Catholic Church, which does not have women priests.

The Church of England is above all things a church of compromise. It takes a long view and distrusts zealous theological or ideological certainty. It prefers to live with disagreements of belief rather than apply authoritarian decisions. It fudges issues where it can, to keep its broad body of believers together. In that sense the Church of England is profoundly typical of the English character. It distrusts the rigid logic of a particular tradition of theology and prefers the illogical but practical atmosphere of 'live and let live' within a broader church climate. To many of its members the 'Englishness' of the Anglican Church is just as important as its religious doctrine. Without it, many Anglo-Catholics would be Catholic, many low churches and liberals would form their own sects and a very large number would simply cease to have anything to do with organized religion at all. At present, this national distinctiveness is emphasized by the Anglican Church's position as the official religion. It was traditionally identified with the ruling establishment and with authority, it even used to be half-jokingly described as 'the Conservative party at prayer', but it has been distancing itself over the past 25 years or so, and may eventually disengage from the state. 'Disestablishment', as this is known, becomes a topic for discussion each time the Church and state clash over some issues.

Nevertheless, the Church of England remains overwhelmingly conventional and middle class in its social composition. Most working-class people in England and Wales who are religious belong to the nonconformist or 'Free' churches, while others have joined the Catholic Church in the past 140 years.

Because of its position, the Anglican Church has inherited a great legacy of ancient cathedrals and parish churches. It is caught between the value of these magnificent buildings as places of worship, and the enormous cost of their upkeep. The state provides about 10% of the cost of maintaining the fabric of historic churches.

Other Christian churches

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Catholicism

After the establishment of Protestantism in Britain Catholicism was for a time an illegal religion and then a barely tolerated religion. A British Catholic hierarchy was reestablished only in 1850 and only in the 20th century did it become as open about its activities as any other religion. Although Catholics can now be found in all ranks of society and in all occupations, the comparatively recent integration of Catholicism means that they are still under-represented at the top levels. For example, although Catholics comprise more than 10% of the population, they comprise only around 5% of MPs.
A large proportion of Catholics in modern Britain are those whose family roots are in Italy, Ireland or elsewhere in Europe. The Irish connection is evident in the large proportion of priests in England who come from Ireland (they are sometimes said to be Ireland's biggest export).
Partly because of its comparatively marginal status, the Catholic Church, in the interests of self-preservation, has maintained a greater cohesiveness and uniformity than the Anglican Church. There is, for example, more centralized control over practices of worship. Not having had a recognized, official role to play in society, the Catholic Church in Britain takes doctrine and practice a bit more seriously than it is taken in countries where Catholicism is the majority religion – and a lot more seriously than the Anglican Church in general does.
This dedication can be seen in two aspects of Catholic life. First, religious instruction is taken more seriously in Catholic schools than it is in Anglican ones, and Catholic schools in Britain usually have a head who is either a monk, a friar or a nun. Second, there is the matter of attendance at church. Many people who hardly ever step inside a church still feel entitled to describe themselves as 'Anglican'. In contrast, British people who were brought up as Catholics but who no longer attend mass regularly or receive the sacraments do not normally describe themselves as 'Catholic'. They qualify the word 'Catholic' with 'brought up as' or 'lapsed'. Despite being very much a minority religion in most places in the country, as many British Catholics regularly go to church as do Anglicans.
The organization of the Anglican and Catholic churches is broadly similar. At the highest level is an archbishop, who presides over a province. The senior Catholic Archbishopric is Westminster and its archbishop is the only cardinal from Britain.

The Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) and other free churches

Those Protestants who did not accept the authority of the Anglican Church were first known as 'dissenters' and later, as tolerance grew, as 'nonconformists'. These days, when refusal to conform to the established church is irrelevant, they are simply called 'members of the free churches'.

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A great many different free-church groups have come into being over the centuries. In the details of their organization, styles of worship and doctrinal emphasis, the various nonconformist groups differ considerably. However, they all share certain characteristics: they have no bishops or 'episcopacy'; they admit both men and women to their ministry; they regard simplicity and individual prayer as more important than elaborate ritual and public ceremony; they praise self-denial, for example many are teetotal. The main ones today are: the Methodist Union, the Baptists, the United Reformed Church, the Salvation Army and the Quakers.

In case of the Methodists and Baptists, there are also smaller splinter groups. The Quakers, also known as the Society of Friends, are a very small group with a long history. Their notable characteristics are their complete lack of clergy and their pacifism. They refuse to fight in any war, though they will do ambulance and hospital work.

In Scotland the Church vehemently rejected the idea of bishops, following a more Calvinist Protestant tradition, which placed great importance on finding the truth for oneself in the words of the Bible and on living an austere life of hard work and self-sacrifice. Its churches are plain. There is no altar, only a table, and the emphasis is on the pulpit, where the Gospel is preached. The Church of Scotland is more democratic than the Anglican Church. It has no bishops and it admits women as well as men to the ministry. Its head, or 'Moderator' is elected each year to chair the General Assembly of the Church. The General Assembly is the principal governing body of the Church. Unlike the Church of England, the Church of Scotland is subject neither to the Crown nor to Parliament.

There is no Welsh equivalent to the Church of England or the Church of Scotland. Wales has no officially established church. The Anglican Church was disestablished in Wales, where it has always had a tiny following, in 1914. Wales is predominantly nonconformist.

Among all these Protestant churches there has been a recent important development called the 'house church' movement. This began in the 1970s and has a membership of roughly 90,000. This movement is a network of autonomous 'churches' of usually not more than 100 members in each. These churches meet, usually in groups of 15 or 20, in members' homes for worship and prayer meetings. Most of those joining such groups are in the 20-40 year-old age range and belong to the professional middle classes – solicitors, doctors and so forth – who have felt frustrated with the more ponderous style of the larger churches. They try to recapture what they imagine was the vitality of the early church.

All the formal churches are in numerical decline. Other Christian churches have been growing. Because of their energetic enthusiasm and their desire to attract new followers, they are sometimes characterized by the Term 'evangelical'. In the case of some groups, their interpretations of the Bible are often literal: the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists (all of which originated in the USA) are examples. These groups also provide a strict code of behaviour for their followers.

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The fastest-growing type of evangelical Christianity, however, places less emphasis on dogma, sin, or giving people a code of behaviour. Instead, the emphasis is on the spiritual and miraculous, on revelation. Gatherings often involve joyful singing. There is a belief in spiritual healing of the sick. The oldest existing church of this type in Britain is called Pentecostal, and this term is sometimes used to denote all such groups. Pentecostalism has had a small working-class following for many years. Its recent growth is among the middle class. Another term used for these groups is 'Charismatic', reflecting both their enthusiasm and their emphasis on the miraculous.

The Protestant churches of Britain owe part of the revival taking place in some evangelical churches to the vitality of the West Indian churches. West Indian immigrants in the 1950s and 1960s were not welcomed into Anglican churches, and many decided to form their own churches. Their music and informal joyfulness of worship spread quickly in evangelical circles.

Some people are turning even further afield, beyond the bounds of the Christian tradition. The term 'New Age' is used to cover a very wide range of beliefs which can involve elements of Christianity, eastern religions and ancient pagan beliefs all mixed together. The term comes from astrology – we are passing from the previous age of Pisces, which has lasted 2,000 years since the birth of Christ, into the age of Aquarius.

Astrology is very popular with New Age people, as is fortune telling by all sorts of means: tarot cards, tealeaves and palm reading. Old non-Christian beliefs have been revived: magic, the occult, and the powers of witches. Interests and beliefs of this kind are not new in Britain. Theosophy, Druidism, Buddhism, Christian Scientism (which believes in the control of the body through the mind) and many other beliefs have all had their followers in Britain for a hundred years or more. Until the 1960s such people came exclusively from a small set of the upper middle class. Since then, however, New Age beliefs have filtered downwards to other sections of the social scale. Despite their great variety two features seem to be common to all New Age beliefs: first, an emphasis on personal development; second, respect for the natural environment.

Apart from Christianity, there are at least five other religions with a substantial number of adherents in Britain. These are usually composed of either immigrants or the descendants of immigrants.

The oldest is the Jewish community, which now numbers barely 300,000, of whom fewer than half ever attend synagogue. Today the Jewish community in Britain is aging and shrinking, on account of assimilation and a relatively low birth rate. Two-thirds of this community live in London. The Jews are divided into different religious groups. The largest group are Orthodox and belong to the United Synagogues. They look to the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain for spiritual leadership. A much smaller number of Sephardic (that is originally from Spain and Portugal) Orthodox still recognize a different leader, the Haham. The two progressive groups, the Reform and Liberal Jews, have no acknowledged single leader, but

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they do have a number of rabbis who command a following among those who admire their wisdom. 37% of Jews claim no religious affiliation at all.
There are also more recently established religious groups: Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Muslims. The most important of these, not only on account of its size, is the Muslim community. There are 1.5 million Muslims and over 1,000 mosques and prayer centres, of which the most important (in all Western Europe) is the London Central Mosque at Regent's Park. There are probably 900,000 Muslims who regularly attend these mosques. Most are of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin, but there are also an increasing number of British converts.
Smaller communities include about 450,000 Sikhs who mainly originate in the Indian Punjab, and about 320,000 Hindus. There is a Buddhist monastery, Samye Ling, in Scotland. It was set up in 1968 when a group of Tibetan monks arrived in the area. They soon collected a large number of European followers and set them to work building Europe's largest Buddhist temple. Since then, Samye Ling has continued to attract new followers. So many Buddhists now live in the area that in 1993 the local primary school had only one Christian pupil.
Finally, it is necessary to mention what are called 'cults'. The style of their belief involves absolute commitment to and unquestioning obedience of the leader around whom they are centred. Cults have a bad reputation for using mind-control techniques. Their extremist tendencies are often offensive to most people and, with a few exceptions, each individual cult is tiny. However, it has been estimated that there are between 500 and 700 of them in the country and that, taken together, they have nearly half a million followers.

1. What is the established religion in Britain?
2. Who is the most senior cleric in the Anglican Church hierarchy?
3. Who is the official head of the Church of England?
4. What other Christian churches are represented?
5. What other major religions are represented in the UK?

The law and order.

The police and the public

Before 1829, there was no police anywhere in Britain. In that year, the Prime Minister, Robert Peel, set up a force in London. They were called bobbies, and the nickname is still occasionally used today (Bobby is the familiar form of the name Robert).
There is no national police force in Britain. All police employees work for one of the 40 or so separate forces which can have responsibility for a particular geographical area. Central government inspects them and has influence over senior appointments within them. In return, it provides about half the money to run them. The other half comes from local government. The exception to the system is the Metropolitan Police Force, which polices greater London. The 'Met' is under the

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direct control of central government. It also performs certain national police functions such as the registration of all crimes and criminals in England and Wales and the compilation of the missing persons register. New Scotland Yard is the famous building which is the headquarters of its Criminal Investigation Department. (The name of the original Scotland Yard comes from the fact that it was the residence of the kings of Scotland when they came to London.)

There was a time when a supposedly typical British policeman could be found in every tourist brochure for Britain. His strange-looking helmet and the fact that he did not carry a gun made him a unique symbol for tourists. The image of the friendly British 'bobby', with his friendly manner, was also well-known within the country and was reinforced by popular television serials. The system of policing was based on each officer having his own 'beat', a particular neighbourhood which it was his duty to patrol. He usually did this on foot or sometimes by bicycle.

However, the British police are not absolutely perfect. In the 1960s the situation began to change in two ways. First, in response to an increasingly motorized society, and therefore increasingly motorized crime, the police themselves started patrolling in cars. As a result, individual police officers became remote figures and stopped being the familiar faces that they once were. At the same time, the police found themselves having to deal increasingly with public demonstrations and with the activities of a generation who had no experience of war and therefore no obvious enemy-figure on which to focus their youthful feelings of rebellion. These young people started to see the police as the symbol of everything they disliked about society. Police officers were no longer known as 'bobbies' but became the 'fuzz' or the 'cops' or the 'pigs'.

Since the middle years of the 20th century, the police in Britain have lost much of their positive image. In the 1980s there were a large number of cases in which it was found that police officers had lied and cheated in order to get people convicted of crimes. They apparently wanted to show results, even if the wrong people suffered. The most common complaint about the police is that they are incompetent. Victims of crime often say that it is not worth calling the police because they will do nothing. There has been a big increase in some types of crime such as car theft (Britain now has the highest rate in Europe), and people have the impression that the battle is being lost.

Nevertheless, there is still a great deal of public sympathy for the police. It is felt that they are doing an increasingly difficult job under difficult circumstances. In a survey, 75 per cent of people in Britain considered that the police were doing a good job. They are approachable – you can ask them the way in the street. Police officers visit primary schools to give talks and meet the children. They are trying to ensure that the next generation grows up with the same pro-police view as their parents. They are better paid than teachers, and much better paid than nurses; this helps to prevent corruption, and they very rarely accept bribes. Of course, the fact that they are unarmed is good for their public image; they look less threatening.

The organisation used to be called the Police Force, but it has decided to call itself the Police Service. This reflects its desire to be part of modern society – serving

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people rather than controlling them. Police officers often still address members of the public as ‘sir’ or ‘madam’. Senior officers think it is important for the police to establish a relationship with local people, and the phrase ‘community policing’ is now fashionable. Some police have even started to patrol on foot again. Generally speaking, the relationship between police and public in Britain compares quite favourably with that in some other European countries.
Britain is one of the few countries in the world (Norway and New Zealand are others) where the police do not normally carry guns. Some officers do have guns, but they don’t patrol the streets with them. Most people in Britain, including the police, feel that if the police were armed, criminals too would always carry guns, and the cycle of violence would increase. In Britain it is illegal to own a handgun; you can keep a shotgun or a hunting rifle, but even for these it is quite difficult to get a licence.

The system of justice

The system of justice in England and Wales, in both civil and criminal cases, is an adversarial system. It involves two sides arguing about the guilt of a person. If you are accused of a crime, you have a defense lawyer who argues with the prosecution lawyer. The court decides which side is right. It is not the business of any court to find out ‘the truth’. This is very different from the inquisitorial system in many countries, where the judges try to find the truth by investigating and asking questions.
There are basically two kinds of court. More than 90 per cent of all cases are dealt with in magistrates’ courts. A panel of magistrates (usually tree) passes judgement. They can also impose a punishment. They deal with cases such as driving offences, shoplifting or vandalism, and the maximum sentence they can give are six months in prison or a L 5,000 fine.
Magistrates are not trained lawyers. They are just ordinary people of good reputation who have been appointed to the job by a local committee. They do not get a salary or a fee for their work. Inevitably, they tend to come from the wealthier sections of society and, in times past, their prejudices were very obvious. In modern times, however, some care is taken to make sure that JPs (Justicies of the Peace) are recruited from as broad a section of society as possible.

All cases go first to the Magistrates’ Court, but more serious ones are then referred to the Crown Court, where a professional lawyer acts as the judge and the decision regarding guilt or innocence is taken by a jury. Juries consist of 12 people selected at random from the list of voters. They do not get paid for their services and are obliged to perform this duty. A convicted person may appeal to the Court of Criminal Appeal in London.

The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom is the supreme court in all matters under English law, Northern Irish law and Scottish civil law. It is the court of last

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resort and highest appellate court in the United Kingdom; however the High Court of Justiciary remains the supreme court for criminal cases in Scotland. The Supreme Court also has jurisdiction to resolve disputes relating to devolution in the United Kingdom and concerning the legal powers of the three devolved governments or laws made by the devolved legislatures. It is housed in Middlesex Guildhall—which it shares with the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council—in the City of Westminster.

The Supreme Court was established by Part 3 of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 and started work on 1 October 2009. It assumed the judicial functions of the House of Lords, which were exercised by the Lords of Appeal in Ordinary (commonly called "Law Lords"), the 12 professional judges appointed as members of the House of Lords to carry out its judicial business. Its jurisdiction over devolution matters had previously been held by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

1. How is Police Force organized?
2. What is the highest court of all in Britain?
3. Which law courts try cases?

The British economy. Overview. Policies and structure. Financial institutions. The trade unions.

Fluctuations in the British economy affect people directly and are of concern to them. They influence employment, income levels, taxation, investment and government programmes. Historically, the British economy has been conditioned by agricultural and industrial revolutions; the growth and later reduction of manufacturing industry; the expansion of service industries; government policies and intervention; and a decline from the late nineteenth century relative to other competitor countries. It experienced both recession and growth throughout the twentieth century, but developed successfully from 1994 with low inflation, unemployment and interest rates. However, there were again signs of weakness in 2001 due to a domestic and global economic downturn.

Economic history

Britain was a largely rural country until the end of the eighteenth century and its economy was based on products generated by agricultural revolutions. But there had also been industrial and manufacturing developments over the centuries, which were mainly located in the larger towns. Financial and commercial institutions, such as banks, insurance houses and trading companies, were gradually founded in the City of London and throughout the country to finance and service the expanding and increasingly diversified economy.

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The growth of an overseas colonial empire from the sixteenth century contributed to national wealth as Britain capitalized on its worldwide trading connections. Colonies supplied cheap raw materials, which were converted into manufactured goods in Britain and exported. Overseas markets grew quickly because merchants and traders were protected at home and abroad. They exploited the colonial markets and controlled foreign competition. By the nineteenth century, Britain had become an economic power. Its wealth was based on international trade and the payments that it received for its exported products. Governments believed that a country increased its wealth if exports exceeded imports. This trading system and its financial institutions benefited industrial revolutions, which began in the late eighteenth century. Manufacturing and industrial inventions, together with a rich supply of domestic materials and energy sources, such as coal, steel, iron, steam power and water, stimulated production and the economy. Manufacturers, who had gained by foreign trade and demand for British goods, invested in new industries and technology. Industrial towns expanded, factories were built and a transport system of roads, canals and railways developed. Efficient manufacturing produced competitively priced goods for foreign markets and Britain was transformed into an urban and industrialized country.

But industrialization was opposed by some people. The Luddites in the nineteenth century, for example, destroyed new machinery in an attempt to halt progress and preserve existing jobs. Industrial and urban development had negative effects, such as long working hours for low wages and bad conditions in mines and factories. They also resulted in the depopulation of rural areas and the decline of traditional home and cottage work. Industrial conditions caused social and moral problems in towns and the countryside, and mechanization was often regarded as exploitative and dehumanizing. The situation was worsened by the indifference of many manufacturers, employers and politicians to the human cost of industrialization. However, the industrial changes did transform Britain into a rich nation, despite economic slumps, unemployment, growth of urban slums and hardship in the nineteenth century. Manufacturing output was now the chief generator of wealth; production methods and technology advanced; and domestic competition improved the quality of goods and services.

But this industrial dominance of world trade did not last. It declined relatively by the end of the nineteenth century as countries such as Germany and the USA industrialized and became competitive. However, British financial expertise continued to be influential in global commercial dealings.

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The modern economy: policies, structure and performance

It is argued that British economic performance and world status declined further in the twentieth century, although some research queries whether decline has been as substantial in relative terms as is popularly assumed.

But Britain was affected by economic problems created by two World Wars; international recessions; global competition; structural changes in the economy; a

lack of industrial competitiveness; alternating government policies; and a series of 'boom-and-bust' cycles in which economic growth fluctuated greatly.

Economic policies

Governments became more involved in economic planning from the 1940s, and the performance of the economy has been tied to their fiscal and monetary policies. All British governments have variously intervened in economic life in attempts to manage the economy and stimulate demand and growth. The Conservative Party, however, has traditionally advocated a minimum interference in the economy and favoured the workings of the market. But, in practice, government intervention was necessary as global competition grew and domestic demands became more complex. The Labour Party argued that the economy should be centrally planned and its essential sectors should be owned and managed by the state. This policy in Clause 4 of its constitution was dropped only in 1995. Labour governments from 1945 consequently nationalized (moved to public ownership) railways, road transport, water, gas, electricity, shipbuilding, coal-mining, the iron and steel industries, airlines, the health service, the Post Office and telecommunications. Public industries and services were run by the state through government-appointed boards. They were responsible to Parliament and subsidized by taxation for the benefit of all, rather than for private owners or shareholders. But they were expensive to run and governments were expected to rescue any which had economic problems. This policy was gradually reversed by the Conservatives. They argued that public industries and services were too expensive and inefficient; had outdated technology and bad industrial relations; suffered from lack of investment in new equipment; were dependent upon tax subsidies; and were run as state services with too little attention paid to profit-making, consumer demand or market forces. They denationalized some state industries and returned them to private ownership.

Conservative denationalization was later (1979–97) called 'privatization'. Ownership of state industries such as British Telecom, British Airways, British Petroleum, British Gas, water and electricity supplies, British Coal and British Rail was transferred from the state to private owners mainly through the sale of shares. These industries are run as profitmaking concerns and are regulated in the public interest by independent regulators. The aim was to 'deregulate' the economy so that restrictions on businesses were removed to allow them to operate freely and competitively. For example, the stock market and public transport were deregulated, resulting in greater diversity in the City of London and local authority bus companies competing with private bus firms. Conservatives believe that privatization improves efficiency, reduces government spending, increases economic freedom and encourages share ownership. The public bought shares in the new private companies, and share-owning by individuals and financial institutions increased. But there was concern about privatization. Private industries became virtual monopolies (although there is now more competition) and there is

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criticism of the independent regulators' abilities to supervise them. There have been complaints about their services, prices and products, although some of them are now profitable and many initial problems have been solved.

Economic structure

Government policies have created a mixed economy of public and private sectors. The public sector includes the remaining state-run industries and public services, which now amount to under one-third of the economy. Over two-thirds is in the private sector and will increase with further privatization. Unlike public-sector concerns which are owned and run by the state, the private sector belongs to people who have a financial stake in a company. It consists of small businesses owned by individuals; companies whose shares are sold to the public through the Stock Exchange; and larger companies whose shares are not offered for sale to the public. Most companies are private and small or medium-size. They are crucial to the economy and generate 50 per cent of new jobs. Some 10 per cent of the economy is controlled by foreign corporations, which employ 10 per cent of the workforce. Britain (even outside the Euro) has been seen as an attractive low-cost country for foreign investment in areas such as electronic equipment and cars, although such investment has recently been reduced.
The shareholders are the real owners of those companies in which they invest their money. However, the daily organization of the business is left to a board of directors under a chairman (woman) or managing director. In practice, most shareholders are more interested in receiving profit dividends on their shares from a successful business than in being concerned with its running. But shareholder power is occasionally mobilized if the company is performing badly. National and foreign companies are sometimes involved in takeovers and mergers in the private sector. A takeover occurs when a larger company takes over (or buys) a smaller, often loss-making, firm. Mergers are amalgamations between companies of equal standing. Such battles for control can be fiercely fought and have resulted in sections of the economy, such as cars, hotels, media concerns and food products, being dominated by a relatively small number of major groups. Takeovers and mergers can cause concern to the target companies and their workforces. A Competition Commission is supposed to monitor this situation by preventing any one group forming a monopoly or creating unfair trading conditions. It examines the plans and reports to the Director General of Fair Trading, who may rule against the proposed takeover or merger. Some decisions have stopped undesirable developments. But others have allowed near-monopolistic situations, and the performance of the Commission is criticized.

Economic performance

Since the Second World War Britain's economic problems (caused by domestic and global factors) have resulted in recession and boom cycles; high

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unemployment, inflation and interest rates; trade weaknesses; poor growth; a fluctuating pound; and industrial relations problems. There have also been structural changes in the economy, such as a growth in service industries and a decline in industrial and manufacturing trades.

The location of British industry, which was dictated by the industrial revolutions, has been a factor in manufacturing and industrial decline. Industries were situated in areas where there was access to natural resources and transport systems and where there was often only one major industry. They could be easily damaged in a changing economic climate, unless they managed to diversify. But even regions which had diversified successfully in the past were affected by further deindustrialization and recession from the 1970s to the 1990s. Many manufacturing industries did not adapt to new markets and demands; did not produce goods efficiently and cheaply enough to compete; lacked competitiveness; and priced themselves out of the world market. In 1938, Britain produced 22 per cent of global exports of manufactured goods. This figure slumped to 6.5 per cent by 1989, owing to world competition and the run-down of manufacturing industries. Industrial decline badly affected northern England, the English Midlands, Scotland, Northern Ireland and South Wales. Traditional trades such as textiles, steel, ship-building, iron and coal-mining were greatly reduced. Governments, helped by European Union grants, tried to revitalize depressed areas with financial aid and the creation of new industry. These policies have only slowly had a positive effect in places such as Liverpool, Glasgow, Newcastle, Birmingham and Belfast. But Britain is still the world's fourth largest economy and a significant industrial and manufacturing country. It is the fifth largest exporter of goods and services, despite its reduced share of the global market and fluctuations in manufacturing since the 1980s. But manufactured goods, such as food, drink and tobacco, engineering and transport machinery, electronics and chemicals, are 86 per cent of exports and 22 per cent of the gross domestic product (a third in 1950). Structural change in industry and manufacturing forced adjustments to different markets. New production methods and technology led to a growth in specialized industries and the service sector (banking, insurance, catering, leisure, finance and information), which is now 70 per cent of gross domestic product, although it also suffered in the 2001 downturn. The discovery of North Sea oil and gas in the mid-1970s has contributed greatly to the British economy and made it less dependent upon imported energy. But gas and oil are finite; Britain has problems in finding alternative sources; it already has to import some gas and oil; and must fill the financial gap with new revenues. It is argued that energy income has been unwisely spent on social targets, rather than being used more positively for investment in new industry and in creating a modern economic infrastructure. Britain's trading patterns have also changed and its partners are now the European Union (59 per cent), North America (17) and other countries (24), with non-EU exports increasing. But it has had a balance-of-payments problem since 1983, and a trade deficit results when exports do not exceed imports. However, 'invisible exports', such as financial and insurance

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services, are not calculated in this equation and contribute significantly to the economy. The economy is affected by fluctuations in the value of the pound. Devaluation (reducing the pound's exchange value) was earlier used by governments as an economic weapon. This boosted exports by making them cheaper on the world market, but raised the cost of imports and dissuaded people from buying foreign goods. Devaluation has not been used recently. Instead, the pound was allowed to 'float' from 1972 and find its own market value in competition with other currencies.

Conservative governments (1979–97) addressed inherent weaknesses in the British economy, but opinions differ on their record. They tried to reduce inflation by high interest rates and cuts in public spending. Industry and commerce were expected to restructure themselves; increase their growth rates and productivity; cut down overstaffing in the workforce; and become more efficient under market forces. Privatization was also gradually applied in many areas of the public sector. Such measures and a world recession resulted in the 1980 British economy falling to very low levels with high interest rates, unemployment and inflation. Although it improved by 1986, it overheated from mid-1988. There were record balance-of-payments deficits, the pound was attacked, inflation increased, and interest rates were raised. Domestic and international factors caused Britain to have its worst recession (1989–93) since the 1930s world depression.

In an attempt to boost economic strength, Britain in 1990 joined the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) which, by linking European moneys, is supposed to stabilize currencies and improve national economies. But, after speculation against the pound in 1992, Britain withdrew from the ERM and allowed the pound to float. The economy recovered outside the ERM. At present (2001), the pound is strong, although this has created problems for British exporters and businesses.

In 1993–94, Britain came slowly out of recession, with improved manufacturing and financial performance and a fall in inflation, unemployment and interest rates. By 1997 the economy, which the Labour government inherited, was one of the most successful in the world. Britain in 2001 suffered mixed fortunes from a global economic downturn. Manufacturing was in recession and there was weakness in other sectors. Consumer spending boosted the economy but consumer confidence was waning. Unemployment, after falling since 1993, rose in October 2001 to 951,100 or 3.2 per cent of the labour force. But interest rates were very low at 4.0 per cent, as was inflation at 2.6 per cent.

Financial institutions

Financial institutions are central actors in the economy. In the 1980s, they responded to a deregulated and freer economy. Banks, building societies, insurance firms, money markets and the London Stock Exchange expanded, merged and diversified. They entered new fields and reorganized their traditional areas of expertise, as competition between institutions increased. But they also had

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problems when the economy fluctuated in the late 1980s, the early 1990s and 2001. However, despite unemploy-ment in financial businesses, the weak performance of the Stock Market and European competition, London has retained its status as a global financial centre. Many major financial institutions have their headquarters in London, with branches throughout Britain. The square mile of the *City of London*, with its banks, insurance houses, legal firms and financial dealers' offices, has always been a centre of British and world finance. Its resources have financed royal wars, military and colonial exploration and trading companies.
Today it provides financial and investment services for commercial interests in Britain and overseas. Many City institutions were founded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as Britain's prosperity and overseas trade grew, such as the insurance firm Lloyd's (1680s), the London Stock Exchange (1773) and the Bank of England (1694). The City is now being seriously challenged in financial dealings by the London Docklands redevelopment centred on Canary Wharf.
The Bank of England ('the old lady of Threadneedle Street') is the country's central bank. Although previously nationalized, it is now independent (1997) of government and sets interest rates to control inflation. Other institutions adjust their interest rates accordingly. It is organized by a governor and directors who are appointed by the government. It is the government's banker; the agent for British commercial and foreign central banks; prints money for England and Wales; manages the national debt and gold reserves; and supports the pound by buying pounds on foreign currency exchanges. The other main banks which provide banking services throughout Britain are the *central clearing banks*, of which the most important are HSBC, Lloyds TSB, The Royal Bank of Scotland (including National Westminster) and Barclays. They provide their customers with current and deposit (savings) accounts, loans and financial advice. But they have been criticized for their banking charges to clients, their treatment of customers and their unwillingness to provide funds for small businesses. They are involved in international finance and have expanded their traditional activities. Building societies, which now offer banking facilities and Internet banking, offer competition to the high street banks. In addition to these high street banks, there are the long-established *merchant banks*, which are mainly located in London. They give advice and finance to commercial and industrial businesses, both in Britain and overseas; advise companies on takeovers and mergers; provide financial assistance for foreign transactions; and organize a range of financial services for individuals and corporations.
The London Stock Exchange is a market for the buying and selling of quoted (listed) stocks and shares in British public companies and a few overseas. Dealings on the Stock Exchange reflect the current market trends and prices for a range of securities, which may go up as well as down.
In recent years, the performance of the stock market has been weak. The Stock Exchange was revolutionized in 1986 by new developments, known popularly as the 'Big Bang'. The changes deregulated the financial market and gave greater freedom of operation. New members were allowed, financial dealers were given

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greater powers of dealing and competition increased. However, some companies were too ambitious, over-expanded and suffered from the effects of the world stock market crash of 1987. The London market returned to earlier profitability levels only after many redundancies among dealers and closure of some companies. From 1997 financial transactions have been organized directly from computer screens in corporate offices by an order-driven system which automates the trading process, rather than traditional dealing on the floor of the Exchange.

The Foreign Exchange Market is also based in London. Brokers in corporate or bank offices deal in the buying and selling of foreign currencies. The London market is the largest in the world in terms of average daily turnover of completed transactions. Other money markets arrange deals on the Euromarkets in foreign currencies; trade on financial futures (speculation on future prices of commodities); arrange gold dealings on the London Gold Market; and transact global deals in the commodity, shipping and freight markets.

Lloyd's of London is a famous name in the insurance market and has long been active in the fields of shipping and maritime insurance. But it has now diversified and insures in many other areas. Lloyd's operates as a market, where individual underwriters (or insurers), who are all members of Lloyd's, carry on their business. Underwriters normally form groups to give themselves greater security, because they have to bear any loss which occurs. But many underwriters have suffered in recent years owing to heavy insurance losses. In addition to the Lloyd's market, there are many individual insurance companies with headquarters in London and branches throughout the country. They have international connections and huge assets. They play an important role in British financial life because they are the largest investors of capital. Their main activity has traditionally been in life insurance. But many have now diversified into other associated fields, such as pensions and property loans. However, their handling of customers' investments (particularly pension mis-selling) has been heavily criticized in recent years.

British financial institutions have traditionally been respected for their honesty and integrity. But, as money markets have expanded and become freer, there have been fraud cases, collapse of financial organizations and financial scandals. These give the City a bad image and have forced it to institute self-regulatory provisions in order to tighten the controls on financial dealings.

But some critics have argued for stronger independent supervision of the City's business. The Labour government, although now more friendly towards the business world than in the past, created a watchdog (the Financial Services Authority) in 2000 and a Financial Ombudsman in 2001 to oversee all financial dealings. But these institutions have been criticized for their lack of adequate control. It is also argued that the City should be more nationally and socially conscious and forced to invest in British industry rather than overseas. The City insists that it should be allowed to invest how and where it likes in order to make a profit. However, it seems that City organizations are conscious of the negative criticisms and are prepared to put their houses in order. The composition of those who create and control wealth in Britain has changed since the Second World War.

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Bankers, aristocrats, landowners and industrialists were the richest people in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Today the most affluent are retailers and those who service the consumer society, although holders of inherited wealth are still numerous. Many millionaires are self-made, with lower-middle-class and working-class backgrounds.

Industrial and commercial institutions

The trade unions

Trade unions obtained legal recognition in 1871 after long and bitter struggles. The fight for the right of workers to organize themselves originated in the trade guilds of the fourteenth century and later in social clubs which were formed to give their members protection against sickness and unemployment. The modern trade unions are associated (if no longer closely) with the Labour Party and campaign for better pay, working and health conditions for their members. The trade union movement is highly organized, with a membership of 7.1 million people. But this is a fall from 12 million in 1978. Today there are some 243 trade unions and professional associations of workers, which vary considerably in size and influence. They represent not only skilled and unskilled workers in industry but also white-collar workers in a range of businesses, companies and local and central government. Other professional associations such as the Law Society, the Police Federation and the British Medical Association carry out similar representational roles for their members.

Members of trade unions pay annual subscriptions to their unions and frequently to the Labour Party, unless they elect not to pay this latter amount. The funding provides for union activities and services, such as legal, monetary and professional help. The richer unions are able to give strike pay to members who are taking part in 'official strikes', which are those legally sanctioned by members. Trade unions vary in their wealth and in their political orientation, ranging from the left to the right wing of the political spectrum. Some unions admit as members only those people who work in a specific job, such as miners or teachers. Other unions comprise workers who are employed in different areas of industry or commerce, such as the Transport and General Workers' Union. Some unions have joined with others in similar fields to form new unions, such as Unison (public service workers) which is now the largest in Britain with 1.4 million members.

Workers may choose, without victimization, whether they want to belong to a particular union or none at all.

Many trade unions are affiliated to the Trades Union Congress (TUC), which was founded in 1868, serves as an umbrella organization to co-ordinate trade union interests and tries to promote worker co-operation. It can exert some pressure on government and seeks to extend its contacts in industry and commerce and with employers as well as workers. But the influence of the TUC and trade unions (as well as their membership) has declined. This is due to unemployment; changing

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attitudes to trade unions by workers; the reduction and restructuring of industry; and Conservative legislation. Laws were passed to enforce secret voting by union members before strikes can be legally called and for the election of union officials. The number of pickets (union strikers) allowed outside business premises has been reduced, secondary (or sympathy) action by other unionists is banned and unions may be fined by the courts if they transgress legislation. Such laws (which the Labour government accept) and the economic climate have forced trade unions to be more realistic in their wage demands. But pay claims are escalating again and there are also arrangements for legal recognition of unions in those workplaces where a majority of workers want them and for consultation with workers in matters such as redundancy. Legislation has controlled extreme union practices and introduced democratic procedures into union activities. The grassroots membership has become more independent of union bosses and activists; is more determined to represent its own wishes; and is concerned to cure abuses in the labour movement. The initiative in industry has shifted to employers and moderate unions, who have been moving away from the traditional 'class-war' image of unionism and are accepting new technology and working patterns in an attempt to improve competitiveness and productivity.

Public opinion polls in the past found that, while a large majority of respondents believed that unions are essential to protect workers' interests, a sizeable number felt that unions had too much power in Britain and that they were dominated by extremists. Half of trade unionists themselves agreed with this latter point of view and half disagreed. The concern over trade unions and their close relationship with Labour governments has declined in recent years. Strike action by unions can be damaging to the economy and has been used as an economic and political weapon in the past. In some cases, strikes are seen as legitimate and find public support. But others, which are clearly political, are unpopular and are rejected. Britain historically seemed to be prone to industrial disputes. However, statistics show that fewer working days are lost in Britain each year than in other industrial nations, although the number has increased recently. On average, most manufacturing plants and businesses are free of strikes, and media coverage is often responsible for giving a distorted picture of industrial relations. Industrial problems should be placed in the context of financial rewards. Britain has a low-wage economy, compared with major European countries, although the Labour government set a minimum wage of £4.61 an hour to help the lowest-paid workers over twenty-one, to the dismay of many companies. The average gross weekly wage in 2000 was £411 per week. Many workers (women at £338) receive less than this. Personal income is taxed at 10 per cent for the first £2,000 of taxable income, 22 per cent up to £28,000 and 40 per cent above this figure. The British tend to believe that they are over-taxed. But their basic and top rates of taxation are in fact lower than in many other western countries. However, the Labour government significantly raised indirect or 'stealth'taxes, and income tax may increase to pay for public services.

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Consumer protection

In a competitive market, consumers should have a choice of goods and services; information to make choices; and laws to safeguard their purchases. Statutory protection for consumers has grown steadily in Britain and is harmonized with European Union law. The public can complain to tribunals and the courts about unfair trading practices, dangerous and unsafe goods, misrepresentation, bad service, misleading advertising and personal injuries resulting from defective products.

The Office of Fair Trading is a government department which oversees the consumer behaviour of trade and industry. It promotes fair trading, protects consumers, suggests legislation to government and has improved consumer awareness. It has drawn up codes of practice with many industrial and commercial organizations; keeps a close watch for any breaches of the codes; and publishes its findings, often to the embarrassment of the manufacturers and companies concerned.

Organizations which provide help on consumer affairs at the local level are Citizens Advice Bureaux, Consumer Advice Centres and consumer protection departments of local councils. Private consumer-protection groups, which investigate complaints and grievances, also exist in some localities.

The independent National Consumer Council monitors consumers' attitudes, although its effectiveness is queried. A more active body is the Consumers' Association. Its magazine *Which?* champions the consumer and applies rigorous tests to anything from television sets to insurance and estate agents. *Which?* is the 'buyers' bible' and its reports have raised the standards of commercial products and services in Britain. Much still needs to be reformed in the consumer field, such as cowboy builders preying on gullible consumers and mis-selling by financial organizations, to achieve minimum standards and adequate protection. But there are signs that a British reluctance to complain about goods and services is breaking down as litigation and compensation claims increase.

Attitudes to the economy

Opinion polls echo the changing economic climate. The electorate was dissatisfied with the Conservative government in the mid-1990s, despite a booming economy. General elections in 1997 and 2001 showed that voters were willing to trust the Labour Party to run the economy efficiently because it had adopted centrist, pragmatic and low-taxation policies. But polls in 2000 and 2001 showed disillusionment with the Labour government on public service issues.

The economy still concerns British people in areas such as unemployment, industrial decline, inflation, interest rates, prices and taxation. Polls suggest that, in a mobile and deregulated market, job security (or the ability to get another job if one is lost) is a priority of job seekers, ranked ahead of work satisfaction, promotion and working conditions. Britain also has a reputation as a country of

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workaholics, where people work the longest hours in Europe (despite an EU maximum working week of 48 hours which will probably be obligatory in 2003). This may be out of choice, enjoyment, ambition, coercion or desperation not to lose one's job. However, it seems that a majority of British people are very or fairly satisfied with their jobs and only a small minority are either fairly or very dissatisfied.

A *CBI* poll in 2001 showed that flexible working was now a key part of British employment patterns: 81 per cent of businesses use part-time workers; 62 per cent operated subcontracting; and 39 per cent use teleworking to allow their employees to work at home for at least some of the time.

Nevertheless, respondents to polls believe that business and economic arrangements in Britain are unfair; the values of managers and workers are opposed; the country's wealth is unfairly distributed; this favours the owners and the rich at the expense of employees and the poor; the gap between rich and poor is growing; there are no longer 'jobs for life' and businesses do not care about the community, the environment or customers. It is felt that workers should be given more control over and say in the organization of their workplaces (now covered by the Social Chapter of the Maastrict Treaty).

A *MORI Corporate Image* survey in August 2001 showed that public hostility towards profitability and business success had waned slightly after rising from 1980 to 1999. In 1999 only 25 per cent of respondents supported corporate profit while 52 per cent were against. In 2001 the figures were 29 per cent and 43 per cent respectively. Stakeholders or shareholders want their companies to make a profit but not at the expense of their staff or the community. The public now thinks that caring for employees should be the top priority for business. Providing more jobs, the safety of workers and the training of the workforce are also more emphasized.

It is often argued that Britain's economic ills are due to cultural factors and attitudes. Traditionally, educated and upper-class people were reluctant to enter trade and industry; the workforce has a lower productivity rate than comparable competitors; there has been insufficient investment in industry and training; management is weak and unprofessional; and there has been too little investment in and encouragement of the technical, scientific and research fields.

But a *MORI/British Council* poll in 1999 found that 81 per cent of overseas respondents rated British goods and services as 'good' overall and 74 per cent thought that British managers are good. However, the country ranks behind the USA, Japan and Germany when it comes to having worldbeating companies, and British business is seen as too risk-averse.

(from British Civilization by John Oakland, Routledge, 2002)

1. What has the British economy been conditioned by?
2. What is the structure of Britain's economy?
3. What major problems has it faced?
4. What are the country's major financial institutions?

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5. How active are the trade unions?

The media. The press and broadcasting.

The term ‘media’ may include any communication system by which people are informed, educated or entertained. In Britain it generally refers to the print industries (the press or newspapers and magazines) and broadcasting (terrestrial or earth-based television, cable and satellite television, radio and video). These systems overlap to some extent with each other and with books, film and the Internet; are profitable businesses; and are tied to advertising, sponsorship, commerce and industry. The media have evolved from simple methods of production, distribution and communication to their present sophisticated technologies. Their growth and variety have greatly improved information dispersal, news availability and entertainment opportunities. They cover homes, places of business and leisure activities and their influence is very powerful and an inevitable part of daily life. For example, surveys indicate that 69 per cent of Britons obtain their daily news from television, 20 per cent from newspapers and 11 per cent from radio. Electronic technology, such as the Internet, is an important part of media, business and education, while the British use of home-view videos is the highest in the world.
But the media provoke debates about what is socially and morally permissible in their content and methods. Questions are asked about the role of advertising and sponsorship, the quality of the services provided, the alleged danger of the concentrated ownership of media resources, influence on politics, restraints upon ‘free expression’ and the ethical responsibility of the media to individuals and society.

The print media

The print media (newspapers and magazines) began to develop in the eighteenth century. Initially, a wide circulation was hindered by transportation and distribution problems, illiteracy and government licensing or censorship restrictions. But, over the last two hundred years, an expanded educational system, abolition of government control, new print inventions and Britain’s small area have eliminated these difficulties and created allegedly free print media. The growth of literacy after 1870 provided the owners of the print media with an increased market. Newspapers and magazines, which had previously been limited to the middle and upper classes, were popularized. They were used for news and information, but also for profit and entertainment. Ownership, new types of print media and financially rewarding advertising increased in the competitive atmosphere of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Owners also realized that political and social influence could be achieved through control of the means of communication.

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National newspapers

National newspapers are those which are mostly published from London (with some regional versions) and are available in all parts of Britain on the same day, including Sundays. Many are delivered direct to the home from local newsagents by newsboys and girls. The good internal distribution systems of a compact country enabled a national press to develop, and Internet online copies now offer updated and immediate availability. The first British newspapers with a limited national circulation appeared in the early eighteenth century and were followed by others, such as *The Times* (1785), the *Observer* (1791) and the *Sunday Times* (1822). But most were so-called 'quality' papers, catering for a relatively small, educated market. In the nineteenth century, the growth and composition of the population conditioned the types of newspaper which were produced. The first popular national papers were deliberately printed on Sundays, such as the *News of the World* (1843) and the *People* (1881). They were inexpensive and aimed at the expanding and increasingly literate working class. In 1896, Alfred Harmsworth produced the *Daily Mail*, which was targeted at the lower-middle class as an alternative to the 'quality' dailies. Harmsworth then published the *Daily Mirror* in 1903 for the working-class popular market. Both the *Mail* and the *Mirror* were soon selling more than a million copies a day. The early twentieth century was the era of mass-circulation papers and of owners such as Harmsworth and Arthur Pearson. There was fierce competition between them as they fought for bigger shares of the market. Pearson's *Morning Herald* (later the *Daily Express*) was created in 1900 to compete with the *Daily Mail* for lower-middle-class readers. The *Daily Mirror* was the largest-selling national daily in the early twentieth century. It supported the Labour Party and was designed for quick and easy reading by the industrial and increasingly politicized working class. The *Daily Herald* (1911) also supported the Labour Party, until it was sold in 1964, renamed the *Sun* and developed different political and news emphases. The competition between the *Sun* and *Mirror* continues today, with each aiming for a bigger share of the mass daily market. Battles are still fought between owners, since newspaper-ownership is concentrated in a few large publishing groups, such as Rupert Murdoch's News International (which has large media holdings in Britain, Australia and the USA) and Trinity Mirror (see table 9.1). The success of the early popular press was due to growing literacy; a desire for knowledge and information by the working class; and political awareness among workers caused by the rise of the Labour Party.

Newspaper owners profited by the huge market, but they also satisfied demand. The price and content of mass papers reflected lower-middle- and working-class readerships. This emphasis attracted large consumer advertising, and owners were able to produce cheaply by using modern printing methods and a nationwide distribution network. The circulation of national papers rose rapidly, with 5.5 million daily sales by 1920. By 1973 these had increased to 17 million. But newspapers had to cope first with the competition of radio and films and later with

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television. Although they have survived, there has, since the 1970s, been a decline in sales and in the number of national and other newspapers. Surveys find that Britons buy more papers than any other Europeans. Some 50 per cent of people over fifteen read a national daily paper and 70 per cent read a national Sunday newspaper. National newspapers have sales of 13.5 million on weekdays and 14.8 million on Sundays, but on average two people read each paper. The national press in Britain today consists of ten daily morning papers and nine Sunday papers. It is in effect a London press, because most national newspapers have their bases and printing facilities in the capital, although editions of some nationals are now published outside London, in Europe and the USA. Most of them used to be located in Fleet Street in central London. But all have now left the street and moved to other parts of the capital. The reasons for these moves were high property rents, fierce competition and opposition from trade unions to the introduction of new printing technology. Newspapers and magazines have also had to face the expense of newsprint and rising production and labour costs. Heavy labour costs were due to the overstaffing and restrictive practices of the trade unions. Owners were forced into new ways of increasing productivity while cutting costs. Regional owners outside London had in fact pioneered the movement of newspapers and magazines into new print technology and London newspapers had to follow in order to survive. New technology meant that journalists' 'copy' could be printed directly through computers, without having to use the intermediate 'hotmetal' typesetting by printers. This gave owners flexibility in their printing and distribution methods and cheaper production costs. It allowed them to escape from trade-union dominance and the concentration of the industry in London. But it also resulted in job reductions, trade-union opposition and bitter industrial action such as picketing.

New technology, improved distribution methods and cuts in labour and production costs have increased the profitability of print industries. Despite the attraction of other media, they still have a considerable presence, although sales are declining. The business is very competitive and papers can suffer from a variety of problems. However, the high risks involved have not stopped the introduction of new newspapers.

The 'quality' national daily *The Independent* was published in October 1986 and survives despite circulation losses. Sunday nationals, such as *The Independent on Sunday* (1990), have also appeared. But other dailies have been lost.

National papers are usually termed 'quality' or 'popular' depending on their differences in content and format (tabloid or broadsheet). Others are called 'mid-market', fall between these two extremes and are tabloids (see table 9.1). The 'qualities' (such as *The Times*) are broadsheets (largesheet), report national and international news in depth and analyse current events and the arts in editorials and articles. The populars (such as the *Sun*) are mostly tabloid (small-sheet), deal with relatively few 'hard news' stories, tend to be superficial in their treatment of events and much of their material is sensationalized and trivialized. It cannot be said that the downmarket populars are instructive, or concerned with raising the critical

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consciousness of readers. But owners and editors argue that their readership demands particular styles, interests and attitudes. ‘Mid-market’ papers, such as the *Mail* and *Express*, cater for intermediate groups.

Sales of popular papers on weekdays and Sundays far exceed those of the ‘qualities’. ‘Qualities’ are more expensive than populars and carry up-market advertising that generates essential finance. Populars carry less advertising and cater for more down-market material. However, the press takes much of the finance spent on total advertising in Britain. There is no state control or censorship of the British press, although it is subject to laws of publication and expression and there are forms of self-censorship, by which it regulates its own conduct. The press is also financially independent of the political parties and receives no funding from government (except for Welsh-language community papers).
It is argued that most newspapers are politically right-of-centre and sympathize with the Conservative Party. But their positions are usually driven by readers’ opinions and political slants in fact can vary considerably over time and under the influence of events. For example, the small circulation *Morning Star* has varied between Stalinist, Euro-Communist and Democratic Left views. Papers may have a political bias and support a specific party, particularly at election times, although this can change. A few, such as those of the Trinity Mirror group, support the Labour Party, some such as *The Times* and *The Independent* consider themselves to be independent, while others, such as *The Guardian*, favour a left-of-centre position. It appears that the British public receive a reasonable variety of political views from their newspapers.
The press is dependent for its survival upon circulation figures; upon the advertising that it can attract; and upon financial help from its owners. A paper may face difficulties and fail if advertisers remove their business. In fact all the media are currently experiencing a downturn in advertising revenue. A high circulation does not necessarily guarantee the required advertising and consequent survival, because advertisers now tend to place their mass-appeal consumer products on television, where they will benefit from a larger audience. Most popular papers are in constant competition with their rivals to increase their sales. They attempt to do this by gimmicks such as bingo games and competitions, or by calculated editorial policies which are intended to catch the mass readership. Owners may refuse to rescue those papers which make continuous losses. A number of newspapers in the twentieth century ceased publication because of reduced circulation, loss of advertising revenue, refusals of further financial aid, or a combination of all three factors. However, despite a fall in hard-copy circulation, most national newspapers now have online Internet publication. This provides an additional medium for information and communication, as well as continuously updated news.

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Regional newspapers

Some 1,300 regional newspapers are published in towns and cities throughout Britain. They contain a mixture of local and national news; are supported financially by regional advertising; and may be daily morning or evening papers, Sundays or weekly. Some nine out of ten adults read a regional or local paper every week and 75 per cent of local and regional newspapers also operate an Internet website.

Excluding its national newspaper industry, London has one paper (the *Evening Standard*) with daily sales of 440,000. But there are also about a hundred local weeklies, dailies and evening papers which appear in the Greater London districts.

'Quality' daily regional (and national) papers, such as *The Scotsman* (Edinburgh) and the *Glasgow Herald*, the *Western Mail* (Cardiff), and the *Yorkshire Post* (Leeds), have good reputations and sales outside their regions. But the best-selling papers are in Scotland, such as the *Daily Record* and the *Sunday Mail* (Glasgow) and the *Sunday Post* (Dundee).

There has also been a growth of 'free newspapers' in the regions, such as the *London Metro* (now available throughout the country with a circulation of 1.2 million), which are often delivered direct to homes and for which the consumer does not pay. Some 800 are published weekly on a local basis and are financed by local advertising, to such an extent that news is outweighed by the advertisements. It is estimated that they have a weekly circulation of some 35 million.

Britain's ethnic communities also produce their own newspapers and magazines, which are increasing in numbers, are available nationally in the larger cities and are improving in quality. There is a wide range of publications for Jewish, Asian, Afro-Caribbean, Chinese and Arabic readers, published on a daily or (more commonly) periodic basis.

Periodicals and magazines

There are 9,000 different periodicals and magazines in Britain, which are of a weekly, monthly or quarterly nature and are dependent upon sales and advertising to survive. They are aimed at different markets and levels of sophistication and either cover trades, professions and business (read by 95 per cent of occupational groups) or are consumer titles dealing with sports, hobbies and interests (read by 80 per cent of adults).

Although the number of periodicals has expanded, it is still difficult to break into the established consumer market with a new product. Some attempts, which manage to find a gap in the market, succeed, but most usually fail.

The teenage and youth magazine market is fiercely fought for, but has suffered large sales losses recently. This is attributed to greater Internet and mobile phone usage. The men's general interest magazine market is similarly volatile. Women's periodicals, such as *Take a Break*, *Woman* and *Woman's Own*, have large and wide circulations. But the bestselling publications are the weekly *Radio Times* and

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What's on TV, which contain feature stories and scheduled programmes for BBC and independent television. Other magazines cover interests such as computers, rural pastimes, gardening, railways, cooking, architecture, do-it-yourself skills and sports.

Among the serious weekly journals are the *New Statesman and Society* (a left-wing political and social affairs magazine); the *Economist* (dealing with economic and political matters); the *Spectator* (a conservative journal); and *New Scientist*. *The Times* publishes influential weekly magazines, such as the *Educational Supplement*, the *Higher* (Education Supplement) and the *Literary Supplement*. The lighter side of the market is catered for by periodicals such as *Private Eye*, which satirizes the shortcomings of British society.

The broadcasting media

The broadcasting media are divided into public and commercial (independent) sectors and consist of radio, terrestrial television and cable/satellite television. Three authorities oversee these services: the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the Independent Television Commission (ITC) and the Radio Authority.

Radio was the first broadcasting medium to appear in Britain. Experimental transmissions were made at the end of the nineteenth century and systems were developed in the early twentieth century. After a period of limited availability, national radio was established in 1922 when the British Broadcasting Company was formed under John Reith. In 1927 Reith became the first Director-General of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and set the tone and style for the BBC's development. The BBC had a monopoly in broadcasting and a paternalistic image. Reith insisted that it should be independent of government and commercial interests; strive for quality; and be a public service broadcaster, with a duty to inform, educate and entertain. The BBC built a reputation for impartial news reporting and excellent programmes, both domestically and internationally.

The BBC's broadcasting monopoly in radio and television (which had started in 1936 for a limited audience) led to pressure from commercial and political interests to widen the scope of broadcasting. As a result, commercial (independent) television financed by advertising and under the supervision of the Independent Television Authority (ITA) was created in 1954 and the first programmes were shown in 1955. The BBC's monopoly on radio broadcasting was ended in 1972 and independent radio stations were established throughout the country, dependent on advertising for their financing.

A duopoly (two organizations) covered broadcasting: the public service of the BBC and the commercial (independent) service of the ITA. This division has been expanded as cable, satellite and other broadcasting services have developed in recent years. The ITA evolved first into the IBA (Independent Broadcasting Authority) and finally the ITC (Independent Television Commission) and the Radio Authority was also created. British broadcasting is thus conditioned by the competition between the BBC and independent organizations. Substantial changes

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to British broadcasting were made in the 1980s and 1990s by Conservative governments which created more radio and television channels. Greater deregulation was supposed to create competition among broadcasters and more choice for consumers.
Broadcasting services are now moving to digital transmission. This is proceeding slowly because of technical problems and few paying customers for commercial offerings. But it will potentially create many more radio and television channels as analogue systems are phased out. These changes are controversial and are criticized for their emphasis on competition and commercialism, rather than quality. A larger number of television channels may not lead to greater choice, but rather inferior programmes as broadcasters chase bigger audiences. There is a finite number of people to watch television; advertisers' budgets cannot be stretched to cover all available independent television offerings; and advertisers gravitate towards those programmes which attract large audiences. Television in 1995 accounted for 28 per cent of total advertising spending but advertising revenue for broadcasters declined sharply in 2001.

The BBC

The BBC is based at Broadcasting House in London, but has stations throughout the country, which provide regional networks for radio and television. It was created by Royal Charter and has a board of governors who are responsible for supervising its programmes and their suitability. They are appointed by the Crown on the advice of government ministers and are supposed to constitute an independent element in the organization of the BBC. Daily operations are controlled by the Director-General, chosen by the board of governors.
The BBC is financed by a grant from Parliament, which comes from the sale of television licences (£1.6 billion per year). These are payable by anyone who owns a television set and are relatively cheap in international terms (£104 annually for a colour set). The BBC also generates considerable income from selling its programmes abroad and from the sale of a programme guide (*Radio Times*), books, magazines and videos.
The BBC in recent years has come under pressure from government to reform itself. It has struggled to maintain its position as a traditional public service broadcaster, funded by the licence fee, at a time of fierce competition with commercial broadcasters. Internal reorganization has led to a slimmer and more efficient organization. But it has had to develop alternative forms of funding, such as subscription and pay services and must include independent productions in 25 per cent of its television schedules.
The BBC's external services, which consist of radio broadcasts in English (the World Service) and 42 other languages abroad, were founded in 1932 and are funded by the Foreign Office. These have a reputation for objective news reporting and programmes. The BBC also began commercially funded television programmes in 1991 by cable to Europe and by satellite links to Africa and Asia;

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BBC World (news) – now merged with the World Service – and *BBC Prime* (entertainment).
The BBC is not a state organization, in the sense that it is controlled by the government. But it is not as independent of political pressures as many in Britain and overseas assume. Its charter has to be renewed by Parliament and by its terms government can, and does, intervene in the showing of programmes which are alleged to be controversial or against the public interest. The BBC governors, although supposedly independent, are in fact government appointees. Governments can also exert pressure upon the BBC when the licence fee comes up for renewal by Parliament.
The BBC does try to be neutral in political matters, to such an extent that all political parties have periodically complained that it is prejudiced against them. The major parties have equal rights to broadcast on the BBC and independent television.
Historically, the BBC was affected by the invention of television, which changed British entertainment and news habits. The BBC now has two television channels (BBC1 and BBC2). BBC1 is a mass-appeal channel with an audience share of 28 per cent. Its programmes consist of news, plays and drama series, comedy, quiz shows, variety performances, sport and documentaries. BBC2, with an audience share of 11 per cent, tends to show more serious items such as news analysis and discussion, documentaries, adaptations of novels into plays and series, operas, concerts and some sport. It is also provides Open University courses. The Labour government has approved (2001) the expansion of BBC television (digital) services by the creation of a BBC4 channel (culture and the arts) and two channels for children under six and over.
BBC Radio performs an important service, although some of its audiences have declined recently. There are five national channels (to be increased by five new digital channels); 39 local stations serving many districts in England; and regional and community services in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. They all have to compete for listeners with independent stations but offer an alternative in news, debate and local information to pop-based local and national commercial stations. The national channels specialize in different tastes. Radio 1 caters for pop music; Radio 2 has light music, news, and comedy; Radio 3 provides classical and modern serious music, talks, discussions and plays; Radio 4 concentrates on news reports, analysis, talks and plays; and Radio 5 Live (established 1990) has sport and news programmes.

The ITC

The ITC (Independent Television Commission) does not make or produce programmes itself. Its government-appointed board regulates the independent television companies (including cable and satellite services). It grants licences to the transmitting companies and independent producers who actually make many of

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the programmes shown on three advertising financed television channels (ITV/Channel 3, Channel 4 and Channel 5).

There are 15 ITV production companies at present, such as Granada (north-west England), Central (the midland counties of England) and Anglia (East Anglia). London has two companies holding one licence, with one providing programmes during the week (Thames), the other at weekends (London Weekend). These companies make programmes for the 14 regions into which Britain is divided for ITV television purposes. The licences granted to ITV companies are renewable every ten years and the companies have to compete with any other interested applicants. It is by no means certain that a further licence will be granted to an existing company, or a new one to a high-bidding company. Much depends on past performance, financial standing and commitment to provide quality and regional programmes. The programme companies receive nothing from the television licence fee, which applies only to the BBC. The companies are consequently dependent upon the finance they receive from advertising and the sales of programmes, videos, books, records and other publications.

ITV (with 30 per cent of audience share) is the oldest independent channel and once seemed only to provide popular programmes of a lightentertainment and sometimes trivial type. But its quality has improved and it now has a high standard of news reports, drama productions and documentaries. Under legislation, ITV must provide programmes made in and about the region represented by the production companies. Channel 4 (with 10 per cent of audience share) was established in 1982 to create a commercial alternative to BBC2. It is a public corporation, which is funded by selling its own advertising time. It was intended to offer something different and challenging in an appeal to minority tastes, and provides programmes in Welsh in Wales. Channel 4 initially had serious problems with advertising and the quality of its programmes, but has now developed a considerable reputation.

Channel 5 (with 6 per cent of audience share) became operative in 1997 after a ten-year licence was awarded to Channel 5 Broadcasting Limited. It is funded by advertising, subscription and sponsorship; covers 70 per cent of the population; but had a shaky start in terms of the attraction of its programmes. Its programmes still have a dubious reputation but it has increased its financial base.

It is argued that the ITC does not always keep a close watch on independent broadcasting developments and lacks clear regulatory powers and consistent policies. There has been controversy over its system of awarding ITV licences, which have often gone to the highest bidder with little apparent regard to quality and production efficiency. The ITC also regulates cable and satellite television. Television and associated technological developments have become very attractive in Britain and a rich source of entertainment profits. At one stage, it was thought that cable television by subscription would considerably expand these possibilities. Cable television is growing steadily through digital technology (with its increased number of channels) and serves 3.3 million homes. But it has been challenged first by video equipment sales and secondly by satellite programmes.

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Television broadcasting by satellite through subscription was established in Britain in 1989. The biggest UK satellite programmer is BSkyB (British Sky Broadcasting) with 7.8 million (4 million domestic) subscribers. Its channels provide news, light entertainment, sport and feature films. The choice of satellite channels is expanding steadily through digital technology, with over 250 satellite servers providing programming in Britain, particularly to the ethnic minorities.
Cable and satellite have a 15 per cent share of television viewing. This suggests that, while they are increasing their market share, they still lag behind ITV (30 per cent) and BBC1 (28 per cent).

The Radio Authority

The Radio Authority controls independent radio (three national stations and 150 local and regional stations throughout the country). All are funded by advertising, and revenue figures suggest that radio is the fastest-growing medium in Britain. The national stations were created by government to expand radio broadcasting. The first licence was awarded in 1991 to Classic FM (popular classical music and news bulletins); the second in 1992 to Virgin 1215 (rock music); and the third in 1995 to Talk Radio UK (speech-based service).
Local commercial radio once seemed to provide mainly pop music, news flashes and some programmes of local interest. But expansion has occurred at city, local and community levels because broadcasting has been deregulated by the government in an attempt to increase the variety of radio and include more tastes and interests.

The role and influence of television

Television is an influential and dominant force in modern Britain, as well as a popular entertainment activity. Over 98 per cent of the population have television sets in their homes; 95 per cent of these are colour sets; and over 50 per cent of homes have two sets or more. Some people prefer to rent their sets instead of owning them because rented sets are repaired and maintained free of charge. However, recent reports (2001) suggest that radio (commercial and BBC) is now more popular than television, indicating that some people are deserting the latter because of its alleged superficiality. Nevertheless, television has an average viewing time of 26 hours per week.
A large number of the programmes shown on television are made in Britain, although there are also many imported American series. A few programmes come from other English-speaking countries, such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada. But there are relatively few foreign-language productions on British television and these are either dubbed or subtitled.
The range of programmes shown is very considerable, but they also vary widely in quality. Although British television has a high reputation abroad, it does attract

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substantial criticism in Britain, either because of the standard of the programmes or because they are frequently repeated.
News reports, documentaries and current-affairs analyses are generally of a high standard, as are dramatic, educational, sporting, natural history and cultural productions. But there is also a wide selection of series, soap operas, films, quizzes and variety shows which are of doubtful quality.
The recent addition of Reality-TV (such as *Big Brother* and *Survivor*) and similar genres has led to charges of a 'dumbing-down' of British television.
Programmes are calculated to appeal to a mass audience and high ratings, which the television companies need to attract advertising and justify expenditure. However, a *MORI/Voks Pops* poll in August 2001 reported that 61 per cent of fifteen to twenty-four-year-olds believed that reality television helps to teach them about the ways in which people interact with each other. But rather than imitating shocking behaviour in the programmes they are grateful for the chance to learn important life lessons and skills. Television, in this view, is taking on a parenting and teaching role.
Competition between the BBC and independent television is strong, and the battle of the ratings (the number of people watching individual programmes) indicates the popularity (or otherwise) of offerings. But competition can mean that similar programmes are shown at the same time on the major channels, in order to appeal to specific markets and attract the biggest share of the audience. It is also argued that competition has reduced the quality of programmes overall and resulted in an appeal to the lowest common denominator in taste. The BBC in particular is criticized for its failure to provide high-quality arts, drama and news programmes, with a slide into commercialism in the battle for ratings. It is argued that the BBC must maintain its public service obligations to quality and creativity in order to justify its universal licence fee. Voices have been raised about the alleged levels of sex, violence and bad language on British television, particularly before the 'watershed' of 9 p.m. when young children may be watching. Some individuals have attempted to reform and influence the kind of programmes that are shown. Research suggests that the public can be morally harmed by the content of some television programmes. The Conservative government considered that violence, sex and obscenity on television do affect viewers and was concerned to 'clean up' television. A Broadcasting Standards Complaints Commission monitors programmes, examines complaints, establishes codes of conduct for the broadcasting organizations and has tightened its rules concerning invasion of privacy by broadcasters. The sale and rent of 'video nasties' (videos which portray extreme forms of violence and brutality) have been banned and rules for the sale of videos have been tightened. Some 69 per cent of homes now own at least one video-cassette recorder. But *British Social Attitudes 2000–01* suggested that Britons are becoming more permissive about the portrayal of sex in the media if this is relevant to a plot, and more permissive if it occurs outside a family context on adult channels, video and cinema.

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Today, there is fierce competition among broadcasters to attract viewers and advertising revenue. But it is questionable whether an 'entertainments' expansion means more genuine choice or declining quality.
Digital broadcasting will increase television channels and may transform the medium into an interactive force which combines the Internet and personalized programming in one package. But broadcasters risk losing audiences and revenue as more people switch to the Internet itself as an alternative to television. In 2000, 25 per cent of British households had Internet access.

Media ownership and freedom of expression

The financial and ownership structures of the British media industry are complex and involve a range of media outlets, which include the press, radio and television. Sometimes an individual company will own a number of print products, such as newspapers and magazines, and will specialize in this area.
But this kind of ownership is declining. Today it is more common for newspapers to be owned and controlled by corporations which are concerned with wide media interests, such as films, radio, television, magazines, and satellite and cable companies. Other newspaper- and mediaowning groups have diversified their interests even further, and may be involved in a variety of non-media activities. In Britain, only a few newspapers such as the *Guardian* and the *Morning Star* have avoided being controlled by multinational commercial concerns.
This involvment of large enterprises in the media, and the resulting concentration of ownership in a few hands, such as newspapers controlled by News International and Trinity Mirror, has caused concern. Although these concentrations do not amount to a monopoly situation, there have been frequent inquiries into the questions of ownership and control. Some critics argue that the state should provide public subsidies to the media industries in order to prevent them being taken over by big-business groups. But this suggestion has not been adopted, and it is felt that there are potential dangers in allowing the state to gain any direct or indirect financial influence over the media.
Today the law is supposed to guard against the risks inherent in greatly concentrated ownership of the means of communication. The purchase of further newspapers by an existing owner is controlled by law and newspaper owners' shareholdings in independent radio and television stations are restricted. Further restrictions, such as independent directors of newspapers; guarantees of editorial independence from owners' interference; and trustee arrangements to allow newspapers to maintain their character and traditions are usually imposed. These arrangements are intended to prevent monopolies and undue influence by owners. But such safeguards do not always work satisfactorily in practice, and takeovers of ITV television companies by rival companies and multimedia corporations are now permitted within limits.
The question of free expression in the media continues to be of concern. Critics argue that the media do not have sufficient freedom to comment on matters of

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public interest. But the freedom of the media, as of individuals, to express themselves, is not absolute. Regulations are placed upon the general freedom in order to safeguard the legitimate interests of other individuals, organizations and the state, so that a balance between competing interests may be achieved.
There are several legal restraints upon media freedom of expression. The *sub judice* rule means that the media may not comment on court proceedings and must restrict themselves to the court facts. The rule is intended to protect the individuals concerned, and if a media organization breaks the rule it may be found guilty of contempt of court and fined. Contempt of court proceedings may also be used by judges to obtain journalists' sources of information, or to prevent the media from publishing certain court details and documents. The obtaining and publishing of state and official information is controlled tightly by the Official Secrets Act and by D-notices (directives to the media concerning information which should not be divulged). The media are also liable to court proceedings for libel and obscenity offences. Libel is the making of accusations which are proved to be false or harmful to a person's reputation. Obscenity covers any action that offends against public morality. In such cases, the media organization and all the individuals involved may be held responsible. These restrictions prevent absolute media freedom of expression. It is argued that there is a need for reform if responsible investigative journalism is to do its job adequately. Britain is a secretive society, and the Labour government's proposed Freedom of Information Act may break down some of the secrecy and executive control. The Human Rights Act may also allow greater freedom of media expression. On the other hand, the media can often act irresponsibly, invade individual privacy, behave in unethical ways and sensationalize events for their own purposes. The media have won some libel cases brought against them and gained important victories for open information. But they have also lost other cases because of their methods. Some media practices do cause concern and the government may impose statutory restrictions on invasions of privacy unless the media reform themselves. The Human Rights Act may also allow individuals to complain about media abuse. But it is generally felt that freedom of expression could be less restricted than it is at present. A restraining media institution, the Press Complaints Commission (PCC), was created in 1990. It is financed by newspaper owners and is supposed to guard the freedom and independence of the press; maintain standards of journalism; and judge complaints by the public against newspapers. Some critics argue that the PCC is not fighting as hard as it might for press freedom. Others maintain that it is not strict enough with newspapers when complaints against them are proved. A fear that the government might legislate against media abuses has led to a tightening of the PCC's rules about privacy invasion, harassment by photographers and protection of children. Newspaper owners have also created an ombudsman system for each newspaper, through which public complaints can be made and investigated. It remains to be seen whether the PCC and the ombudsman system will be truly effective.

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It is sometimes argued that the concentrated ownership patterns of the media might limit freedom of expression by allowing owners undue influence over what is included in their products. Ex-journalists have claimed that there is proprietorial interference in some of the media, which is not being curbed either by editorial guarantees or by legal and government restrictions. On the other hand, editors and journalists can be very independently minded people, who will usually strongly object to any attempts at interference. Owners, in practice, seem to be careful not to tread on too many toes, because there are always competing media sources which are only too willing to publish the facts.
A further concern about limitations on media freedom has been the extent to which advertisers might dictate policy when they place their products. The question of advertisers' influence is complex and might today be more applicable to the mass-consumer market of radio and television than the press. Advertisers dealing with the press are more concerned with the type or status of readers rather than their numbers. Arguably, the media have not succumbed in a substantial degree to the manipulations of the advertising agencies, in spite of the media's dependence upon advertising revenue.

Attitudes to the media

Apart from the issues discussed above, opinion polls suggest that the media are not a source of great concern to most British people. Respondents are reasonably, if not overly, satisfied with the BBC and independent broadcasters. However, most are generally very sceptical of the press and journalists, and mistrustful of the content of newspapers. It is difficult to evaluate absolutely whether the media play a dominant part in influencing public opinion on a range of political and other matters. The left-wing view assumes that they do and consequently disapproves of the alleged right-wing bias in the British media. But, while some people may have their attitudes directly shaped in these ways, it is argued that a majority of readers and viewers have already made up their own minds and react against blatant attempts at indoctrination. On certain occasions and for specific events (such as general elections), the media may have an important effect on public opinion. But it is also likely that the media may merely follow popular trends.
Many people learn to read between the lines of newspapers and broadcasts and are conditioned early in life 'not to believe everything you read in the papers', or hear 'on the telly'. Since television in particular is often accused of being either right-wing or left-wing, depending on which government is in power, it would seem that the British people are receiving enough information from all sides of the political spectrum. In practice, most people object to having politics and other concerns 'thrust down their throats' and many take a sceptical attitude to such matters.
A *MORI/British Council* poll in 1999 found that only 28 per cent of overseas respondents (5 per cent for Germany) believe that the British media as a whole cannot be relied on to tell the truth. The British media were regarded as being more

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truthful than their counterparts in most of the overseas countries surveyed in the poll.
(from British Civilization by John Oakland, Routledge, 2002)

1. What are the three different types of newspaper in the U.K.?
2. What are their main characteristics?
3. Do newspapers have a political bias?
4. What is characteristic of the regional press?
5. What broadcasting media are active in the UK?
6. What is the role and influence of television?
7. How does the ownership of the media affect the freedom of expression?

Art and culture.

The 'arts' once had a somewhat precious and exclusive image associated with notions of high culture, which were usually the province of the urban and metropolitan middle and upper classes. This attitude has lessened to some degree since the Second World War under the impetus of increased educational opportunities and the gradual relaxation of social barriers. The growth of mass and popular culture has increased the potential audience for a wider range of cultural activities, and the availability and scope of the arts has spread to greater numbers of people. These activities may be amateur or professional and continue the mixture of participatory, spectator and home-based entertainment. It is argued that the genuine vitality and innovation of the British arts are to be found in the millions of people across the country who are engaged in amateur music, art and theatre, rather than in the professional and commercial world. Virtually every town, suburb and village has an amateur group, whether it be a choir, music group, orchestra, string quartet, pipe band, brass band, choral group, opera group or dramatic club.
In addition, there are 500 professional arts and cultural festivals held each year throughout Britain, many of which are of a very high standard.
The funding of the mainstream arts in Britain is precarious and involves the private and public sectors. The public sector is divided between local authorities and the regional Arts Councils. Local authorities raise money from the council (property) tax to fund artistic activities in their areas, but the amounts spent vary considerably between different areas of the country and local authorities are attacked for spending either too much or too little on cultural activities.
Members of the regional Arts Councils in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are appointed by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. They are responsible for dividing up an annual government grant to the arts and the finance has to be shared among theatres, orchestras, opera and ballet companies, art galleries, museums and a variety of other cultural organizations. The division of limited funds has inevitably attracted much criticism. It means that many artistic institutions are often dependent upon the private sector to supply donations and

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funding, in addition to their state and local government money, in order to survive and provide a service. But some cultural organizations, such as the Royal Opera and museums, have received much-needed finance from the National Lottery.

British theatre can be lively and innovative and has a deserved international reputation. There are some 300 commercial or professional theatres, in addition to a large number of amateur dramatic clubs, fringe and pub theatres throughout the country. London and its suburbs have about a hundred theatres, but the dominant influence is the London 'West End'. The majority of the West End theatres are commercial, in that they are organized for profit and receive no public funds. They provide a range of light entertainment offerings from musicals to plays and comedies. However, some of the other London theatres are subsidized from grants supplied by the Arts Council, such as the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company (as well as at Stratford-upon-Avon) and the English Stage Company. These cater for a variety of plays from the classics to modern drama. The subsidized theatres in both London and the regions constantly plead for more state financial aid, which the government is loath to give. The government subsidy is considerably less than that given to most comparable theatres in continental Europe. But there is a feeling in some quarters that these theatres should be more competitive and commercially minded like the West End, although Arts Council grants have been recently increased.

Many of the theatres in the regions outside London are repertory theatres, which means that they provide a number of plays in a season and have a resident theatre company and organization. The repertory companies have traditionally been the training ground for British actors and actresses. They present a specific number of classical and innovative plays and a variety of other artistic offerings in a season.

Most theatres in London and elsewhere have had difficult times in recent years in attracting audiences and in remaining solvent, although the West End theatres brought £1 billion into the British economy in 2000. They have had to cope with increased competition from alternative and new entertainment activities. New commercial theatres in some cities are proving popular and are taking audiences away from the established repertory companies. These commercial theatres provide a wide range of popular entertainment, shows and drama, as well as plays prior to a London run. There are now signs that audience figures for all types of theatres are picking up again.

Opera in Britain occupies a similar position to that of the theatres and is divided into subsidized, commercial and amateur companies. The Royal Opera in London provides London seasons and occasional regional tours while the English National Opera Company supplies a similar midmarket service. It and the Royal Opera now share the reburbished facilities of the Covent Garden Theatre. There is a range of other opera companies, both in London and the regions, such as the English Opera Group, the Welsh National Opera and the Scottish Opera Company. There are also several light opera groups, and ballet companies such as the Ballet Rambert, the London Festival Ballet, the Scottish Theatre Ballet and the Royal Ballet, which

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operates in London and Birmingham. A number of contemporary dance companies have also been formed in recent years.

Britain has many high-quality orchestras, although most of them are based in London, such as the London Symphony Orchestra, the London Philharmonic and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. There are regional symphony orchestras of high quality, such as the Hallé in Manchester, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Ulster Orchestra, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and a number of chamber groups in London and the regions. Most of the opera, ballet and orchestra activities have their greatest appeal in London and still cater only for a minority of the people. But more popular forms, such as brass bands, choral singing and light music have a large following.

The more exclusive entertainments are heavily dependent upon Arts Council subsidies, local government grants and private donations. The country's operatic, dance and classical music offerings can compete against international rivals.

The history of the cinema in Britain has shown a big decline since its early days as a very popular form of mass entertainment and from 1946 when annual visits reached a total of 1.6 billion. The domestic film industry had virtually ceased to exist, because of lack of investment and government help, although British films with British actors continued to be made abroad and in Britain with foreign financial backing. Although some government and National Lottery finance has been provided to support British film making, only 52 British films were made in Britain in 2000 compared with 70 in 1999, and the film industry has been criticized for making too many indifferent films. In 1960 there were over 3,000 cinemas in Britain. But many have now either gone out of business, or changed to other activities such as dancing and bingo. But new screens have been built since 1996 and today there are 2,954 cinema screens situated either in single buildings or in multiplexes with five or more screens. Annual audience figures dropped from some 501 million in 1960 to 193 million in 1970. This decline was hastened by the arrival of television and continued as new forms of home entertainment, such as videos, have increased. However, although annual admissions sank to 55 million by 1984, there was an increase to 142 million in 2000. This improvement in audience figures has been encouraged by cheaper tickets, a wider range of films, responses to competition, appeal to younger people and the provision of an alternative leisure activity within more modern surroundings. But more than 30 per cent of the population never go to the cinema and 47 per cent of those aged over thirty-five never go.

A *Target Group Index (BRMB International) poll* in 2000 found that attendances at 'cultural events' of the population over fifteen in Britain are increasing and were 56 per cent for cinema, followed by theatre (23), art galleries and exhibitions (22), classical music (12), ballet (6), opera (6) and contemporary dance (4).

British popular music led the world from the 1960s and was both an economic and cultural phenomenon. Since the Beatles and early Rolling Stones, the domestic market for music sales has multiplied more than sixfold. However, in recent years,

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there has been a staleness in the popular field which has affected mainstream, avant-garde and 'ethnic' music alike. Some critics attribute this to commercial manipulation, overly packaged offerings and standardized bands, and others to a lack of substantial and consistent talent. Old-guard pop stars complain about the inadequacy of contemporary British pop music with its bland, vacuous material and ephemeral boy and girl bands, which have difficulty breaking into the global (and particularly the American) market. But British popular and rock music today still has a domestic and international following, is attractive to the overseas youth market and constitutes a considerable and growing industry. Music was worth over £4 billion a year in 2000 with exports of £1.3 billion. The value of UK record sales rose by 3.3 per cent in 2000, with 200 million pop albums and 66 million pop singles. Sales of classical albums increased by 13 per cent in 2000 to a value of £66.5 million. The music business has expanded and constitutes a sizeable amount of British exports in the form of recordings, concert tours, clothing and books. Polls suggest that 81 per cent of Britons between sixteen and twenty-four spend their leisure time listening to CDs, tapes or records at least once a week, and more people attend live music performances than football matches.

There is a wide range of museums and art galleries in Britain, which provide for a variety of tastes. Most of them are financed and controlled by local authorities, although some are commercial ventures and others, including national institutions such as the British Museum and the National Gallery in London, are the province of the Secretary of State for Culture. In the past, entry to most of the public museums and art galleries was free of charge, but in recent years entrance fees have been charged for some institutions. This development has led to protests from those people who regard such facilities as part of the national educational and cultural heritage, which should be available to all without charge. But museums and art galleries are also finding it difficult to operate on limited funds and are dependent upon local government grants, Arts Council subsidies and National Lottery donations. The Labour government has now persuaded thirteen national galleries and museums to drop their entry charges. Museum and art gallery attendance in England rose from 25 million in 2000 to 27 million in 2001.

As in sport, certain arts activities and their associated buildings have become virtual institutions, such as the West End, repertory companies, the Last Night of the Proms, the Albert Hall, the Royal Festival Hall, the National Theatre, the Tate (including Tate Modern) and National Galleries and the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon. These have been added to in recent years by buildings such as the Tate Modern, together with associated (often controversial) prizes such as the Turner Prize. They reflect Britain's lively (and internationally important) contemporary art scene.

Attitudes to leisure, sports and the arts

MORI/We British public opinion polls in 1990 produced findings that are still valid according to later polls, although there have been decreases in some activities. They showed that Britain's cultural life was thriving on both home and wider social levels. A large number of people participate in a considerable variety of

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available pastimes, sometimes with surprising priorities. One poll asked interviewees ‘which, if any, of these have you been to in the past twelve months?’, with the following results: library (49 per cent); cinema (32); museum (27); theatre (25); art exhibition (17); football match (14); pantomime (13); orchestral concert (10); pop concert (10); modern dance (8); opera (3) and classical ballet (2).
A second poll asked interviewees ‘which of these things have you done in the past month?’, with the following results: watched television or a video (89 per cent); read a book (64); had friends round to your home for a meal or a drink (51); been to a restaurant (49); been to pubs (46); general exercise and keep fit (42); gardening (40); Do-It-Yourself (39); been away for a weekend (23); been to a sports club (20); been to a cinema (16); competitive sport (16); been to a nightclub or disco (15); been to the theatre (15); been to a social or working men’s club (15); been away on holiday (13); and been to a wine bar (12). The interesting point in this list is the popularity and second place of reading, as well as the appeal of sporting and keep fit activities.
The authors of *We British* concluded that ‘we can report that the nation is in no telly-induced trance. Its tastes mix watching and doing, ‘high’ and ‘low’ cultures, with a richness that contradicts the stereotypes of the British as divided between mindless lager louts and equally moneygrubbing consumers. The mix we have found will not please everybody.
(from British Civilization by John Oakland, Routledge, 2002)

SUPPLEMENTARY READING MATERIALS

Aristocratic Titles

Ordinary people in Britain are themselves often confused by the many titles and complicated hierarchy of the British aristocracy, but there are guiding rules for classifying the peerage by rank and title and the titles of members of the aristocracy are listed in Debrett's guides and Burke's Peerage.
There are five main grades of nobility, collectively known as peers or the peerage. In order, they are: dukes, marquesses, earls, viscounts and barons. All these are entitled to sit in the House of Lords, and all are called 'Lord'. There are also additional grades. The highest, ranking above dukes, are the royal dukes, that is, those dukes who are members of the royal family, at present five in number: the Duke of Edinburgh (Prince Philip), the Duke of Cornwall (Prince Charles), the Duke of York (Prince Andrew), the Duke of Gloucester and the Duke of Kent. Ranking between royal dukes and the dukes come the two archbishops, of Canterbury and York. Bishops, not all of whom have seats in the House of Lords, rank between viscounts and barons.

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Some peers are life peers, that is they have not inherited their titles as hereditary peers do, but have been granted them by the monarch in either the New Year Honours List or the Birthday Honours List. Since 1958, all male life peers have been barons. Women who are made life peers are given the title countess or baroness.
Baronets, who rank below barons, hold the lowest British hereditary title of honour. They are not peers and are not called 'Lord' but 'Sir'. By definition they are therefore commoners, so do not sit in the House of Lords. Below baronet in rank is the non-hereditary title of 'knight'. Knights are also called 'Sir', and the wives of knights and baronets are called 'Lady'.
The sons and daughters of peers have courtesy titles, which have no legal significance, and do not entitle them to sit in the House of Lords. Younger sons of dukes and marquesses are called 'Lord', and the daughters of dukes, marquesses and earls are called 'Lady'. Sons and daughters of earls, viscounts and barons are called 'the Honourable' ('the Hon' for short).
Most peers have more than one title. Any secondary title is often adopted by a son or daughter as a courtesy title. Moreover, a peer's titles are usually different from the family surname. Thus, the Earl of Strafford, whose surname is Byng, has the secondary title of Viscount Enfield, and this is the courtesy title of his son and heir, the Hon William Byng.
(from Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopedic Dictionary, OUP, 1993)

Charities

There are over 150000 charities in Britain. They raise money for many different causes, from caring for the poor and disadvantaged to funding vital medical research. Among the best known, with the highest incomes, are the National Trust, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), Oxfam, the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, the Cancer Research Campaign, the Salvation Army, Barnados, the Save the Children Fund, the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).
Charities raise money in many ways. Volunteers visit homes and ask for donations, or collect contributions on busy shopping streets on Saturdays. In both these cases the people who donate money are given a small paper sticker to wear. (Formerly, small paper 'flags' were pinned to clothing, so that such collection days were known as 'flag days', a term still sometimes used.) Some charities hold special national fund-raising weeks for this purpose.
At a local level, many kinds of events are held to raise money for national and local charities. They include coffee mornings, bring-and-buy sales, car-boot sales, fetes, raffles, amateur sports contests or dramatic entertainments. Sponsored sporting events, in which people take part in an organized walk, run, swim, etc and are 'sponsored' by people who agree to give a certain sum to a particular charity if the event is successfully completed, are increasingly popular.

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Charity appeals are regularly made on radio and television. One kind of fund-raising event on television is the ‘telethon’, in which famous people appear or perform for no fee. Such programmes can bring in millions of pounds from the public, and the 27-hour Telethon held by Independent Television in 1990 to raise money for old people, children, the disabled and regional charities raised over £26 million.
Many firms give to charity, with large companies like British Petroleum and Marks and Spencer donating millions of pounds annually. Some people, especially rich people who have no heirs, leave large sums to charity in their wills. Many charities obtain much of their income in this way. Voluntary donations are also collected locally for 'good causes' other than registered charity. For example, a fete might be held to money for repairs to the roof of the church.
There is an established tradition of charity work among show business and sports personalities, and celebrities often ‘sponsor’ a favourite charity by becoming personally involved with its work and its fund-raising. Members of the royal family are involved with many charities, usually as president.
An official register of charities is kept by the Charity Commission, which is responsible for overseeing their activities, giving them advice and preventing fraud. One of the functions of the Commission is to receive the income from land and investments held by charities and to return it to them free of income tax. This tax relief helps charities considerably.
(from Oxford Advanced Learner’s Encyclopedic Dictionary, OUP, 1993)

Christmas

Christmas is the most important annual festival in both Britain and North America. In its origins, it combines the Christian celebration of the birth of Christ, on 25 December, with the ancient tradition of a winter feast during the darkest period of the year.
The religious preparation for Christmas begins four weeks earlier on Advent Sunday, and during Advent churches hold special carol services, such as the popular Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. At this time, too, carol singers make door-to-door visits to people at home, collecting money for charity. In many towns, open-air carol services are held round a Christmas tree in the town centre. Children at school often perform nativity plays commemorating the birth of Christ. Church attendance on Christmas day is higher than at any other time of year. Some people like to go to midnight mass, a service held late on Christmas Eve. Churches are specially decorated and carols are sung.
Many weeks before Christmas, the first sign of its approach is usually the appearance of Christmas cards for sale. Millions of such cards are sent yearly both by individuals and firms. Many people use them as a way of keeping in touch with friends who live far away. The images used on the cards reflect the nostalgic mood of the season, with scenes of Victorian Christmas celebrations, or they use typical

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Christmas symbols such as stars, robins, holly, mistletoe, snow and snowmen. Biblical scenes, especially the Nativity, are also used.
Christmas is a time for giving presents, especially to children. Small children believe that Santa Claus, or Father Christmas, a white-bearded old man dressed in red, rides through the air on a sleigh pulled by reindeer and delivers presents to each child, coming into the house by the chimney. Children hang stockings up on Christmas Eve and find them filled with presents on Christmas morning.
The custom of having a decorated Christmas tree, usually a spruce or fir tree, was introduced to Britain from Germany in the 19th century. Trees are placed in town squares, outside churches and in many homes, decorated with coloured lights and with a large star or an angel at the top. In homes, presents are placed round the tree, or hung on it, and given out on Christmas day.
People decorate their houses with holly, mistletoe, candles and coloured paper chains and lanterns. 'Kissing under the mistletoe' an old tradition that is still occasionally observed. Streets are often decorated with coloured lights and the Christmas lights in the main shopping streets in London's West End are a special attraction.
On Christmas day itself there is usually a celebration with family and friends, which includes a special Christmas meal of roast goose or turkey followed by Christmas pudding which is soaked in brandy and set alight. The table is specially decorated, usually with Christmas crackers, containing paper hats riddles and other novelties. Port and nuts are often served after the meal. Other Christmas foods are mince pies and a special Christmas cake, a fruit-cake covered in marzipan and icing. Many people listen to the message broadcast by the Queen to people in Britain and the Commonwealth on Christmas Day. The following day (26 December) is called Boxing Day. It was formerly the day when servants were given their 'Christmas box', a gift or money from their employer. Many households still give Christmas boxes to the people who deliver their post, milk, newspapers, etc.
(from Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopedic Dictionary, OUP, 1993)

Class

Until the Second World War there were very distinct social groups in British society. There was an upper class that included the aristocracy and many people who lived on inherited wealth, a middle class that could be subdivided into upper middle class, middle class and lower middle class, and a working class that included both skilled craftsmen and unskilled industrial workers and agricultural laborers. The divisions between the classes were reflected in many aspects of life. Working-class children usually left school and went out to work at the age of 14. Upper-class children were educated in private schools and formed the majority of students at university. Pubs were divided into public bars and saloon (or lounge) bars which were more expensive and more comfortable. Trains had first, second and third class carriages. Theaters had a dress circle where theater-goers wore

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evening dress, and a gallery where the seats were cheaper and evening dress was not worn.
Many aspects of this region structure have virtually disappeared in modern Britain, although the continued existence of a private education system that educates about 7% of children still reflects it. The policies of governments since the Second World War in areas such as health, education, housing and taxation have on the hole had the effect of reducing class differences in society. There has also been a decline in manufacturing or ‘blue collar’ jobs and an increase in ‘white collar’ jobs in service industries. Never the less, Britain is still far from being the classless society that many politicians have set out to achieve.
Class consciousness is based not so much on economic differences as on class differences that reflect family background, education and accent rather than on differences based on occupation. Class distinctions are popularly represented by stereotypes, especially in matters of clothing, speech and region of origin. This is best seen in caricatures of upper and lower class individuals, whether in literature or the contemporary media. Upper class people are typically portrayed in country clothes since they are primarily associated with land ownership and the three traditional aristocratic sports of hunting, shooting and fishing. Other typically upper class sports are polo and riding. Distinctive items of upper class wear are peaked caps for men, head-scarves for women, and green Wellington boots for either. Upper-class speech is portrayed as loud, drawling and affected, with much use of nicknames and slang. The typical upper-class person is usually thought of as a southerner, although it is perfectly possible to be Scottish and upper class.
The stock caricature of a working-class men shows him wearing a flat cap, braces (although these are now in fashion with some upper-class people) and boots. He is popularly thought of as living in the north of England. A working-class woman is often depicted as untidily dressed, wearing ‘indoor’ items such as hair curlers and bedroom slippers in the street.
(from Oxford Advanced Learner’s Encyclopedic Dictionary, OUP, 1993)

Clothes

In Britain, there are traditional regional costumes and styles of dress associated with particular jobs or social groups. Wales and Scotland each have a national costume, although there is no English one. Welsh national dress is seen on such occasions as the annual Llangollen Eisteddfod. Women wear full skirts, laced bodices, colourful shawls and a distinctive tall crowned black hat, while men have bright waistcoats and flat black hats. The Scottish Highland dress, worn by both sexes and based on each clan's distinctive tartan, is considered the Scottish national dress. For men it includes a tweed jacket, a tartan kilt and tartan stockings, with a fur or leather sporran. Women's dress is similar, but with a tartan skirt in place of the kilt. Scottish costume is worn at many national events, such as the Highland Games, but also for everyday use by some Scots. A form of dress similar to the

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Scottish one is also worn by the Irish on ceremonial or formal occasions, showing the common Celtic and historical link between the two peoples.
As in most countries, members of particular professions and occupations often wear special dress. Among those regarded as distinctively British are the dark blue helmet and uniform of the policeman, the ceremonial red tunics and busbies of some army regiments, the 16th-century scarlet uniform of the Beefeaters (Yeomen of the Guard), the gown and 'mortarboard' of university students, and the wigs worn by judges. To this one could add the bowler hat, pin-striped trousers and rolled umbrella that were at one time almost a uniform for civil servants and City businessmen.
Many independent schools have distinctive uniforms, such as the Eton suit worn at Eton, or the boaters (straw hats) worn at Harrow and some girls' schools. Some state schools also have uniforms, with boys wearing a dark jacket or blazer, grey or black trousers, and white shirts, with a school tie. Girls usually wear a dark-coloured jumper and skirt with a white or pale-coloured blouse. The once familiar schoolgirl's gym tunic or gym slip is now rarely worn.
The blazer, whether dark blue or with bright stripes, is a distinctive garment still worn by many present and past members of schools, colleges and sporting clubs, with the institution's crest on the breast pocket. Blazers without a crest are worn as casual wear, as are tweed sports jackets.
As well as a blazer, many groups and clubs have a striped or crested tie to be worn by members. Some schools and colleges have more than one tie, for example for members of a particular team or club, or for former members (‘old boys’). It is the ‘old school tie’ that traditionally serves as an identifying link between former members of a public school and is sometimes regarded as a symbol of the upper-class outlook and attitudes of its wearer.
Items of clothing that are linked with particular social groups are the flat cap associated with working-class men and more rounded cap worn by the ‘country gentleman’. Although the British normally dress casually, there are still a few occasions when people like to dress up formally. Many weddings, for example, are very formal, with men wearing morning dress and women wearing extravagant hats. Women also usually wear hats at events where members of the royal family are present.
Allowing for national differences, there is much in common between British and American dress, although Americans of all ages have always been more colourful and adventurous than the British. Checked shirts and jeans are casual wear that the USA has exported to the rest of the world. The cowboy's broad-brimmed hat has become a symbol of the American West, and of the country as a whole.
Despite the constant changes of fashion and highly developed fashion industries, in both Britain and the USA, the majority of people wear casual and simple dress, with such garments as sweat shirts, jeans, denim jackets and training shoes (or ‘trainers’) worn by both sexes.
(from Oxford Advanced Learner’s Encyclopedic Dictionary, OUP, 1993)

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Clubs

The London 'gentlemen's clubs' evolved from the coffee-houses and taverns that existed in the 17th and 18th centuries. They are characterized by their social exclusivity and their male-oriented organization and atmosphere.
Even today there are a few clubs that do not admit women as members. In the past their role was to provide for upper-class men the all-male environment that they were used to at public school and in the army.
Membership is by election and normally involves both an admission fee and an annual subscription. Some clubs have thousands of members many of whom live outside London and use their club as a place to stay when 'in town. Most clubs have good restaurants and reading rooms, and provide comfortable surroundings where members can meet socially and invite their guests. The members of a particular club often share a professional interest or occupation. In some cases the interest is political, as in the Carlton, whose members are staunch Conservatives. Many members of Garrick are actors or writers. Boodle's club, one of the oldest, is used by high-ranking officers and bankers. Members of the Reform Club are predominantly Treasury officials, economists and judges. The Athenaeum, as its classical name implies, is known for its learned membership. A recently founded club, the Groucho, has a membership of people who work in the media. (The club was named after the American comic actor Groucho Marx, who once said that he would not want to belong to any club that would have him as a member.)
The oldest and most prestigious of London clubs is White's, founded in 1693, to which many members of royalty and the aristocracy have belonged. It was formerly a Tory political club, but is now purely social, with a reputation for extravagance and eccentricity.
Some clubs have names that indicate their specialization, such as the Army and Navy, the Cavalry and Guards, the Royal Automobile, the Traveller's and the United Oxford and Cambridge University Clubs. One of the best-known women's clubs is the University Women's Club, founded in 1886.
Most of the famous clubs are situated in and around Pall Mall and St James's Street, an area sometimes known as 'Clubland'. The club buildings themselves are often large and impressive, and as a sign of their exclusivity some do not even have their name outside.
There are also provincial clubs, mostly founded for a specific purpose. Many of them are attached to universities, such as the Amateur Dramatic Club, Cambridge, or the Oxford Union Society, Oxford (the university's debating club). The Leander Club, based at Henley-on-Thames, is Britain's oldest rowing club, with members drawn from the Oxford and Cambridge University crews.
Among the most exclusive types of sporting club are the yachting and sailing clubs, the best-known being the Royal Yacht Squadron, at Cowes Castle, Isle of Wight. Britain has numerous golf clubs, with membership of many of them being

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as socially exclusive as that of the London clubs. The country's leading golf club is the Royal and Ancient Golf Club (‘R and A’), at St Andrews in Scotland.

At a more modest level, almost every town and community, from school to factory, has a club of some kind, even if its prime purpose is purely social. Working men's clubs were set up in the mid-19th century to provide educational and recreational facilities for their members, and still exist in many towns. They are not political, nor is membership of a trade union a condition for joining. On similar lines, the Royal British Legion has men's clubs throughout the country for ex-servicemen and women and their families. Local branches of the main political parties also have clubs which are a centre for political activity as well as fulfilling a social function.

There are many sports clubs and associations and youth clubs, the latter run by such organizations as the National Association of Youth Clubs or the National Association of Boys' Clubs. Rotary Clubs, associations of men and women who work in business or the professions, operate in many parts of the country.

Most towns also have what is in effect a club open to everybody, in the form of a community centre. This provides a wide range of facilities educational, recreational and social. There are also special clubs for retired people where they can go and chat to friends over a cup of tea.

In the USA, the equivalent of the London ‘gentlemen's club’ is the country club, usually located in an upper-class suburban area and providing social and sports facilities, notably golf. Country clubs are just as exclusive as London clubs, and often succeed in restricting membership in spite of the laws that prohibit racial or sexual discrimination. There is also a wide range of professional, political and social clubs of other types, including international ones, like the Rotary Club.

(from Oxford Advanced Learner’s Encyclopedic Dictionary, OUP, 1993)

Drinks

By tradition, the British national drink is tea. It is drunk not only on its own but with or after meals, from breakfast to supper and from early in the morning (often in bed) to last thing at night. It has given its name to the characteristically British meal, tea, either ‘afternoon tea’ or ‘high tea’, meaning the meal itself rather than just a cup of tea or ‘cuppa’. The traditional way to make tea is in a teapot, which is first warmed with hot water. When the pot is warm, very hot water is poured onto the tea-leaves, and the tea is allowed to ‘brew’ for a few minutes before being poured out. Most people drink tea with milk and many add sugar.

In recent times coffee has become much more popular and for many people has replaced tea as the usual drink. It has always been served as an after-dinner drink, when it is often drunk black, i.e. without milk, and cafes and coffee shops serve ‘morning coffee’ in the middle of the morning. Other hot drinks are those made with milk, e.g. cocoa, hot chocolate and drinks sold under brand names such as Horlicks or Ovaltine. They are often drunk as a nonalcoholic ‘nightcap’, especially in winter.

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Children often drink milk when adults drink tea or coffee. Milk used to be provided free in all schools as a mid-morning drink. It has been advertised with the slogan 'Drinka pinta milka day' (Drink a pint of milk a day) and a pint of milk is often called a 'pinta'. Fruit drinks of all kinds are also popular with children. They include fruit juice, squash and fizzy drinks often sold in cans.

The trend towards healthier eating and drinking has brought an increase in the sales of mineral water, and water from many springs in Britain is now sold as well as imported brands. Sales of low-alcohol and alcohol-free beers and wines have also increased.

Among alcoholic drinks, beer is traditionally the most popular in Britain, especially with men. It is the main drink served in pubs, in pints or half-pints and is associated with leisure and conviviality. There are a number of different types, from the weakest, known as 'mild' to the strongest, called 'bitter'. 'A pint of best bitter' is a common order in a pub. Traditional draught beer is served from the barrel by means of a pump. The more modern type of beer is called keg beer. It is usually served colder than draught beer, using carbon dioxide so that it is also more fizzy. CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, is an association that supports traditional draught beer, which is also being replaced by canned beer, especially lager. Stout, a dark type of beer, is also popular, especially in Ireland. Shandy, beer mixed with lemonade or ginger beer, is also served in pubs. Cider, made from apples, is another traditionally popular drink, especially in Devon, Somerset and Herefordshire, where it is made.

Wine has for centuries been imported to Britain from France, but it is only in recent years that wine drinking has become common. Wine is now imported from many other countries including Spain, Italy, Germany, the USA and Australia and is also produced in small but increasing quantities in southern England. Sherry, imported from Spain, is commonly drunk before a meal, and port, imported from Portugal, is often drunk at the end of a meal, especially a formal one, and at Christmas-time.

Whisky is not only a popular drink in Britain. It is one of the country's major exports. There are over a hundred distilleries in Scotland and more than 80 per cent of what they produce is exported. Whisky is often drunk diluted with water or soda water and is more often drunk by men than women. A glass of whisky and soda is a traditional 'nightcap'. Gin is often mixed with tonic water or with fruit drinks such as lime or orange. Less traditional but popular mixtures are rum and Coca Cola or vodka and orange juice. Brandy and fruit-flavored liqueurs are sometimes drunk at the end of a meal with coffee.

There are high taxes on alcoholic drinks in Britain. People who make their own wine and beer can avoid paying these taxes, but it is illegal to sell home-made alcoholic drinks. Shops need a special licence to sell alcoholic drinks and there are laws that restrict the hours when alcohol may be sold. It is illegal to sell alcohol to anyone under the age of 18, either in a shop or in a bar or restaurant.

In the USA there are also legal restrictions on the sale of spirits, but not of wine or beer, which is by far the most popular alcoholic drink. In many states it is illegal to

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sell spirits to people under the age of 21. As in Britain, there are high taxes on alcohol. During the period of Prohibition (1920-33) it was illegal to make or sell alcoholic drinks in the USA, but the ban on alcohol led to the rise of organized crime as an illicit trade developed.
With the trend towards healthier living, cocktails, i.e. mixtures such as gin and dry vermouth (called a Martini) or whisky and dry vermouth (called a Manhattan) have become less fashionable, and long drinks like spritzers (a mixture of white wine and soda water) are becoming more popular. These are also called wine coolers.
Soft drinks are as popular in the USA as in Britain and Coca Cola is regarded throughout the world as a typically American drink. Drinks made with milk, especially milk shakes, are also popular.
The main wine-growing area in the USA is California but, as in Britain, wine is also imported from many countries in Europe and elsewhere.
(from Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopedic Dictionary, OUP, 1993)

Drugs

In both Britain and North America the misuse of drugs, especially among the young, is a serious problem, because of the damage it causes both socially and physically. There is a high incidence of the use of both heroin and cocaine. Despite moves by the governments of both countries to reduce the Illegal import of drugs, they continue to find their way onto the market, where they are sold to addicts for high prices. Customs officers regularly find large quantities of drugs worth millions of pounds when sold to users. Campaigns have been mounted on both sides of the Atlantic to warn people of the dangers of drug abuse.
In the second half of the 1980s the potential damage caused by drug abuse was increased because of AIDS. Many drug users risked contracting and transmitting the HIV virus by sharing needles and syringes. In Britain, government publicity campaigns about the dangers of drug abuse are aimed partly at reducing the spread of AIDS as well as informing young people of the dangers of injecting drugs, including amphetamines.
In sport, there have been cases of the misuse of anabolic steroids to increase physical performance and stamina. As a result of a campaign initiated by the Sports Council, random drug testing of athletes has been introduced and some athletes have been banned from competing as a result.
Drug addicts are treated at hospitals, often as out-patients, and many hospitals have special drug dependence units. Family doctors also treat cases of addiction, and are now conscious of the addictive nature of tranquillizers, which in the past have been very freely prescribed.
There are fashions in drug abuse as in most other things. In the 1960s the use of hallucinogenic drugs like marijuana (or 'pot') and LSD was associated with rebellion by young people against bourgeois society, and there was also a link that still exists today between rock music and the use of drugs. In the 1980s sniffing cocaine became fashionable among 'yuppies', successful young people working in

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the financial services industry in London and New York. Crack, an especially potent form of cocaine that can be smoked or inhaled, was also widely used in the late 1980s. Another recent fashion was the ‘acid house party’ in which sometimes thousands of young people met, often at a secluded country site, to listen to music and take ‘ecstasy’, a powerful amphetamine-based drug
(from Oxford Advanced Learner’s Encyclopedic Dictionary, OUP, 1993)

Employment

People of working age can be divided into three groups: the employed, the self-employed, and the unemployed. At the end of the 1980s, Britain's total work-force was about 26 million, about two thirds of the adult population. Of this number, around 3 million people were self-employed, and there were about 2 million unemployed. About 40 per cent of the workforce are women, a proportion that is gradually growing.
As in many countries, there has been a gradual swing from employment in the manufacturing industries to jobs in service industries such as banking, retailing, hotels and catering, and public administration. About two thirds of the work-force are employed in service industries, compared with one quarter in manufacturing industry. During the 1980s, the largest rise was in the banking, insurance and finance sector, which increased by 50 per cent. The number of workers in transport, however, has declined.
During the 1980s there were years of high unemployment, with a peak of over 3 million unemployed in 1986. A number of government schemes, programmes and incentives were introduced to help unemployed people find work. These range from the Youth Training Scheme (YTS), giving young people the opportunity to obtain a vocational qualification while under training, to Employment Training (ET), an extensive adult training programme introduced in 1988 for people who had been out of work for more than six months.
Many unemployed people look for work in advertisements, such as those in local newspapers. Others make their first search through the government Jobcentres, where local jobs are advertised and where individual advice is given.
Instruction in practical skills is provided for the unemployed at Skillcentres. These were at first run by the Department of Employment but are now privately managed. Training of a more theoretical kind can also be obtained through the Open College, an independent body that provides courses by radio and television. Two further schemes are Business Growth Training, which offers financial help to employers training their own employees, and the Enterprise Allowance Scheme, which helps unemployed people start their own business.
Although many school-leavers obtain jobs after completing a one-year or two-year YTS course, some find the experience depressing and regard it as a waste of time.
If a person is unemployed for six months or longer, he or she may attend an interview with a 'Restart' counsellor, who will suggest alternative ways of finding work. One solution is for the person to attend a special five-day Restart course,

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with practical advice on the way to look for a job. Another is a place in a Jobclub, where the person is given similar advice followed by help in finding a job. A third possibility is self-employment under the Enterprise Allowance Scheme. People who remain unemployed for a year or more are recommended to see a Restart counsellor every six months.
Similar schemes operate in the USA where, as in Britain, an increasing number of workers are employed in service industries and where unemployment in 1990 was about 5 per cent. The Federal-State Employment Service refers employable applicants to job openings where they can make the best use of their skills. It also helps unemployed people to obtain advice or training.
The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), which came into force in 1983, provides job training and employment services for poor and disadvantaged people, with the aim of finding permanent jobs for as many people as possible. A special section of the Act caters for people who lose jobs in industries where they are unlikely to be able to find another job. Young unemployed people are given training by Job Corps residential training centres. In addition to these schemes, which are organized on a federal basis, individual states also provide employment training which is paid for from state taxes.
(from Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopedic Dictionary, OUP, 1993)

Entertaining

The most usual way to entertain friends at home is to invite them for a meal, either in the evening or at lunch-time on a Sunday. In smaller communities, for example a country village, people also invite each other for a drink before a meal, for morning coffee or afternoon tea.
When guests are invited for a meal, they often sit and chat while they have a drink before a meal, and coffee is usually served afterwards. Several friends are sometimes invited at once to make a small party. These parties are almost always informal. Formal occasions, when written invitations are sent out and people dress formally, rarely take place in people's homes, although they did in the past.
Larger parties are arranged to celebrate a particular event. Children's birthdays are often celebrated with a tea-party for the child's friends. The meal will often be followed by party games, or a children's entertainer such as a conjuror may perform. Parties are held to celebrate a person's coming of age (formerly at 21 but now at 18), a couple's silver wedding anniversary (after 25 years of marriage), a couple's engagement and New Year's Eve. In the USA a person's 40th birthday is often marked with a special celebration. A house-warming party is sometimes held to invite friends to one's new home.
In summer, if the weather is fine, people may hold a barbecue in the garden. A much grander, more formal occasion is a garden party, held in the afternoon, when tea is served.
(from Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopedic Dictionary, OUP, 1993)

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The Armed Forces

Both Britain and the USA have, like many other countries, three armed forces, the Navy, the Army and the Air Force.
In Britain, the Royal Navy (RN), sometimes called the 'senior service', dates from 1488, when Henry VII built the Great Harry. The Army (with no 'Royal' in its title) evolved in its present form from Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army of 1661, although some of the oldest regiments were formed before this. The Royal Air Force (RAF) was constituted by Act of Parliament in 1918. The Royal Marines (RM) were first formed in 1664, soon after the Army, and although the force is administered by the Navy, its ranks are the same as those in the Army.
In the USA, both the United States Navy and United States Army came into being in 1775. The United States Air Force (USAF) did not become a separate service, however, until after the Second World War. The United States Marine Corps (USMC), formed as part of the US Navy, was established in the same year as its parent force.
There was conscription (called 'the draft' in the USA) in both countries during the Second World War. In Britain it continued as 'National Service' until 1962, and was temporarily revived in the USA in the early 1970s at the time of the Vietnam War.
At the beginning of the 1990s the strength of the British armed forces was just over 300 000 with half this number in the Army, about a third in the RAF, and the remainder, less than a quarter, in the RN and the RM. Of the 16 700 women in the services, just over a third each were in the Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF, known as 'Wrafs', formerly 'Waafs') and the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC), and the rest in the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS, or 'Wrens').
The current military strength of the USA is just over 2 million. Of this total, just under a third are in the US Army, about a quarter in the USAF, and the remainder in the US Navy. In terms of manpower the US Navy is the largest in the world. US Marines comprise just under 10 per cent of the total. Unlike in Britain, the US Coast Guard is part of the country's military force, under the control of the Navy Department.
In both Britain and the USA female personnel are an integral part of the services, with women serving alongside men, mainly in support roles. American servicewomen are banned by law from combat roles in the front line, although they can be assigned to most other fields. Until recently, British servicewomen were barred from posts on board aircraft and ships.
In the British armed forces, engagements for non-commissioned ranks (below that of officer) are from 3 to 22 years. Personnel may leave the services at any time on giving 18 months' notice, but may also purchase their discharge or be granted it on compassionate grounds or for reasons of conscience. For officers, there are short, medium or long-term commissions.
Britain and the USA are members of NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization). The RN is the largest European navy in NATO, and its prime

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allegiance is to the alliance. The Army and RAF are stationed in Germany as part of NATO and almost all the RAF's combat and support aircraft are assigned to NATO. In Northern Ireland, the army has ten units, in addition to the nine battalions of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), which are responsible for fighting terrorism.
At home, the army has a role in ceremonial duties, especially those carried out at the Trooping the Colour and the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace. The troops seen in their ceremonial uniforms on these royal occasions are the Household Cavalry and such well-known foot regiments as the Irish Guards, the Scots Guards and the Welsh Guards.
Auxiliary forces also have their part to play. In Britain, the Army is backed up by the Territorial Army (TA), which in turn is supported by a Home Defence Force. Other reserve forces include the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR), the Royal Naval Auxiliary Reserve (RNAS), the Royal Marines Reserve (RMR), and the Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAAF). All these have grown in recent years to make a total of around 240000 regular reserves and 90 000 volunteer and auxiliary reserves. Many doctors and nurses serve as medical reserves and were called up in 1991 during the Gulf War. The US auxiliary forces are the National Guard and the Army Reserve.
Recruiting to the services is carried out mainly through recruiting offices but also through cadet corps. Recruiting campaigns and publicity now emphasize the versatility and variety of professions and trades offered in the armed forces, rather than stressing a ‘macho’ image for the Army or luring volunteers to the Navy with the promise of travel to exotic places.
(from Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopedic Dictionary, OUP, 1993)

The Countryside

The British countryside is very varied and in places very beautiful, especially in such regions as the West Country, the Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales, the mountains of Wales and Northern Ireland, and the Scottish Highlands. It comprises not just farmland but large areas of forest, moorland and upland. As well as mountainous country there are extensive areas of hills and downs, such as the Cotswolds, the Yorkshire Wolds, the Chilterns and the South Downs There are also many attractive island groups including the Orkneys, the Shetlands, the Hebrides and the Scilly Isles. The overall charm of the countryside is enhanced by Britain's many rivers, streams and canals, and by the varied coastline, with its many bays and beaches. All this makes for a land where tourism is one of the major industries, and where a ‘country walk’ is regarded as one of the chief recreational pleasures.
Access to much of the countryside is free, even over privately owned fields and farmland, by a system of public footpaths and bridleways. The Country Code sets out rules for the public to observe in helping to protect farmland and the natural environment.

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The government, mainly through the Countryside Commissions, has established areas where the countryside may be freely enjoyed. These range from national parks and 'areas of outstanding natural beauty' to long distance footpaths like the 'National Trails', which are designed to take the walker through Britain's most attractive scenery, such as the fens of East Anglia or the mountains of Snowdonia. These paths are maintained by the local authorities. Large-scale Ordnance Survey maps, published for every part of the country, show footpaths and public rights of way.
Among special areas to be enjoyed are country parks, forest parks, 'national scenic parks' (in Scotland) and coastal tracts. Common land is also popular for walks. It is land that is open to the public, often the land that in medieval times was available to villagers for growing crops and grazing animals. The village green, a feature of many villages, is usually an area of common land and is a traditional setting for country fairs. Most country parks and forest parks provide such facilities as picnic sites for tourists, and many have special 'nature trails'.
Conservation of the environment is a major issue in Britain. Nature conservation is the responsibility of the Nature Conservancy Council. Forest land, unless it is privately owned, is under the care of the Forestry Commission. This body has also set up a number of 'sites of special scientific interest', whose most important aim is nature conservation. Many local authorities, too, have established nature reserves. Around the coast, undeveloped and ecologically valuable stretches of land are protected as 'heritage coast'.
Preservation of the coastline and of many other areas of scenic beauty is also the work of the National Trust. The Trust is a charity that raises money to preserve not only land but also historic buildings. It owns many famous country-houses, gardens and ancient monuments, as well as stretches of countryside.
'Green belts' have been established round many large cities, in order to control building development and to provide open land for the public to enjoy.
(from Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopedic Dictionary, OUP, 1993)

Youth Movements

Youth organizations have been popular in Britain since the 19th century. The Boy Scouts movement was founded by Robert Baden-Powell in 1908 and has since become a world-wide organization. Two years later, 'B-P', together with his sister Agnes, founded the Girl Guides.
Scouts and Guides today are the leading youth organizations in Britain in terms of numbers. The Scout Association has the aim of training boys to use their initiative, teaching them to use practical skills, and helping them to become useful members of society. It attaches importance to moral values such as loyalty and responsibility.
The Girl Guides Association has similar aims but with greater emphasis on community service and activities such as camping, games and hiking.

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Many young people belong to a youth club, whose activities usually involve a mixture of sport and community service.
The Sea Cadet Corps, the Army Cadet Force and the Air training Corps are organizations for young people who are interested in joining one of the armed forces when they are older.
The Outward Bound Trust offers young people the chance to participate in adventurous activities such as sailing, canoeing, rock climbing and pot-holing.
Apart from youth movements such as these, there are a number of informal ways in which young people can form groups together or share an interest. These range from organizations like the many local clubs and social groups, or the national fan clubs for pop stars and pop groups, to less clearly defined groups, like skinheads, who adopt a distinctive life-style, their shaven heads and usually tattered clothing making a recognizable ‘statement of identity’. The same is true of rockers, with their love of rock music, black clothes (often leather) and motor cycles.
(from Oxford Advanced Learner’s Encyclopedic Dictionary, OUP, 1993)

3 April 2013

How do you identify new types of class?

Sociologists are interested in the idea that class is about your cultural tastes and activities as well as the type and number of people you know.
These factors are important when put alongside people's economic position.
Professors Mike Savage and Fiona Devine explain how a BBC Lab UK experiment allowed them to better understand class in the 21st Century.
Measuring Class
Understanding classes as amounts of different types of 'capitals' helps us to see class across a number of dimensions.
The French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu first developed this approach in 1984, suggesting there are different types of capitals which give people an advantage in life. Economic, cultural and social capital may overlap but they are different. Using this approach, we distinguished between people with different amounts of each of these three capitals.
It's been difficult to test this approach in Britain because comprehensive questions on cultural and social capital are rarely asked in national surveys. Sociologists need large amounts of data to unravel the complicated way the different capitals interact with each other, in many different people.
So we were excited to test this approach for the first time by designing a survey with BBC Lab UK.

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The Great British Class Survey

We wanted to find detailed ways of measuring how much economic, cultural and social capital people possess.
The questions we asked about people's leisure interests, musical tastes, use of the media and food preferences helped us build a picture of Britain's cultural consumption.
To investigate social capital, we used a 'position generator' developed by the American sociologist Nan Lin in 2001 to measure the range of people's social ties. We asked our participants whether they knew anyone in 37 different occupations.
The questions on economic capital asked about household income, whether you owned your own property, how much it was worth, and your savings. This meant we had unusually detailed measures of the different types of economic capital.
We also collected extensive information about people's household composition, education, social mobility and political attitudes. This data allowed us to understand our measures of economic, cultural and social capital in the context of other important aspects of people's lives.

Measuring Your Capitals

Cultural Capital

It was complicated working out how to measure cultural capital because we needed to understand how some cultural activities tend to cluster together and how some are associated with being advantaged in the first place.
To find out which cultural activities tended to go together, we did some statistics called multiple correspondence analysis on the 27 cultural activities listed in the survey. This analysis was based on the interests participants said they liked or disliked and the activities they told us they did or didn't do.
From this analysis we could determine the people interested in 'highbrow' culture, like going to the theatre or listening to classical music; and those attracted to more 'popular' or 'emerging' forms of culture, like using social media or going to gigs. We found that there were three distinct groups; those who engaged with 'highbrow' culture, those interested in 'emerging' culture and those who were pretty uninterested in culture of any kind.
We decided to use engagement in 'highbrow' and 'emerging' culture as measures of cultural capital. We measured how much 'highbrow' culture people consumed by scoring how engaged they were with classical music, attending stately homes and so on. We measured how much 'emerging' cultural capital people owned by scoring their engagement with video games, a preference for hip-hop and so forth.
Social Capital
The 37 different occupations listed in the online survey for people to identify as friends were taken from the very well established Cambridge Social Interaction and Stratification (CAMSIS) scale. For each participant, we were able to assess

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how many of the 37 occupations they reported, the average importance of their contacts and their range of people they know.
We decided to focus on two ways of measuring social capital. We measured the average status or importance of people's social contacts and the number of occupations people said they knew.
Economic Capital
We asked people about their household income, household savings and the value of their house. We combined this information to make a ‘score’ which represented each participant's economic capital.
It's important to emphasise that these measures are for the household and it is possible for some people who aren't in well-paid jobs themselves to achieve high scores because of the income of other members of the household. They might be members of the same family although they might not be related.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/0/22001963

Britain now has 7 social classes - and working class is a dwindling breed

LIAM O'BRIEN Wednesday 03 April 2013

Thought shopping at Waitrose and graduating from a Russell Group university is enough to make someone middle class? Think again. According to a new study, the UK population is split into no less than seven different social classes, from the “elite” to the lowly “precariat”.
Following a BBC survey of more than 160,000 people, academics established that Britons can no longer be boxed in to the traditional “upper”, “middle” and “working” classes.
Instead, you could be a home-owning “elite” with highbrow cultural interests and savings of £140,000. Their “sheer economic advantage” sets them apart from the other classes, according to Professor Mike Savage of the LSE, and they make up just six per cent of the population.
The findings, presented at a British Sociological Association convention, show that at the very bottom lies the “precariat”. Typically shopkeepers, drivers and cleaners, they represent 15 per cent of people in the UK and lack “any significant amount of economic, cultural or social capital”.
The categories in between are: established middle class; technical middle class; new affluent workers, traditional working class and emergent service workers.
The results were obtained by analysing people’s income, assets, the professions of their peer group and their social activities. Professor Fiona Devine, of the University of Manchester, said: “There’s a much more fuzzy area between the traditional working class and traditional middle class.”
The social classes
Precariat: This is the most deprived class of all with low levels of economic, cultural and social capital. The every day lives of members of this class are precarious.

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Traditional Working Class: This class scores low on all forms of the three capitals although they are not the poorest group. The average age of this class is older than the others.
Emergent Service Workers: This new class has low economic capital but has high levels of 'emerging' cultural capital and high social capital. This group are young and often found in urban areas.
Technical Middle Class: This is a new, small class with high economic capital but seem less culturally engaged. They have relatively few social contacts and so are less socially engaged.
New Affluent Workers: This class has medium levels of economic capital and higher levels of cultural and social capital. They are a young and active group.
Established Middle Class: Members of this class have high levels of all three capitals although not as high as the Elite. They are a gregarious and culturally engaged class.
Elite: This is the most privileged class in Great Britain who have high levels of all three capitals. Their high amount of economic capital sets them apart from everyone else.
http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/britain-now-has-7-social-classes--and-working-class-is-a-dwindling-breed-8557894.html

Family breakdown 'could cost taxpayers £46bn'

Welfare minister Lord Freud says Government has ‘clear duty’ to strengthen family and insists true impact of relationship breakdown goes 'far deeper' than benefits bill
By John Bingham, Social Affairs Editor10:20PM GMT 04 Mar 2014 Comments66 Comments
The true cost of divorce and family breakdown in Britain goes “far higher” and “far deeper” than the multi-billion pound benefits bill, a welfare minister has warned.
Lord Freud said that the current £9 billion cost to the taxpayer of lone parent benefits amounts to just the tip of the iceberg when the full social cost of separation is taken into account.
He also called for marriage to be “put back into its rightful place” after a surge in the number of children being brought up by unmarried parents who he said were four times more likely to separate than those who tie the knot.
The Coalition should make “no apology” for saying that it has a “clear duty” to strengthen the family, he said.
The peer’s comments, in an article for The Telegraph, came as he acknowledged that family breakdown could be costing the country up to £46 billion a year.
Speaking in the Lords, he also said that the Government should actively attempt to reverse what he called a “major structural changes” in society away from marriage and towards cohabitation.

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His remarks came in response to a question from the Bishop of Chester, the Rt Rev Peter Forster, about the cost to the welfare budget from family breakdown.
He said the combined cost of single parent benefits and collecting maintenance payments is currently just short of £9 billion a year but that the welfare figures only told part of the story.
He pointed to a study by the Relationships Foundation think-tank estimating that family breakdown in the UK currently costs the public purse £46 billion a year - or £1,541 for every taxpayer.
The estimate includes spending on children in care and a proportion of the costs of the health, education and criminal justice systems.
A series of studies have linked family breakdown with children failing at school, becoming unemployed, getting involved in crime and suffering mental health problems.
“It would be easy to put a financial cost to society from family breakdown, but the social cost is far higher and its impacts far deeper,” he explained in his Telegraph article.
“On the face of it, we pay around £8.4 billion annually to lone parents in benefits and around £500 million a year running the Child Support Agency that administers more than a million child support cases.
“There are an estimated 2.5 million separated families with 4.1 million children – and one million lone parents claiming Housing Benefit in the current financial year.
“But it is a sad fact that 700,000 children living in lone parent families were in relative poverty.
“That is why this Government is working to fix the problem that previous governments left behind.
“I make no apology for stating that we have a clear duty to try our best to ensure that stable families are in place, so we can ensure stable futures for children.”
Challenged about what the Government is doing to promote traditional marriage, he said the number of couples cohabiting had doubled in less than a generation to 1.2 million.
“Those couples are four times more likely to split when their child is under three than if they are married,” he said.
“However there are major structural societal changes behind those trends and it will take an enormous amount of effort to start putting marriage back into its rightful place and that is exactly one of the things that we are looking to do with the Family Stability Review.”
George Osborne, the Chancellor, has promised a £150 tax break for married couples. The Work and Pensions Secretary Iain Duncan Smith has been targeting the so-called "couple penalty" in the benefits system.
But Bishop Forster said the task the Government faced in cutting welfare spending while family breakdown remanis high was like trying to fix a roof when leaks were springing around the house.

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“We are trying to keep the welfare budget under control but relationship breakdown has caused the welfare budget to spiral out of control,” he said.
“This isn’t just about bishops constantly banging on about moral ideals, it actually hits people’s pockets.”
Christian Guy, Director of the Centre for Social Justice, the think-tank founded by Mr Duncan Smith, said: “The wider cost of family breakdown is immeasurable and drives much of the social problems we see across Britain.
“We know from our research that children growing up in unstable families tend to do worse at school, are more likely to be involved in crime and to live in poverty.
“It is worrying that a 16-year-old is now more likely to have a television in their bedroom than a father at home.
“A mature debate about the importance of family stability and marriage could not be more urgent.”
John Ashcroft, research director at the Relationships Foundation, added: “When relationships go right society as a whole benefits, but when they go wrong we all pay a price.
“Government should be as concerned about a social deficit as a fiscal deficit yet George Osborne is likely to have very little in the Budget to say about such a major area of expenditure or such a valuable national resource."
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/sex/divorce/10674267/Family-breakdown-could-cost-taxpayers-46bn.html

Huge survey reveals seven social classes in UK

3 April 2013 Last updated at 04:00 GMT

John Cleese, Ronnie Barker and Ronnie Corbett in the Class Sketch
Previous definitions of social class are considered to be outdated
People in the UK now fit into seven social classes, a major survey conducted by the BBC suggests.
It says the traditional categories of working, middle and upper class are outdated, fitting 39% of people.
It found a new model of seven social classes ranging from the elite at the top to a "precariat" - the poor, precarious proletariat - at the bottom.
More than 161,000 people took part in the Great British Class Survey, the largest study of class in the UK.
Class has traditionally been defined by occupation, wealth and education. But this research argues that this is too simplistic, suggesting that class has three dimensions - economic, social and cultural.
The BBC Lab UK study measured economic capital - income, savings, house value - and social capital - the number and status of people someone knows.
The study also measured cultural capital, defined as the extent and nature of cultural interests and activities.
The new classes are defined as:

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Elite - the most privileged group in the UK, distinct from the other six classes through its wealth. This group has the highest levels of all three capitals
Established middle class - the second wealthiest, scoring highly on all three capitals. The largest and most gregarious group, scoring second highest for cultural capital
Technical middle class - a small, distinctive new class group which is prosperous but scores low for social and cultural capital. Distinguished by its social isolation and cultural apathy
New affluent workers - a young class group which is socially and culturally active, with middling levels of economic capital
Traditional working class - scores low on all forms of capital, but is not completely deprived. Its members have reasonably high house values, explained by this group having the oldest average age at 66
Emergent service workers - a new, young, urban group which is relatively poor but has high social and cultural capital
Precariat, or precarious proletariat - the poorest, most deprived class, scoring low for social and cultural capital
The researchers said while the elite group had been identified before, this is the first time it had been placed within a wider analysis of the class structure, as it was normally put together with professionals and managers.
At the opposite extreme they said the precariat, the poorest and most deprived grouping, made up 15% of the population.
The sociologists said these two groups at the extremes of the class system had been missed in conventional approaches to class analysis, which have focused on the middle and working classes.
Methodology
Professor of sociology at Manchester University, Fiona Devine, said the survey really gave a sense of class in 21st Century Britain.
"What it allows us is to understand is a more sophisticated, nuanced picture of what class is like now.
"It shows us there is still a top and a bottom, at the top we still have an elite of very wealthy people and at the bottom the poor, with very little social and cultural engagement," she said.
"It's what's in the middle which is really interesting and exciting, there's a much more fuzzy area between the traditional working class and traditional middle class.
"There's the emergent workers and the new affluent workers who are different groups of people who won't necessarily see themselves as working or middle class.
"The survey has really allowed us to drill down and get a much more complete picture of class in modern Britain."
The researchers also found the established middle class made up 25% of the population and was the largest of all the class groups, with the traditional working class now only making up 14% of the population.
They say the new affluent workers and emergent service workers appear to be the children of the "traditional working class," which they say has been fragmented by

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de-industrialisation, mass unemployment, immigration and the restructuring of urban space.
BBC Lab UK worked with Prof Mike Savage of the London School of Economics and Prof Devine on the study.
The findings have been published in the Sociology Journal and presented at a conference of the British Sociological Association on Wednesday.
Researchers asked a series of questions about income, house value, savings, cultural and leisure activities and the occupations of friends.
They were able to determine a person's economic, social and cultural capital scores from the answers and analysed the scores to create its class system.
The GBCS was launched online in January 2011, but data showed participants were predominantly drawn from the well-educated social groups.
To overcome this a second identical survey was run with a survey company GFK, with a sample of people representing the population of the UK as a whole, using the information in parallel.
http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-22007058

Illegal immigrants and foreign offenders 'left in detention for years'

Ian Travis, home affairs editor

theguardian.com, Thursday 27 March 2014 13.12 GMT

Illegal immigrants and foreign offenders facing deportation are languishing in detention for months and even years because no new travel documents have been obtained for them, an official watchdog has found.
John Vine, the independent chief inspector of borders and immigration, says a sample group of 27 foreign offenders whose cases were examined in detail by inspectors had each been locked up for an average of 563 days – more than 18 months – beyond the end of their sentences.
In one case, Vine found that a detainee had been held for 1,288 days – more than three and a half years – because there was no passport to send him home with. The chief inspector said that detention had so far cost the taxpayer £211,032, at the rate of £164 a night.
He called for an urgent review of all the long-term immigration detainees for whom a lack of travel documents was the primary barrier to their removal. He said the Home Office could not even tell him the overall scale of the problem and only had detailed figures for foreign national offenders, not all illegal migrants facing removal.
The report is one of two highly critical immigration inspection papers whose publication has been delayed by at least two months by the home secretary, Theresa May, who determines their publication date.
The second Vine report reveals that immigration enforcement officers have been involved in the widespread abuse of their powers to carry out raids on restaurants

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and other business premises and make arrests without a warrant. The chief inspector said that in two-thirds of the case files he examined, the use of the power had been abused, and in six cases the raids had been carried out unlawfully.
The first inspection into getting travel documents for those facing deportation was undertaken between May and September last year and the report was submitted to the home secretary on 17 December.
Vine said it appeared the Home Office was keeping foreign offenders and illegal immigrants facing deportation locked up in the hope that they would eventually comply with attempts to get them new travel documents and co-operate with their removal.
"I was concerned to find that the Home Office was keeping foreign criminals, who had completed their prison sentences, in immigration detention for months or even years in the hope that they would eventually comply with the re-documentation process. Given the legal requirement only to detain individuals where there is a realistic prospect of removal, this is potentially a breach of their human rights. It is also very costly for the taxpayer," he said.

In late 2012, the inspectors made a detailed study of a sample of cases of those facing deportation who refused to comply by giving evidence of their identity or nationality. They found that nine individuals had been removed by 15 June 2013 and a further 16 released on bail. But 27 individuals who remained in detention had been held for an average of 563 days. The shortest period was 176 days and the longest 1,288. In cases where no travel documents had been obtained because the country to which they were being sent back refused to co-operate, the average period of detention was 755 days – more than two years.
The inspectors found that in 13 of the 27 cases of prolonged detention, no application for the individual's travel documents had actually been lodged with his or her embassy; in a further six cases, previous applications that had been rejected had not been renewed. In only seven of the 27 cases was an application for new travel papers under consideration by the relevant embassy.
Vine said the Home Office had been successful in securing emergency travel documents for a second, much larger group of foreign nationals with no right to be in Britain, but had made little effort to remove them.
The chief inspector said the Home Office had a stock of several thousand emergency travel documents that had already been agreed by foreign embassies, some dating back more than 10 years. But many of those cases were not being worked on and 15% of the people had actually been given permission to stay in Britain and should not have remained in this pool.
"The Home Office has no clear picture of the scale of non-compliance by individuals and had no effective strategy for tackling this," Vine said.
The second report revealed serious failings in the use of immigration powers to carry out raids on business premises where swift action was required, usually because of an immediate threat of absconding by immigration offenders.

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The inspectors found there had been a big increase in the number of times the "warrantless" powers were used in the last two years, rising from 843 in 2012-13 to 1,049 in the first six months of 2013-14. Over the same period, the number of raids carried out with search warrants fell from 5,850 to 3,046.
There were also wide variations in the use of the powers: the south London immigration enforcement team used them in more than two-thirds of its illegal working operations, while east London used them only in 3% of such operations.
"There was widespread non-compliance with the Home Office's own guidance in relation to the use of this power and a lack of management oversight," reported Vine. "In almost two-thirds of cases [of the sample 60 examined], I disagreed with the decision made by the assistant director to authorise the use of this power. In particular I was very concerned to find six cases where the power appeared to have been used unlawfully." He said that in these cases either the authorising officer was not senior enough or the power was not used within the timescale set out by law. He said the average time taken to prepare the raids was 13 days, which was ample to apply for a search warrant.
The chief inspector said it was apparent during the inspection last autumn that a significant number of staff and managers were either ignorant of the Home Office guidance or were choosing to ignore it. He found that once his inspection got under way, senior managers responded by introducing a range of measures to improve performance and compliance.
A Home Office spokesman said: "We are building an immigration system that is fair to British citizens and legitimate migrants and tough on those who abuse the system or flout the law. Those with no right to live in the UK should leave at the earliest opportunity and we make no apologies for enforcing our immigration policy."
He said the letters authorising raids on business premises without a warrant and emergency travel documents played a vital role in tackling and removing immigration offenders: "Work was already under way to improve their use before the inspections were conducted and we will continue to make improvements in the way we work."
He added: "The immigration bill will make it easier than ever to remove people with no right to be here. It will cut the number of appeal rights from 17 to four, allow us to remove people while their appeals are ongoing and restrict how often individuals can apply for immigration bail without a change in circumstance."

http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/mar/27/immigration-illegal-home-office-failures-abuses-inspector-watchdog

Immigration crackdown made us 'nasty Britain', says Osborne's father-in-law

Lord Howell, a former energy minister and George Osborne's father-in-law, says gifted immigrants regard the country as 'nasty Britain'

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Matthew Holehouse By Matthew Holehouse, Political Correspondent 12:37PM GMT 28 Mar 2014

A senior Conservative peer has launched a stinging attack on the Government's immigration policy, saying visa restrictions were creating a "nasty Britain feeling" among foreign students and businesses.

Lord Howell, a former energy minister and George Oborne's father-in-law, said businesses are being put off from coming to the UK because of a "tangle of regulation" while students are close to "despair" at the restrictions imposed on them." The policies are creating a "blot" on Britain's reputation, he said.

"This country has got to be open for business, our leaders say that all the time," he told the BBC.

"Being open for business means we've got to welcome the right people, including a lot of students and brilliant skilled people who add to our power in the world and we've got to keep out those obviously who would do bad things to Britain and damage us."

A House of Lords report has found gifted immigrants are being scared away from Britain because of heavy-handed immigration and visa policies are harming the country's standing on the world stage.

The peers called for students to be removed from net migration targets and for a change in tone from the Government in the way it communicates about immigration.

The committee also recommended the creation of a new strategic unit at the heart of Government to deal swiftly with potentially damaging policies or messages coming out of Whitehall departments.

Lord Howell, who chaired the committee, said: "This requires very careful handling. We are not getting it right. All our witnesses who came before us - and we had 24 hearings and a vast amount of written evidence - said the visa policy and some of the handling of immigration policy was creating rather a blot, creating a nasty Britain feeling.

"In fact we've got all these fantastic assets which, if we handle them right and tell the story right, can promote a very positive image for Britain, increase our trade, enable us to export more, invest more."

The peers called for an increase in the use of soft power - described in its report as "getting what one wants by influencing other countries to want the same thing through the forces of attraction, persuasion and co-option" - to bolster Britain's global influence.

"The UK necessarily has visa and immigration regimes to regulate the ability of foreign nationals to come to the UK to live, to work, to learn, or as tourists," the report said.

"However the Government should be wary of introducing policies that, however inadvertently, undermine the attractiveness of the UK as a place to do business with' visit; and study, carry out research and learn English in."

It added: "We now urge the Government to improve visa application processes - including access to visa processing facilities - for other key growth areas such as

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India and other Commonwealth nations, and to keep a close eye on competitors' visa policies."

"We feel that there is a real risk that anti-immigration rhetoric will lead immigrant communities in the UK to feel less welcome and less a part of the UK, with injurious consequences for the unity of the nation. This can only undermine the message of friendliness and diversity that the UK hopes to project."

Lord Howell previously provoked suprise after suggesting fracking for shale gas should take place in the North East of England because it has "large, uninhabitated and desolate areas".

The Telegraph

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/10729284/Immigration-crackdown-made-us-nasty-Britain-says-Osbornes-father-in-law.html

Immigration figures to drop 20,000 as Home Office 'massages' numbers

The Home office is pushing through changes to the short-term visa regime that will reduce immigration figures by nearly 20,000 a year without actually lowering the number of foreign workers in the UK.

Immigrants have cost the taxpayer more than £22 million a day since the mid-1990s, totting up a bill of more than £140 billion, according to a new report

By Peter Dominiczak, Assistant Political Editor8:58AM GMT 27 Mar 2014

Theresa May, the Home Secretary, is pushing through a change to the visa system that will allow the Government to claim that there are nearly 20,000 fewer immigrants in the UK.

In a move that risks being described as an attempt to massage immigration statistics, Home Office officials are considering plans to shorten visas by as little as one day to avoid having to describe them as migrants.

Currently, foreign workers brought to Britain by companies to plug skills gaps on short-term visas lasting 12 months count towards the annual net immigration total.

The Home Office will now reduce the maximum stay for Intra-Company Transfer (ICT) short-term visas to under 12 months – meaning they will no longer count towards the annual net migration total, according to The Financial Times.

It comes as the Government continues to face pressure over David Cameron and Mrs May's pledge to reduce net migration to the "tens of thousands" by 2015.

In February, figures showed that net migration had increased by a third to 212,000 in the last year.

The surge was partly driven by a huge increase in the number of Romanian and Bulgarian citizens coming to Britain, which jumped 166 per cent from 9,000 to 24,000 year-on-year.

The Office for National Statistics said estimates for the 12 months to the end of September revealed a net flow of 212,000 migrants to Britain, compared with 154,000 the previous year.

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According to the Home Office, it wants to impose new curbs on the ICT visas over fears that they are being abused by companies.
Neil Carberry, director for employment and skills at the CBI, told The Financial Times: “We are in a pretty dangerous place if we are redesigning the tiers of the immigration system in order to meet a political target.
“This would once again undermine the image of the UK as a place where we welcome highly skilled people.”
In recent weeks Mr Cameron has insisted that the Government will still meet the net migration target ahead of next year’s general election.
Labour accused Mrs May of trying to "fix" the net migration figures.
David Hanson, the shadow immigration minister, said: "This is a desperate attempt to fiddle figures from an increasingly desperate Home Secretary.
"David Cameron promised his Government would cut net migration to the tens of thousands and he has failed. Now Theresa May wants to fix the figures brazenly, trying to take the British public for fools. If the Home Secretary thinks cheating the public is the way forward, it's this Government that's the fool."
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/10726132/Theresa-May-tweaks-visa-system-in-move-that-will-reduce-net-migration.html

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