

Учреждение образования
«Гомельский государственный университет
имени Франциска Скорины»

В. Г. ГУД

ЛИНГВОСТРАНОВЕДЕНИЕ

Практическое руководство

для обучающихся по программе общего высшего образования
дневной формы обучения
специальности 6-05-0231-01 «Современные иностранные языки
(английский, немецкий), (английский, французский)»

Гомель
ГГУ им. Ф. Скорины
2026

УДК 811.111'27(076)
ББК 81.432.1-006я73
Г935

Рецензенты:

кандидат филологических наук Е. Л. Батурина,
кандидат филологических наук В. В. Степанова

Рекомендовано к изданию научно-методическим советом
учреждения образования «Гомельский государственный
университет имени Франциска Скорины»

Гуд, В. Г.

Г935 Лингвострановедение : практическое руководство / В. Г. Гуд ;
Гомельский гос. ун-т им. Ф. Скорины. – Гомель : ГГУ им.
Ф. Скорины, 2026. – 42 с.
ISBN 978-985-32-0211-3

Практическое руководство предназначено для ознакомления обучаю-
щихся с теоретическими основами лингвострановедения. Издание способ-
ствует формированию системы страноведческих понятий и специальных
знаний, необходимых для успешного овладения английским языком.

Адресуется обучающимся факультета иностранных языков специаль-
ности 6-05-0231-01 «Современные иностранные языки (английский, немец-
кий), (английский, французский)».

УДК 811.111'27(076)
ББК 81.432.1-006я73

ISBN 978-985-32-0211-3

© Гуд В. Г., 2026
© Учреждение образования
«Гомельский государственный университет
имени Франциска Скорины», 2026

ОГЛАВЛЕНИЕ

Предисловие	4
1. The Stages in the Formation of the British Nation	5
2. The Social Framework of British Population	13
3. British Politics	19
4. British School Education	25
5. British National Economy	29
6. Religion in the UK	35
7. The NHS and the Social Security System in Britain	39
Literature	42

ПРЕДИСЛОВИЕ

Практические цели издания предполагают усвоение теоретических основ лингвострановедения, ознакомление студентов с системой страноведческих понятий и специальных знаний, необходимых для успешного овладения английским языком. Без углубления в теоретические аспекты лингвострановедения невозможна подготовка квалифицированных кадров в области лингвистики и филологии. Знание теоретических основ лингвострановедения позволяет сформировать прочные навыки практического использования того или иного иностранного языка.

Структурно издание состоит из семи тематических разделов, в которых представлены страноведческие сведения о Соединенном Королевстве Великобритании. Освещается история, состав населения, характеризуется политическое устройство, описывается система школьного образования, анализируется современное экономическое развитие, рассказывается о религиозных конфессиях, системах здравоохранения и социального обеспечения.

Характер и объём теоретического материала, изложенного в руководстве, определен практической необходимостью и целесообразностью. Теоретические сведения предлагаются в объёме, необходимом для овладения лингвистическими понятиями и в соответствии с программой курса. Каждая тема снабжена вопросами, направленными на контроль понимания изучаемого материала и развитие навыков устной речи, и перечнем необходимой литературы.

Издание может быть использовано студентами факультета иностранных языков как на семинарских занятиях, так и во время самостоятельной работы для совершенствования знаний английского языка и выполнения научно-исследовательской работы.

1. THE STAGES IN THE FORMATION OF THE BRITISH NATION

1.1. Britain in Prehistoric Times: the Iberian Men, the Beaker People and the Celts

The most ancient population of the British Isles are the Iberians, the Beaker Folk and the Celts.

The first evidence of human life on the British Isles is a few stone tools dating from 250,000 BC. These objects show there were two different kinds of inhabitant. The earlier group made tools from flakes of flint. The later group made tools from a central core of flint. Hand axes made in this way have been found widely in Britain.

From 50,000 BC a new type of human beings arrived who was the ancestor of the modern British. They looked similar to the modern British, but were smaller and had a life span of only 30 years.

Around 10,000 BC Britain was peopled by small groups of hunters, gatherers and fishers. They had no settled homes and followed herds of deer.

By 5,000 BC Britain had finally become an island and heavily forested. For the wanderer-hunter culture this was a disaster as the cold-loving deer on which they lived died out.

About 3,000 BC Neolithic or New Stone Age people crossed the narrow sea from Europe and settled in Britain. These people kept animals, grew corn crops, made pottery. They probably came from either the Iberian (Spanish) peninsular or even the North African coast.

Around 2,400 BC new groups of people arrived in Britain from Europe. They became the leaders of British society because of their military and metal-working skills. Their arrival is marked by the first individual graves furnished with pottery beakers, from which these people get their name: the “Beaker” people.

Around 700 BC another group of fair and red haired and blue eyed people began to arrive. These were the Celts who probably came from central Europe or even southern Russia. They were technically advanced and continued to arrive in one wave after another over the next seven hundred years. The earliest wave of Celtic migration is associated with the Gaels, who settled in what is now Ireland and parts

of Scotland. Following the Gaels, the Brythons began to migrate into Britain. By 100 BC the Belgae, another powerful and prominent Celtic tribe, had moved to Britain in large numbers.

1.2. Roman Conquest and Occupation of Britain, Traces of Roman Rule (43–410)

The name “Britain” comes from the word “Pretani”, the Greco-Roman word for the inhabitants of Britain. The Romans mispronounced the word and called the island “Britannia”.

The Romans had invaded the British Isles because the Celts of Britain were working with the Celts of Gaul against them. The British Celts were giving them food and allowing them to hide in Britain. Under the Celts Britain had become an important food producer. The Romans could make use of British food for their own army fighting the Gauls.

Julius Caesar first came to Britain in 55 BC, but it was not until almost a century later, in AD 43, that a Roman army actually occupied Britain. The Romans were determined to conquer the whole island. But unfortunately the Roman province of Britannia covered most of present-day England and Wales only. The Romans never went to Ireland and exerted an influence, without actually governing there, over only the southern part of Scotland. In general The Romans could not conquer “Caledonia”, as they called Scotland, although they spent over a century trying to do so. At last they built a strong wall along the northern border, named after the Emperor Hadrian who planned it.

It was during this time that a Celtic tribe called the Scots migrated from Ireland to Scotland, where they became allies of the Picts and opponents of the Romans. This division of the Celts into those who experienced Roman rule (the Britons in England and Wales) and those who did not (the Gaels in Scotland and Ireland) may help to explain the development of two distinct branches of the Celtic group of languages.

Roman control of Britain came to an end as the empire began to collapse. The first signs were the attacks by Celts of Caledonia in AD 367. In AD 409 Rome pulled its last soldiers out of Britain and the Romanized Celts were left alone to fight against the Scots, the Irish and Saxon raiders from Germany. The following year Rome itself fell to raiders.

The Romans brought the skills of reading and writing to Britain. Latin was important for spreading ideas and also for establishing power.

The Celtic peasantry remained illiterate and only Celtic-speaking, town-dwellers spoke Latin and Greek, rich landowners used Latin. But Latin completely disappeared when the Anglo-Saxon invaded Britain in the fifth century AD.

The most obvious characteristic of Roman Britain was its *towns*, which were the basis of Roman administration and civilization. There were three different kinds of town in Roman Britain, two of which were established by Roman charter. The first kind were the *coloniae*, towns peopled by Roman settlers; the second – *municipia*, large cities in which the whole population was given Roman citizenship. The third kind, *the civitas*, included the old Celtic tribal capitals through which the Romans administered Celtic population. The Romans left about twenty large towns of about 5000 inhabitants and almost one hundred smaller ones. Many of these towns were at first army camps, and the Latin word for camp, *castra*, has remained part of many town names to this day: Winchester, Lancaster, Leicester and others. The towns were connected by roads which were so well built that they survived when later roads broke up. These roads continued to be used long after the Romans left, and became the main roads of modern Britain. Roman roads met in London, a capital city of about 20 000 people.

Outside the towns, the biggest change during the Roman occupation was the growth of large farms, called *villas*. Each villa had many workers. There was a growing difference between the rich and those who did the actual work on the land.

In general life in Roman Britain seemed civilized.

But the remarkable thing about the Romans is that despite their long occupation of Britain, they left very little behind. Most of their villas, baths, temples, their impressive network of roads and the cities they founded including Londinium were soon destroyed or fell into despair. Almost the only lasting reminder of their presence are place-names, which include variants of the Roman word “*castra*”.

1.3. The Anglo-Saxon Conquest and the Danish Invasions of Britain (410–1066)

The wealth of Britain by the fourth century, the result of its mild climate and centuries of peace, was a temptation to the greedy. At first

the Germanic tribes only raided Britain, but after AD 43, during the fifth century a number of tribes from the north-western Europe invaded and settled in large numbers. The newcomers were warlike and illiterate. Two of these tribes were the Angles and the Saxons. These Anglo-Saxons soon had the south-east of the country. In the west their advance was temporally stopped by an army of Britons. Nevertheless, by the end of the 6th century, they and their way of life predominated in nearly all of England and in parts of southern Scotland. The Celtic Britons were either Saxonized or driven westwards, where their culture and language survived in Wales, Cornwall, south-west Scotland. The Anglo-Saxon migrations gave the larger part of Britain its new name, England, “the land of the Angles”.

The Anglo-Saxons were pagan when they came to Britain. Christianity spread throughout Britain from two different directions during the 6 and 7th centuries . Firstly it came directly from Rome when St Augustine arrived in 597 and established headquarters at Canterbury. Secondly it had already been introduced into Scotland and northern England from Ireland which had become Christian more than 150 years ago. Although Roman Christianity eventually took over the whole of the British Isles, the Celtic model persisted in Scotland and Ireland for several hundred years.

The strength of Anglo-Saxon culture is obvious even today. Days of the week were named after Germanic gods: Tig (Tuesday), Wodin (Wednesday). New place-names appeared on the map. The earliest Saxon villages were family villages. The ending *-ing* meant family (Reading – family of Rada), *ham* meant farm (Birmingham), *ton* meant settlement (Kingston). The Anglo-Saxons established a number of kingdoms, some of which still exist in county or regional names till this day: Essex (East Saxons), Sussex, Wessex, Middlessex. By the middle of the 7th century the three largest kingdoms, those of Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex were the most powerful.

The Saxons created institutions which made the English state strong for the next 500 years. One of these institutions was the King’s Council, called *the Witan*, a group of senior warriors and churchmen to whom kings turned for advice and support.

The Saxons divided the land into new administrative areas, based on *shires* or counties. These shires remained almost the same for a thousand years. “Shire” is the Saxon word, “county” is the Norman one, but both are still used. Over each shire was appointed a shire *reeve*, the king’s local administrator. In time it became shortened to “sheriff”.

Anglo-Saxon technology changed the shape of English agriculture. The fields were divided into the parts. One part would be used for planting spring crops, and another for autumn crops. The third area would be left to rest for a year. This Anglo-Saxon pattern of farming was the basis of English agriculture for a thousand years, until the 18th century.

The Saxons settled previously unfarmed areas. They cut down many forested areas and began to drain the wet land. In each district was a “manor” or large house. This was a simple building where the villagers came to pay taxes and where men met together to join the Anglo-Saxon army the *fyrð*. The lord of the manor had to organize all this. It was the beginning of the manorial system which reached its fullest development under the Normans.

Towards the end of the 8th century new raiders were tempted by Britain’s wealth. These were the Vikings, (a word which probably means either “pirates” or “the people of the sea”), Norsemen and Danes and they came from Norway and Denmark. Like the Anglo-Saxons, they only raided at first. They burnt churches and monasteries. London was itself raided in 842.

In 865 the Vikings invaded and settled the extreme north and west of Scotland and also some coastal regions of Ireland but their conquest was stopped when King Alfred of the Saxon Kingdom of Wessex defeated them in 878. This resulted in a treaty with the Vikings, which divided England into two parts. Viking rule was recognized in the east and north of England. It was called the Danelaw, the land where the law of the Danes ruled. In the rest of the country Alfred was recognized as king. However the cultural differences between Anglo-Saxons and Danes were comparatively small. They led roughly the same way of life and spoke two varieties of the same Germanic tongue. Soon the Danes converted to Christianity. These similarities made political unification easier, and by the 10th century England was one kingdom with a Germanic culture throughout.

Soon after 950AD the Danish Vikings started raiding westwards. The Saxon king decided to pay the Vikings to stay away. To find the money he set a tax on all people, called *Danegeld* or *Danish money*. It was the beginning of a regular tax system. Since that time one king had been succeeding another until 1066 when a new period in the history of the British Isles began.

1.4. The Norman Conquest and its Consequences (1066–1485)

A new Norman period in Britain's history began with the defeat of the Saxon army under the command of king Harold in the battle near Hastings and the coronation of Duke William of Normandy as the king of England in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day, 1066. In popular history the Duke is known as William the Conqueror. October, the 14, 1066 is remembered in English history for being the last time that England was successfully invaded. But although William was crowned king, his conquest had just begun and the fighting lasted for another five years. There was an Anglo-Saxon rebellion against the Normans every year until 1070. The small Norman army marched from village to village, destroying places it could not control. It was a true army of occupation for at least twenty years. By 1086, twenty years after the arrival of the Normans, only two of the greater landlords and only two bishops were Saxon. William gave the Saxon lands to his Norman nobles. Over 4000 Saxon landlords were replaced by 200 Norman ones.

Unlike the Germanic invasions, the Norman invasion was small-scale. There was no such thing as a Norman village or a Norman area of settlement. Instead the Norman soldiers who had been part of the invading army were given the ownership of land – and of people living on it. So the Norman nobles were given half of these lands, a quarter – to the Church and a fifth part William took himself. He kept the Saxon system of sheriffs and used these as a balance to local nobles. William and the kings after him, thought of England as their personal property. William organized his English kingdom according to the feudal system which had already begun to develop in England before his arrival. The word “feudalism” comes from the French word *fue*, which the Normans used to refer to land held in return for duty or service to a lord. The basis of feudal society was the holding of land and its main purpose was economic. The central idea was that all land was owned by the king but it was held by others, called “vassals”, in return for services and goods. The king gave large estates to his main nobles in return for a promise to serve him in war for up to forty days. A strict feudal system was being imposed. In this system great nobles or barons were responsible directly to the king; lesser nobles, knights and other freemen, each owning a village, were directly responsible to a baron. Under them were the

peasants, tied by a strict system of mutual duties and obligations to the local lord and forbidden to travel without permission. The peasants were the English-speaking Saxons. The lords and the barons were the French-speaking Normans. This was the beginning of the English class system.

So William the Conqueror gave out the land all over England to his nobles. By 1086 he wanted to know exactly who owned which piece of land and how much it was worth. He therefore sent a team of people all through England to make a complete economic survey (a very detailed village-by-village record of the people and their possessions). This survey was the only one of this kind in Europe. But it was not popular with people. It so reminded them of the paintings of the Day of Judgment, or “doom” on the walls of their churches that they called it the “Domesday Book”. The name struck. The Domesday Book still exists and gives extraordinary information about England of that time.

The strong system of government which the Normans introduced meant that the Anglo- Norman kingdom was the most powerful in the British Isles. Soon the authority of the English monarch gradually extended to other parts of these islands in the next 250 years. By the end of the 13th century, a large part of eastern Ireland was controlled by Anglo-Normans lords in the name of the English king and the whole of Wales was under his direct rule. Scotland managed to remain politically independent in the medieval period, but it was obliged to fight occasional wars to do so.

The cultural story of this period is different. 250 years after the Norman Conquest, it was a Germanic language (Middle English) and not the Norman (French) language which had become the dominant one in all classes of society in England.

Despite English rule northern and central Wales was never settled in great numbers by Saxon or Norman. As a result the (Celtic) Welsh language and culture remained strong.

The Anglo-Norman lords of eastern Ireland remained loyal to the English king, but despite laws to the contrary mostly adopted the Gaelic language and customs.

The political independence of Scotland did not prevent a gradual switch to the English language and customs in the lowland (southern) part of the country. By the end of this period a cultural split had developed between the lowlands, where the way of life and language was similar to that in England, and the highlands where (Celtic) Gaelic culture and language prevailed.

It was in this period that Parliament began its gradual evolution into the democratic body. The word “parliament” which comes from the French word *parler* (to speak) was first used in England in the 13th century to describe an assembly of nobles called together by the king. In 1295 the model Parliament set the pattern for the future by including elected representatives from urban and rural areas.

Questions

1. What do we know about the Iberians, the Beaker people and the Celts? What traces have their cultures left on the British Isles?
2. What traces are there of Roman rule in Britain? What part of Britain was Latinized during the Roman occupation? Why did the Romans leave Britain?
3. Why is the Germanic Conquest one of the governing events in the English history? What happened to the Celts as a result of the Anglo-Saxon conquest? What forms of governance and institutions were created by the Anglo-Saxons? What is the Danelaw? How did the Danes influence the development of the country in the 10th–11th centuries?
4. How did the Norman invasion start? What made it possible for William to strengthen his royal power so greatly? What is the Domesday Book? What is the cultural story during the Norman invasion?

2. THE SOCIAL FRAMEWORK OF BRITISH POPULATION

2.1. Language Variations and Ethnic Identity

English is the main language spoken in Britain, although with many regional variations in terms of accent and phraseology. It is also one of the most widely used in the world; over 400 million people speak it as their first language with a similar number speaking it as a second language. Modern English derives primarily from one of the dialects of Anglo-Saxon but has been very greatly influenced by other languages over time.

For people living in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the way that ethnic identity commonly expresses itself varies. People in Scotland have constant reminders of their distinctiveness. First, several important aspects of public life are organized separately, and differently, from the rest of Britain – education, law and religion.

Second, the Scottish way of speaking English is very distinctive. Gaelic, a language of Celtic origin, is still spoken by some 70,000 people in Scotland; the greatest concentration of Gaelic speakers is in the islands of the Hebrides. People in the central lowlands of Scotland have for centuries spoken Scots, a dialect derived from the Northumbrian branch of Old English. Many words and phrases from the Scots tongue are retained in the everyday English which is spoken throughout Scotland. Gaelic is spoken in everyday life by most of the working classes in the lowlands. It has many features which are different from other forms of English and cannot usually be understood by people who are not Scottish.

Third, there are many symbols of Scottishness which are well-known throughout Britain. However, the feeling of being Scottish is not that simple. This is partly because of the historical cultural split between highland and lowland Scotland. A genuinely Scottish Gaelic sense of cultural identity is felt only by a few tens of thousands of people in some of the western isles of Scotland and the adjoining mainland. These people speak Scottish Gaelic (which they call ‘Gàidhlig’) as a first language.

About one-fifth of the population of Wales speak the Welsh language, which is of Celtic origin too. They are concentrated in the rural north and west, where Welsh remains the first language of most of

the population. Bilingual education in local schools is encouraged and there has been an extended use of Welsh for official purposes and in broadcasting. In the context of dealing with public authorities and the administration of justice in Wales Welsh and English are treated on an equal basis. The people of Wales do not have as many reminders of their Welshness in everyday life. The organization of public life is identical to that in England. Nor are there as many well-known symbols of Welshness. In addition, a large minority of the people in Wales probably do not consider themselves to be especially Welsh at all. In the nineteenth century large numbers of Scottish, Irish and English people went to find work there, and today many English people still make their homes in Wales or have holiday houses there. As a result, a feeling of loyalty to Wales is regional rather than nationalistic. However, there is one single highly-important symbol of Welsh identity – the Welsh language. Everybody in Wales can speak English, but it is not everybody's first language. For about 20 % of the population (that's more than half a million people), the mother-tongue is Welsh. For these people Welsh identity obviously means more than just living in the region known as Wales. Moreover, in comparison to the other small minority languages of Europe, the Welsh language shows signs of continued vitality. Thanks to successive campaigns, the language receives a lot of public support.

To speak about ethnic identity in Northern Ireland is quite difficult as there are two communities living on both sides of the divide. On one side of the divider are people whose ancestors came from lowland Scotland or England. They are Protestants and want Northern Ireland to remain in the UK. On the other side of the divide are people whose ancestors were native Irish. They are Catholics and would like Northern Ireland to become part of the Irish Republic. Although the two communities live side-by-side, their lives are almost entirely segregated.

As for English identity, most people who describe themselves as English make no distinction between "English" and "British".

2.2. Demographic Trends

Britain has a population of more than 69 million people, the 21st or 22nd largest in the world. The great majority, 58,3 million, live in England; Scotland has just over 5,5 million people, Wales – 3,3 million and Northern Ireland – around 1,9 million.

The population density of the United Kingdom is approximately 285 people per square kilometer, with England being the most densely populated – 434 people per sq km, and Scotland the least, with 70 people per sq km. However, this is misleading because population distribution is uneven. The great majority of people are concentrated in towns and cities, although there has been a trend, especially in the capital London, for people to move away from urban centers into the suburbs. There has also been a geographical redistribution of the population from Scotland and the northern regions of England to the South East, East Anglia, the South West and the East Midlands in recent decades.

The birth rate is relatively low: at approximately 10.0 live births per 1,000 population. It reflects a long-term-decline with the rate being nearly double that in 1960. This is due to a trend towards later marriage and towards postponing births. The average age of women having children has risen to over 28 years in England and Wales. There is also a greater preference for smaller families than in the past.

Life expectancy for men in Britain is about 78,6 years and for women 82,8 years (compared with 49 years for men and 52 years for women at the start of the century).

Britain has one of the highest marriage and divorce rates in comparison with the European countries. There are about 247,000 marriages each year in Britain. The average age for first marriages in England and Wales is now 29 for men and 27 for women. In England and Wales there are about 9 divorces for every 1,000 married couples. Divorce rates are lower in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In common with many other Western European countries, there has been an increase in cohabitation (unmarried couples living together) in Britain. About 14 per cent of non-married men and women aged 16 and over in Great Britain are cohabiting.

One of the most significant changes in the age structure of British population over the last 30 years has been the increasing proportion of people over retirement age (65 for men and 60 for women) – some 12,7 million today, representing about 19 % of the population, and their number continues to grow. Most elderly in Britain live healthy and independent lives. Nearly all want to be a part of the community, living in their own homes. Services for elderly people are designed to help them live at home whenever possible. In fact, only about 5 per cent of people aged over 65 in Britain live in institutional accommodation.

These services may include advice and help from visiting social workers, assistance with domestic chores and the provision of meals in the home.

The economic and domestic lives of women have been transformed in the twentieth century. These changes are due partly, to the removal of much of sex discrimination in political and legal rights. Women make up more than two-fifths of the workforce. But there is still a significant difference between men's and women earnings. Women's wages remain relatively low because they tend to work in the lower-paid sector of the economy and work fewer hours than men because of their domestic commitments.

The Sex Discriminations Acts 1975 and 1986 make discrimination, in certain circumstances, between men and women unlawful in employment, education, training and the provision of housing goods, facilities and services.

2.3. Immigration Trends

For centuries people from overseas have settled in Britain, to escape political or religious persecution or in search of better economic opportunities.

The Irish have long formed a large section of the population.

Jewish refugees who came to Britain towards the end of the 19 century and in the 1930s were followed by other European refugees after 1945.

Former British Empire citizens from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana have been settling since 1949 when the British Empire collapsed due to rising nationalism and US's increasing global power. While the empire no longer exists, many former colonies are now part of the Commonwealth of Nations, a voluntary association that includes the United Kingdom and other independent states.

Substantial immigration from the Caribbean and the South Asia subcontinent dates principally from the 1950s and 1960s. There are also groups from the United States and Canada, as well as Australians, Chinese, Greek and Turkish Cypriots, Italians and Spaniards.

More recently people from Latin America, Indo-China and Sri Lanka have sought refuge in Britain.

In 1989-91, according to the results of a sample survey, average ethnic minority population of Great Britain numbered about 2.7 million of whom 46 per cent were born in Britain. Just over half of the ethnic minority population was of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin; less than one-fifth was of Afro-Caribbean ethnic origin; and over one in ten was of mixed ethnic origin.

Asian communities are concentrated in the inner cities, where there are problems of deprivation and social stress, progress has been made over the last 20 years in tackling racial disadvantage in Britain. Many individuals have achieved distinction in their careers and in public life and the proportion of ethnic minority members occupying professional and managerial positions is increasing. There has also been an expansion enterprise, and numerous self-help projects in ethnic minority communities have been established. Black competitors have represented Britain in a range of sporting activities, and ethnic minority talents in the arts and in entertainment have increasingly been recognized.

Equal opportunities policies are backed up by legislation against racial discrimination. The Race Relations Act 1976, which strengthens previous legislation passed in the 1960s, makes discrimination unlawful on groups of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin in the provision of goods, facilities and services, in employment, in housing and in advertising.

Modern UK immigration is characterized by a decline in immigration from the European Union countries, a surge in non-EU immigration since 2021 and a recent sharp decrease in overall net migration from 2023–2024. In 2021, a new immigration policy was set up. Freedom of movement with the European Union member states ended. Post-Brexit net migration has been driven only by non-EU immigration. The reasons for non-EU immigration are work and study, though family visas have also increased, particularly for refugee family reunion. Recent changes include new rules for skilled worker visas and a reduction in the length of the Graduate visa. While migration from the European Union has decreased since Brexit, non EU-migration accelerated now and it is a major factor in the high migration figures. India is currently the most common non-EU nationality for work and study immigration.

Questions

1. What languages are spoken in Britain?
2. What languages are of Celtic origin?
3. What are the current statistics for British birth rates?
4. What is the demographic situation in Britain today?
5. What is modern British population?
6. Are women still disadvantaged in Britain?
7. What are latest immigration trends?
8. What countries are currently the greatest migration societies?
9. Is it easy today to obtain any kind of visa to the UK?

3. BRITISH POLITICS

3.1. The History of British Politics

British politics formally started with the Acts of Union in May, 1707, which merged the separate parliaments of England and Scotland to create the Parliament of Great Britain. While the unified state began here, the foundations of the political system, including the parliamentary tradition and the role of the Monarch, evolved over centuries, notably starting from the Magna Carta in 1215 and the Glorious Revolution of 1688. In 1801 the Act of Union with Ireland merges the British and Irish Parliaments. The 19th and 20th centuries saw the transition into a full democracy through the expansion of voting rights (Reform Acts) and the deduction of the House of Lords' power.

In general the history of British politics over the past 800 years has been largely one of breaking down the monarch's former power. This struggle has produced bitter conflicts on governmental, social and religious levels. The original structures were monarchical, aristocratic and non-democratic. These have been gradually adapted to the requirements of parliamentary democracy, changing social conditions. However, the roles of the political institutions are still debated in contemporary Britain. Governments are frequently accused of being too secretive, too centralized, too party-political. It is felt that political power has shifted to the sitting government, and to the Prime Minister within the Cabinet. This view suggests that the real authority in the British governmental and political system now rests with the Prime Minister, as it had once belonged predominantly to the monarch.

Some critics argue that the British political system no longer works satisfactorily. They maintain that its institutions are too centralized, and that the traditional bases are no longer adequate for the organization of a complex, mass society. Questions have consequently been raised about the democratic and representative basis of national programs. It is argued that there must be a fundamental reform of the existing political institutions if they are to reflect a contemporary diversity. However, changes do continue to be made to the present apparatus, and it may be that the old evolutionary principles will be successfully adapted to new demands and conditions.

3.2. The Governmental Model

The governmental model that operates in Britain today is usually described as a constitutional monarchy, or parliamentary system. While the monarch still has a role to play on some executive and legislative levels, it is Parliament which possesses the essential legislative power, and the government of the day which governs. The correct constitutional definition of Parliament is the ‘King-in-Parliament’, and all state and governmental business is therefore carried out in the name of the monarch by the politicians and officials of the system. In constitutional theory, the British people hold the political sovereignty to choose their government, while Parliament, consisting partly of their elected representatives in the Commons, possesses the legal sovereignty to make laws. The monarch is formally head of the executive, the ‘legislature and the judiciary.

The legislature, which consists of both Houses of Parliament and formally the monarch, is for most purposes the supreme law-making body. The executive comprises the sitting government and its Cabinet, together with government ministries or departments headed by ministers or secretaries of state, who all act formally in the name of the monarch. The judiciary is composed mainly of the judges of the higher courts, who determine the common law and interpret Acts of Parliament. The judiciary is supposed to be independent of the legislative and executive branches of government.

The continuity of the English monarchy has been interrupted only by the Cromwell republic of 1649-59 although there have been different lines of descent, such as the Stuarts, the Tudors and the Hanoverians.

3.3. The English Monarchy

Succession to the throne is still hereditary, but only for Protestants in the direct line of descent.

The monarch has a number of roles, and serves formally as head of state, head of the executive, head of the judiciary, head of the legislature, commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and supreme governor of the Church of England. It follows that all ministers and officials of the central government are the monarch’s servants, and judges, military officers, peers and bishops of the Church of England swear allegiance to the Crown.

In spite of these roles, there are difficulties in defining the precise powers of the monarch, who is supposed to reign but not to rule. The monarch is also expected to be politically neutral, and should not be seen to be making political decisions. The monarch acts only on the advice of political ministers. The monarch can not make laws, impose taxes, spend public money.

Contemporary Britain is governed by His Majesty's Government in the name of the King. Nevertheless the monarch still performs some important executive and legislative duties. These include the summoning, opening and dissolving of Parliament; giving Royal Assent to bills which have been passed by both Houses of Parliament; appointing government ministers and other public figures; granting honours; holding audiences with the Prime Ministers; giving pardons to some convicted criminals; and fulfilling international duties as head of state. In practice, most of these functions are performed by the monarch on the advice of the Prime Minister or other ministers.

But central power still possessed by the monarch is the choice and appointment of the Prime Minister. Normally this person would be the leader of the political party which has a majority in the House of Commons.

3.4. The Privy Council

The Privy Council developed from a small group of royal advisers at court into the chief source of executive authority. But its powerful position was weakened in the 18 and 19 centuries. Its work was later devolved to newly created ministries.

Today its main role is to advise the monarch on a range of matters like the resolution of constitutional issues and the approval of Orders in Council, such as the granting of Royal Charters to public bodies. Its members can be appointed to advisory and problem-solving committees and, because of its international membership and continuing constitutional character, it can be influential. Life membership of the council is also given by the monarch, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. There are about 380 Privy Councillors at present. A full council is usually only summoned on the death of a monarch; when there are serious constitutional issues; or occasionally when a Commonwealth Heads of State Conference is held in London. Apart from its practical

duties and its role as a constitutional forum for experienced people, perhaps the most important task of the Privy Council today is performed by its Judicial Committee. This serves as the final court of appeal. It may also be used as an arbiter for a wide range of courts and committees in Britain and overseas.

3.5. Parliament

Parliament is the supreme legislative authority in Britain and, since it is not controlled by a written constitution, it has legal sovereignty in virtually all matters. This means that it can create, abolish or amend laws for all or any part(s) of Britain on any topic. The main functions of Parliament today are to pass laws; to vote on financial bills; examine government policies and administration; and to scrutinize European Community legislation.

Parliament consists of the House of Lords, the House of Commons and formally the monarch. It assembles as a unified body only on ceremonial occasions, such as the State Opening of Parliament by the monarch in the House of Lords. All three parts of Parliament must normally pass a bill before it can become an Act of Parliament and therefore law.

A Parliament has a maximum duration of five years, but it is often dissolved and a general election called before the end of this term. The maximum has sometimes been prolonged by special parliamentary legislation on occasions of national emergency like the two World Wars. The contemporary House of Lords consists of the Lords Temporal and the Lords Spiritual. The Lords Spiritual are the Archbishops of York and Canterbury, together with twenty-four senior bishops of the Church of England. The Lords Temporal consist of (1) hereditary peers and peeresses who have kept their titles; (2) life peers and peeresses, who have usually been created by political parties; and (3) the Lords of Appeal (Law Lords), who become life peers on their judicial appointments. The latter serve the House of Lords as the ultimate court of appeal for most purposes from most parts of Britain. This appeal court does not consist of the whole House of Lords, but only some nine Law Lords who have held senior judicial office, who are under the chairmanship of the Lord Chancellor, and who form a quorum of three to five when they hear appeal cases.

There are some 1,200 members of the House of Lords, but the active daily attendance varies from a handful to a few hundred. Peers receive no salary for their parliamentary work, but are eligible for attendance and travelling expenses should they wish to claim them. The House is presided over by the Lord Chancellor who is a political appointee of the sitting government, who sits on the Woolsack (or stuffed woolen sofa) as Speaker (Chairman) of the House, and who controls the procedure and meetings of the House.

There are frequent demands that the unrepresentative, unelected House of Lords should be abolished and replaced by a second democratically elected chamber. Attempts to reform the House of Lords were made several times in the course of the 20 century. The Parliament Act of 1911 removed from the House of Lords the power of veto a bill. Instead the Lords could delay a bill up to two years. Now it is one year.

The House of Commons consists of Members of Parliament (MPs) who are elected by the adult suffrage of the British people, and who are said to represent the citizen in Parliament. The Commons has 650 MPs, of whom under 10 per cent are women. There are 523 parliamentary seats for England, 38 for Wales, 72 for Scotland and 17 for Northern Ireland.

3.6. Political Parties

Britain is divided for electoral purposes into constituencies or geographical areas of the country usually containing about 60 000 voters each of which returns one elected MP to the House of Commons. Since 1945 there have been seven Labour and eight Conservative governments in Britain. Some have had large majorities in the House of Commons, while others have had small ones. Some, like the Labour governments in the 1970s, have had to rely on the support of smaller parties, such as the Liberals and various nationalist parties, in order to remain in power.

The great majority of the MPs in the House of Commons belong to either the Conservative or the Labour Party, which are the largest political parties. This division emphasizes the continuation of the traditional two-party system in British politics, in which power has alternated between two major parties.

The Labour Party has traditionally gathered its support from the trade unions, the working class and some middle-class backing. Its electoral strongholds have always been in south Wales, Scotland, and the Midland and northern English industrial cities.

The Conservative Party has traditionally regarded itself as a national party, which appeals to people across the class barriers. The party's support comes mainly from business interests and the middle and upper classes, but a sizeable percentage of skilled and unskilled workers, and women have always voted Conservative. The party's strongholds tend to be in southern England, with scattered support elsewhere in the country, although it has suffered serious setbacks in Scotland.

Smaller political parties also have some representation in the House of Commons. Among these have been the Liberals and Social Democrats; the Scottish National Party; Plaid Cymru (the Welsh National Party); the Protestant Northern Irish parties of the Official Unionists, the Democratic Unionists and the Ulster Popular Unionists; the Social Democratic and Labour Party (moderate Roman Catholic Northern Irish party); and Sinn Féin (Republican Northern Irish party). Other small parties such as the Greens and Communist Party, as well as publicity-seeking fringe groups, may also contest a general election. But a party which does not achieve a certain number of votes in the election loses its deposit – the sum paid when a party registers to fight an election.

Questions

1. What are the powers of the Monarch?
2. Why are the Commons more important than the Lords?
3. Does Britain have an adequate parliamentary electoral system?
4. What are the Conservatives and where are their strongholds?
5. What is the role of the Prime Minister in modern Britain?
6. Who elects the Privy Councilors?
7. Why are modern MPs so powerful?
8. Who rules Britain?
9. What governmental model operates currently in Britain?

4. BRITISH SCHOOL EDUCATION

4.1. School History

Basic features of the current British educational system are following:

- 1) full-time education is compulsory up to the middle teenage years;
- 2) the academic year begins at the end of summer or the beginning of autumn;
- 3) compulsory education is free of charge but parents may spend money on educating their children privately;
- 4) there are three recognized stages of education: primary, secondary and tertiary.

The British government attached little importance to education until the end of the 19th century. But when the government began to take an interest in education it did not sweep away old institutions and left alone the small group of schools used in the 19th century to educate the sons of the upper and the upper-middle classes. They were called “*public schools*”.

Stereotypical public schools:

- were for boys (from 13) who attended a private “*prep*” school;
- took fee-paying pupils (some scholarship pupils);
- were boarding schools;
- were divided into “*houses*”;
- made some of the senior boys “prefects” who had authority over other boys;
- placed great emphasis on team sports;
- used physical punishment.

This traditional image no longer fits the facts as a large number of girls “public schools” have appeared, a few have started to admit both sexes, day students and boarders. The system of prefects has been abolished. Nowadays less emphasis is paid to sports, but more to academic achievements. Famous public schools are Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Winchester.

There is little central control or uniformity in the modern British school system. It is managed by three separate government departments (*the Department for Education and Employment* which is responsible for England and Wales alone, Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own departments). None of these central authorities exercise much control of what happens in the educational institutions. They do not prescribe a detailed program of learning or books, the length of a school day or

the dates of holidays. They do not manage an institution's finances. All the power is in the hands of an individual institution or the Local Education Authority.

Major developments of the British educational system started in the 20th century.

1. Before 1965 most children had to take an exam at the end of their primary schooling (at the age of 11). *Passed* – a possibility to attend a grammar school, *Failed* – a transfer to a secondary modern school. This system reinforced class distinctions. The division into grammar and secondary modern schools was changed. *Comprehensive schools* appeared.

2. Setting up of a national curriculum (a set of learning objectives for each of schools and all state schools are obliged to work towards these objectives).

3. Schools can decide to “opt out” of the control of LEA and put themselves directly under the control of the appropriate government department. They become ‘*grant-maintained schools*’ and get money directly from central government.

4.2. The National Curriculum

Pupils (5–16) in state schools must be taught the National Curriculum, made up of the subjects: English, Maths, Science, Design and Technology, Information Technology, History, Geography, Music, Art, Physical Education, Modern Foreign Languages, RE, Careers education, Work-related learning.

The National Curriculum is divided into 4 stages. These are called key stages and depend on pupils' ages. Schools organize their own timetable and can decide what else to teach their pupils. Each school has National Curriculum documents for each subject (what to teach at each key stage). Schools and teachers draw up their own lesson plans based on the National Curriculum. Schools decide which text books to use.

The National Curriculum sets standards of achievements in each subject for pupils aged 5 to 14. These standards range from levels 1 to 8: 7 year-olds – level 2; 11 – level 4; 14 – levels 5 or 6. Able pupils reach above these levels. The National Curriculum for Music, Art and PE does not use levels. There is a single description of the standards the pupils may reach.

There are three National Curricula for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland separately.

4.3. Public Examinations

There are *national tests* for 7-, 11- and 14-year-olds in *English and Maths*. Pupils aged 11 and 14 are also tested in *Science*. There are four key stages and the children are tested at the end of each key stage but only in the core subjects. Most 16-year olds take GCSE or similar qualifications. The exams are not set by the government, but by independent examining boards. Each school decides which board's exams pupils will take. (Some schools – more than one board). The boards publish a separate syllabus for each subject.

There is no unified school leaving exam or school leaving certificate. The exams have nothing to do with school years as such.

Standard Attainment Tests (SATs)

Children take Standard Attainment Tests (SAT's) when they are 7, 11 and 14, and national examinations at the age of 16 (end of key stage 4). SATs are statutory. State schools must report their results. It is possible for a child to be misapplied from the tests. Many independent schools take SATS but are not obliged to report the results.

Key Stage One (Y1-Y2) covers the 5–7 age group. Schools have flexibility over when and how the tests in reading, writing (including spelling and handwriting) and Maths are administered. The average 7 year old is expected to achieve a level 2. The tests are designed to indicate whether a child is above or below the target level. Teacher assessment looks at speaking, listening and science skills as well as the areas covered by the tests.

Key Stage Two (Y3-Y6) covers children aged 7 to 11. Children are tested in English, Maths and Science, at age 11 (Y6), prior to the move to senior school. The results are reported to the LEA and to parents. The average 11 year old is expected to achieve a level 4.

Key Stage Three (Y7-Y9). Tests are taken in Y9 at senior school, when a child is typically aged 14. Children are tested in English, Maths and Science and the results are reported to the LEA and to parents. Teachers assess pupils in these areas plus art, citizenship, design technology, geography, history, music, PE. The target level at KS3 is level 5, with the most able achieving a level 8. There are wide variations reported in the levels achieved at this stage.

Key Stage Four/GCSE (Y10-Y11) Most children sit GCSEs at the end of Y10. Children are usually encouraged to take a broad base of

subjects including: English (usually language and literature); Maths; Science (biology, chemistry, physics – a combination of one, two or all three); a modern foreign language (no longer compulsory) – most schools offer French and often a choice of German, or Spanish but always check with a school first; a design technology subject; humanities (History, Geography, RE), and the Arts (visual and performing). Often business/vocationally orientated subjects such as business studies, economics, media studies are offered. Social sciences: psychology, sociology are as popular in some schools as Latin, Greek and Classical studies.

Questions

1. What is the compulsory school age in Britain?
2. What is the difference between a grammar school and a secondary modern school?
3. What are the most famous public schools?
4. Does public mean “private”?
5. What kind of school was introduced in the 1960s?
6. What does “National Curriculum” mean? What was the purpose of its introduction? Is there just one National Curriculum?
7. What national tests do British school students pass?
8. What is a school key stage? How many key stages are there in British school institutions?
9. Is a modern foreign language a compulsory GCSE exam?

5. BRITISH NATIONAL ECONOMY

5.1. The Overview of the British Economy

Britain became the world's first industrialized country in the mid 19th century. The Industrial Revolution transformed the Britain's manual labour and draft-animal-based economy into machine-based manufacturing. Wealth was based on manufacturing iron and steel, heavy machinery and cotton textiles, and on coal mining, shipbuilding and trade. Manufacturing still plays an important role and Britain excels in high-technology industries like chemicals, electronics, aerospace and offshore equipment, where British companies are among the world's largest and most successful.

The most important industrial developments in the past 30 years or so in Britain have been the exploitation of North Sea oil and gas, and the rapid development of microelectronic technologies. At the same time service industries have been assuming ever-increasing importance and now account for around two-thirds of output and employment.

British industry performed poorly during the decades following the Second World War. In contrast, British agriculture was very successful.

As in all European countries, the economic system in Britain is a mixture of private and public enterprise. From 1945 until 1980s the general trend was for the state to have more and more control. Various industries became nationalized especially those concerned with the production and distribution of energy. So too did the various forms of transport and communication services. By the late 1970s it became increasingly apparent that many of the industries nationalized in the late 1940s were running into difficulties as they were ineffective and poorly managed.

From 1980 the trend started going in the other direction. Between 1980 and 1994 a large number of companies, such as British Airways and British Rail, were privatized. Privatisation generated huge revenues for the UK Treasury as well as allowing tax cuts and creating environment where other supply-side reforms could be implemented.

The UK economy today is one the strongest European economies in terms of inflation, interest rate and unemployment, all of which remained relatively low.

The United Kingdom presently has the 5th largest GDP in the world. It is the third largest economy in Europe and is often described as

an “Anglo-Saxon economy” with higher levels of income inequality, weaker social services and public service sectors compared to other large economies of Europe.

Britain’s industry is divided into service, manufacturing, mining, fishing industries, agriculture and energy production yet four main sectors feed into the UK GDP – production (or manufacturing), construction, services and agriculture.

5.2. The Economy by Sectors

The UK manufacturing makes up over 10 per cent of the country’s GDP and 45 per cent of the UK’s total exports. It directly employs around 3 million people.

Despite the decline since the 1970s, when manufacturing contributed 25 per cent of UK GDP, the UK is currently the 11th largest manufacturing nation in the world.

The UK manufacturing faces some problems, the most serious are the shortage of skilled workers and low productivity which remains a long-term concern for the country as a whole.

The major sectors and industries in the UK manufacturing list aerospace, space, nuclear, car manufacturing, chemical and pharmaceutical industry, electronics, energy, steel, textiles, food and drinks.

Britain’s aerospace industry is the second largest in the Western world after the United States. The British aerospace industry has made many important contributions to the history of aircraft. Rolls-Royce is one of the world’s three major manufacturers of aero-engines. Its engines have been selected by over 80 per cent of airlines for their Boeing 757 airliners. Over 400 companies in Britain are engaged in space activities. The industry is strong in the manufacture of satellites and ground infrastructure for satellite systems.

Car manufacturing is one of the successful industries in the country. It currently produces the highest level of cars since 1999.

Britain has the fifth largest electronics industry in the world. The computer sector produces an extensive range of systems, central processors, from large computers for large-scale data-processing and scientific work to mini-and microcomputers for control and automation system and for home, educational and office use. 14 of the world’s top 20 semiconductor companies have established their design and manufacturing sites in the UK.

Energy sector generates energy from fossil fuels and renewables. The renewables account for 7 per cent of the UK's electricity are likely to increase to around 30 per cent by 2030.

Nuclear sector operates 16 reactors on nine sites that supply 19 per cent of the country's electricity.

Britain has large food and drink manufacturing industry, which has accounted for a growing proportion of total domestic food supply in recent decades. Frozen and prepared children foods, other convenience foods, yoghurts, dairy desserts and instant snacks have formed the fastest-growing sector of the food market in recent years. Demand for health and slimming foods also continues to expand and there has been a rise in sales of organically-grown produce as well as a variety of products for vegetarians. Of major significance among alcoholic drinks produced in Britain is Scotch whisky, one of Britain's top export earners. The soft drinks industry is the fastest-growing sector of the grocery trade, with an annual turnover of about 6,000 pounds million.

Textiles is the third largest employer in the Western Europe. The industry is primarily concentrated in the North-West. Today textiles, clothing and footwear are in absolute decline because British companies face increasing difficulty competing with imports, especially from Asia.

Britain's chemical industry (with pharmaceuticals and specialty products) is the third largest in Europe and it is the nation's first biggest manufacturing industry. Around a half of its output is exported, making it Britain's greatest single export earner.

Construction sector represents 6.4 per cent of the total economic output.

The most remarkable economic development in the UK has been the growth of services industry. The service sector currently dominates, it is the third behind the US and China. The main sectors of the services industry in the UK list financial, banking and business services, education, health and social work, retail industry, tourism and hotel services, transport, restaurants and cafes, creative industries, insurance services.

Historically the financial services industry has been located in the 'Square Mile' in the City of London. Manchester, Cardiff, Liverpool, Leeds, Edinburg and Glasgow are also financial centres.

Nowadays the UK has one of the most globalised economies. It is the fifth-largest exporter of goods and services in the world and the fourth-largest importer.

Britain's overseas trade is mainly, and increasingly, with developed countries.

5.3. Tourism

Britain pioneered the development of a professional tourism industry. Around 1.5 million people are employed in the industry in Britain. Tourism in the United Kingdom is a major industry and contributor to the UK economy, which is the world's 7th biggest tourist destination. Britain's tourism attractions include theatres, museums, art galleries and historic houses, as well as shopping, sports and business facilities. The country's principal tourist destinations are London, Edinburgh, Oxford, Cambridge, York, and Canterbury. The United Kingdom hosts a total of 33 World Heritage sites, the 8th most in the world. The largest hotel business in Britain is Forte. There are around 7,200 travel agencies in Britain. Although most travel agents are small businesses, there are a few very large firms, which have hundreds of branches.

The United Kingdom is the 10th most visited country in the world and the 6th most visited country in Europe.

The United Kingdom attracts worldwide visitors with a combination of rural and urban scenery and the appeal of British culture which includes sport, food and art. London is the most visited city in the United Kingdom, and some of the smaller towns and cities attract a significant number of tourists. The country's other large cities such as Edinburgh, Manchester and Liverpool draw large numbers, and some smaller cities have major tourist attraction landmarks. The university cities of Oxford and Cambridge are, despite their smaller population, recognised worldwide because of the Oxbridge universities' legacies.

The tourism industry is a leading sector in the British economy. The UK Travel and Tourism industry is nearly five times the size of automotive manufacturing and supports almost as many jobs as the financial sector.

5.4. Agriculture

Agriculture in the UK is intensive, highly mechanised, and efficient by European standards. The self-sufficiency level was just under 50 % in the 1950s, peaking at 80 % in the 1980s, before declining to its present level at the turn of the 21st century.

Agriculture, one of Britain's most important industries, supplies nearly 65 per cent of the country's food and uses almost 80 per cent of

the land area. British agriculture is efficient, for it is based on modern technology and research. Although the area for farming is declining by about 20,000 hectares a year to meet the needs of housing, industry and transport, the land in urban use is less than a tenth of the agricultural land. There are 12 million hectares under crops and grass. The cool temperate climate and the comparatively even distribution of rainfall contribute favorably to the development of agriculture. However, the social structure of British agriculture has a negative effect on its development. Part of the land belongs to banks, insurance companies.

60 per cent of full-time is devoted mainly to dairying or beef cattle and sheep. This sector of agriculture accounts for three-fourths of agricultural production in value.

There are three main types of farming: pastoral, arable, mixed. Arable farming is dominated in the eastern parts of England and Scotland, whereas in the rest of the country pastoral and mixed farming are prevalent. Besides the three above mentioned types of farming there is another type of farming, crofting, which is still practiced in the remote areas of northern and western Scotland. This pattern of cultivating a small area of land around the farm (the infield) and maintaining a much larger area of rough pasture for stock rearing (the outfield) is typical of crofting communities in Scotland and shows a clear adaptation to a difficult environment. There has been a great decline in crofting and it has virtually disappeared from large areas of the Highlands.

Sheep and beef farming are developed in upland areas where rainfall is higher. Sheep can survive in cold winters on the hills and moors.

In the south-west of England the rich grass is ideal for feeding dairy cows.

The country is the largest producer of lamb and mutton, the third largest producer of dairy and the fourth largest of beef in Europe.

The UK is the third largest milk producer after Germany and France and the tenth largest producer in the world.

Crop production is developed in the lowlands where climate is drier and better farming land can be found.

In the UK there are three main approaches adopted by farmers in their farming system. These are defined as organic, conventional and integrated.

Agriculture contributes around 0.5 % of the UK's national GDP. Around two-thirds of production by value is devoted to livestock, and

one-third to arable crops. The agri-food sector as a whole was worth £120 billion at the beginning of the century and accounts for 4 million jobs in the UK.

Britain's second major source of food is the surrounding sea. The fishing industry provides about 70 per cent of British fish supplies, and is an important source of employment and income in a number of ports, especially those situated on the North Sea shore. The average annual landings of fish by British ships are about 700,000 tons. This marks a massive decline from landings earlier in the century and reflects the crisis which afflicts the industry. For centuries the British fishing industry depended upon fishing grounds near Britain, particularly those in the North Sea.

Questions

1. Is the structure of British economy complex?
2. What is the difference between private and public industries?
3. What are the most important industrial developments in the past fifty years?
4. Describe the development of the major manufacturing industries.
5. Does the financial sector work satisfactory in Britain?
6. Name the main types of farming.
7. Explain the importance of the development of fishing industry in Britain.
8. Is international tourism declining currently?
9. Expand on the service sector as the major segment of the UK economy today.
10. Highlight Britain's agricultural sector. Is it flourishing?

6. RELIGION IN THE UK

6.1. The Overview of British Religion

The vast majority of people in Britain do not regularly attend religious services. Many do so only a few times in their lives. Most people in Britain cannot strictly be described as religious. The British public, both adults and children, are almost ignorant of the basic facts surrounding Christians and other world religions. They know little about the Bible and the English Book of Prayers. (*The most successful English translation of the Bible was written in the early 17th century and is known as the King James Bible*). But 75 % of the British believe in God. A majority approve of the fact that religious instruction at state schools is compulsory. Freedom of religious belief and worship is taken for granted in modern Britain except Northern Ireland where the question of religion is quite acute. It is accepted that politics should stay out of religion but it is a point of debate as to whether religion should stay out of politics in the UK. The Church of Scotland and the Church of England are the last two cases in Europe of 'established' churches, churches which are, by law, the official religion of a country. The monarch is the official head of both churches. The religious leader of the Church of England (*The Anglican Church*) is the Archbishop of Canterbury who is appointed by the government. The Church of Scotland (*The Kirk*) has no head of faith or leadership group.

6.2. Anglicanism

The Anglican Church has the largest following group in England, and large minorities of adherents in the other nations of Britain. Less than 5 % of those who might describe themselves as Anglicans regularly attend services.

The doctrine of the Church of England was set out in the sixteenth century, in a document called *the Thirty-Nine Articles*. The main motivation for the birth of *Anglicanism (Protestantism)* in England was more personal and political than doctrinal. In the lowlands of Scotland it took a more idealistic form known as *Calvinism*. The Scottish highlands and Ireland remained Catholic.

Three main strands of Anglicanism are Evangelical, Anglo-Catholic and Liberal.

Evangelical or 'low church' puts great emphasis on the contents of the Bible, greatly opposes to Catholicism, organizes plain services with almost no ceremony

In Anglo-Catholic or 'high church' strand the beliefs are virtually identical to Catholicism; but the adherents do not accept the Pope as the ultimate authority. More colourful services, organ music, elaborate priestly clothing are constituents of high church. These two directions are traditional in their outlook.

The third one is a liberal wing. The representatives consider the Bible merely as a historical document. They are more tolerant towards homosexuality. This direction was the first to support moves to ordain women priests in 1992. There are no women-priests in Catholicism.

There are churches in other countries (Scotland, Ireland, USA, Australia) which have the same origin and whose members describe themselves as "Anglican". The official term of such churches is '*Episcopalian*'. Every ten years the bishops gather in London for the *Lambeth Conference*.

The Protestants who did not accept the authority of the Anglican Church were known as '*dissenters*' and later '*nonconformists*', now '*members of free churches*'.

6.3. Catholicism

After the establishment of Protestantism in Britain, Catholicism was an illegal religion. The Crown and government treated Catholics as suspect. By the time of the creation of the Kingdom of Great Britain in 1707, Catholics were discriminated against in England and Scotland in significant ways: in all the kingdoms of the British Isles, they were excluded from voting, from sitting in Parliament, and from the learned professions. These discriminatory laws continued after the Acts of Union 1800, which created the new United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in 1801. Only in 1850s a British Catholic hierarchy was reestablished.

A large proportion of Catholics in modern Britain are those whose family roots are in Italy, Ireland or elsewhere in Europe. Catholicism

has maintained a greater uniformity than the Anglican Church. There is more centralized control over practices of worship. Catholic adherents take doctrine and practice a bit more seriously than the Anglican Church's followers in general do.

Religious instruction is taken more seriously in Catholic schools. Catholic schools are generally headed by a monk or a nun.

The Catholic Church in the United Kingdom is organised into the Catholic churches in England and Wales, Scotland, and with Northern Ireland organised as part of the Catholic Church in Ireland, all as part of the worldwide Catholic Church in communion with the Bishop of Rome (the Pope).

6.4. Other Conventional Christian Churches

Presbyterian Church (the Church of Scotland or the KIRK) – the biggest established religion in Scotland. It uses the Puritan/ Calvinist traditions. It is a form of Protestantism. It has a separate organization from the Church of England. It has no bishops. Its head or Moderator is elected.

Methodist Society (the largest traditional nonconformist group in Britain) follows the teachings of John Wesley (the 18th century Anglican preacher). The Salvation Army grew out of the Wesleyan movement where the needs of ordinary people are taken into consideration.

The Baptists (a nonconformist group) are comparatively strict in their interpretation of the Bible and in their dislike of worldly pleasures.

The Quakers (the Society of Friends) (a nonconformist group) support complete lack of clergy and are characterized by their pacifism.

The number of followers of traditional Christian churches have been declining and other Christian sects and churches have been growing. They are the Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostalism, 'New Age' movement.

The Mormon doctrine emphasizes tithing, missionary work, and the Second Coming of Christ. Seventh Day Adventists' doctrine emphasizes the Second Coming of Christ, the members are vegetarians, non-smokers and those who do not drink coffee. Jehovah's Witnesses' puts emphasizes on active missionary work, human rights advocacy and government non-interference in religion. The doctrine of Pentecostalism is close to that of the Baptists. Gatherings involve joyful singing. All

these groups provide a strict code of behavior. New Age's movement involves elements of Christianity, eastern religions and ancient pagan beliefs mixed together. Its followers are Druids and Christian Scientists.

Questions

1. Do the majority of people in Britain regularly attend religious services?
2. Highlight how religiously affiliated the British public is.
3. In what ways is the Anglican Church typical of the English character?
4. What are the crucial differences between two established Churches of Britain?
5. What are the characteristic features of the Church of England?
6. What are the largest nonconformist groups in Britain?
7. What are the Protestants' beliefs?

7. THE NHS AND THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM IN BRITAIN

7.1. The Benefits System

Britain is the first country in the world to have accepted that it is part of the job of government to help any citizen in need and to set up a '*welfare state*'.

Before the 20th century *welfare* was the responsibility of local communities. The care provided was poor. The poor, the old, the sick, the orphans were sent to *the workhouses* (a most hated institution of the 19th century).

During the first half of the 20th century a number of *welfare benefits* were introduced.

1. A small old-age pension scheme (1908).
2. Partial sickness and unemployment insurance (1912).
3. Unemployment benefits conditional on regular contributions and proof of need (1934).
4. The National Health Service was set up by the National Health Act (1948).
5. The first payment within the NHS (a fixed charge for medicines) was introduced (1951).
6. Other charges followed (1952).

Nowadays any adult who cannot find paid work, or any family whose income is not enough for its basic needs may get financial help. It is paid by the *Department of Social Security*.

Anyone below the retirement age who has worked for a certain minimum period of time and now is looking for a job can receive *Unemployment Benefit (the dole)* or *Job Seeker's Allowance*.

All retired people may get *the Standard Old-age Pension* if they have paid their national insurance contributions for most of their working lives. The government pension is not very high. Many people contribute to a *pension fund*.

Some people are entitled to neither pension benefit nor unemployment benefit (have not worked previously or have been unemployed for a long time or with low income). They can apply for *Income Support*.

Child Benefit is a small weekly payment for each child under 16 if you are a single mother, paid directly to mothers.

Housing Benefit is distributed by the local authority to help with full or part rent payments. There is no set amount.

There are some other benefits as well: *Sickness Benefit*, *Maternity Benefit*, *Death Grant*, etc.

7.2. Social Services and Charities

As well as giving financial help, the government also takes a more active role in looking after people's welfare. Services are run either directly or indirectly by local government. Professional social workers have the task of identifying and helping members of the community in need:

- the old;
- the mentally handicapped;
- children suffering from neglect or from maltreatment.

Before the welfare state was established and the concept of '*social services*' came into being, the poor and needy in Britain turned to many charitable organizations for help. They were staffed by unpaid volunteers relied on voluntary contributions from the public.

At present there are more than 150.000 registered charities. They have an income of more than 15 million pounds. Among some well-known charities are: the Samaritans organization, the Salvation Army, Barnado's and MENCAP.

The Samaritans organization was founded in the sixties. It is a registered charity and offers free counseling and emotional by phone to anyone in despair, emotional distress, thinking of committing suicide throughout United Kingdom and Ireland. Its name derives from biblical parable Good Samaritan, although the organization itself is not religious.

The Salvation Army is organized on military lines and grew out of Christian missionary work in the slums of London in the 19th century. It offers help to the most desperate and needy: overnight accommodation in hostels for the homeless.

Barnado's (in the 19th century) used to provide homes for orphaned children and helped children in need. Nowadays Barnado's purpose is to transform the lives of the UK's most vulnerable children through essential services, campaigning and research. Ever since Barnado's was founded by Dr T. Barnado over 150 years ago, the charity has worked to realize his dream of a world where no child is turned away.

MENCAP is a charity for the mentally handicapped and campaigns on their behalf.

7.3. The National Health Service

The NHS (1948) is considered as the jewel in the crown of the welfare state. The system is organized centrally. There is little interaction with the private sector. There is no working together with health insurance companies.

The NHS is typically British. It originated in Wales. It is very simple. There are no forms to fill in and no payments to be made which are later refunded. What you are to do is to register with a local NHS doctor. Most doctors are *General Practitioners*. A visit to the GP is the first step of getting any kind of treatment. The GP arranges tests, surgery, specialist consultation or medicine.

It is free. The exceptions to free medical care are teeth and eyes. Large numbers do not pay or pay less as the cost of dental treatment is subsidized. The country spends *less money* per person on health care than any other country in the western world. The reason is the way the GPs are paid. They get a 'capitation allowance' on their registered patients.

Lately there has been a steady rise in the number of people paying for *private medical insurance* in addition to the state insurance contribution which all employed must pay.

There are several private medical insurance schemes. The biggest are BUPA, Aviva, Vitality often covering inpatient, outpatient and cancer care. The advantages are *short waiting lists* or their absence, the highest quality outpatient care and leading UK medical professionals.

Questions

1. What are the strengths of the GP system?
2. Do you agree that charitable organizations in Britain which provide many forms of help allow the government to avoid its responsibilities?
3. Is the British welfare state successful in giving help to all needy layers of the society?
4. What is considered as the jewel in the crown of the welfare state?
5. What is *a workhouse*?
6. Explain what is *a dole*.
7. What are the main problems of the welfare state in contemporary Britain?
8. Compare the situation in Britain with that in Belarus from the point of view of availability of free medical treatment.

LITERATURE

1. English-speaking Countries. Seminars = Англоговорящие страны. Семинары : учебно-методическое пособие / авт.-сост. : С. В. Колтунова, Н. Э. Чернявская. – Белгород : Белгородский государственный институт искусств и культуры, 2020. – 181 с.
2. Голицынский, Ю. Б. Великобритания : пособие по страноведению : учебное пособие / Ю. Б. Голицынский. – 2-е изд., испр. – Санкт-Петербург : КАРО, 2019. – 480 с.
3. Козикис, Д. Д. Страноведение. Великобритания в XX–XXI веках = Britain in the 20th–21st centuries : учебное пособие / Д. Д. Козикис, С. А. Могилевцев. – Минск : Аверсэв, 2019. – 280 с.
4. Акулич, Л. Д. Страноведение Великобритании : курс лекций : в 2 ч. / Л. Д. Акулич. – Гомель : ГГУ им. Ф. Скорины, 2008. – Ч. 1. – 137 с.
5. Агабабян, С. Р. Страноведение : учебное пособие / С. Р. Агабабян, И. Г. Барабанова. – Ростов-на-Дону : РИНХ, 2021. – 96 с.
6. Поддубская, О. Н. Britain in Questions and Answers : учебное пособие по страноведению Великобритании / О. Н. Поддубская, Е. Г. Котова. – Орехово-Зуево : ГГТУ, 2021. – 154 с.
7. Страноведение Великобритании : учебное пособие / сост. : Е. Н. Ермолаева, А. Г. Смирнова. – Кемерово : КемГУ, 2022. – 92 с.

Производственно-практическое издание

Гуд Валентина Гавриловна

ЛИНГВОСТРАНОВЕДЕНИЕ

Практическое руководство

В авторской редакции

Подписано в печать 16.06.2026. Формат 60x84 1/16.

Бумага офсетная. Ризография.

Усл. печ. л. 2,56. Уч.-изд. л. 2,80.

Тираж 10 экз. Заказ 361.

Издатель и полиграфическое исполнение:
учреждение образования

«Гомельский государственный университет имени Франциска Скорины».

Специальное разрешение (лицензия) № 02330 / 450 от 18.12.2013 г.

Свидетельство о государственной регистрации издателя, изготовителя,
распространителя печатных изданий в качестве:

издателя печатных изданий № 1/87 от 18.11.2013 г.;

распространителя печатных изданий № 3/1452 от 17.04.2017 г.

Ул. Советская, 104, 246028, Гомель.

