

Country Studies

GIÁO TRÌNH **ĐẤT NƯỚC HỌC** (HỆ ĐẠI HỌC)

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ĐẤT NƯỚC HỌC

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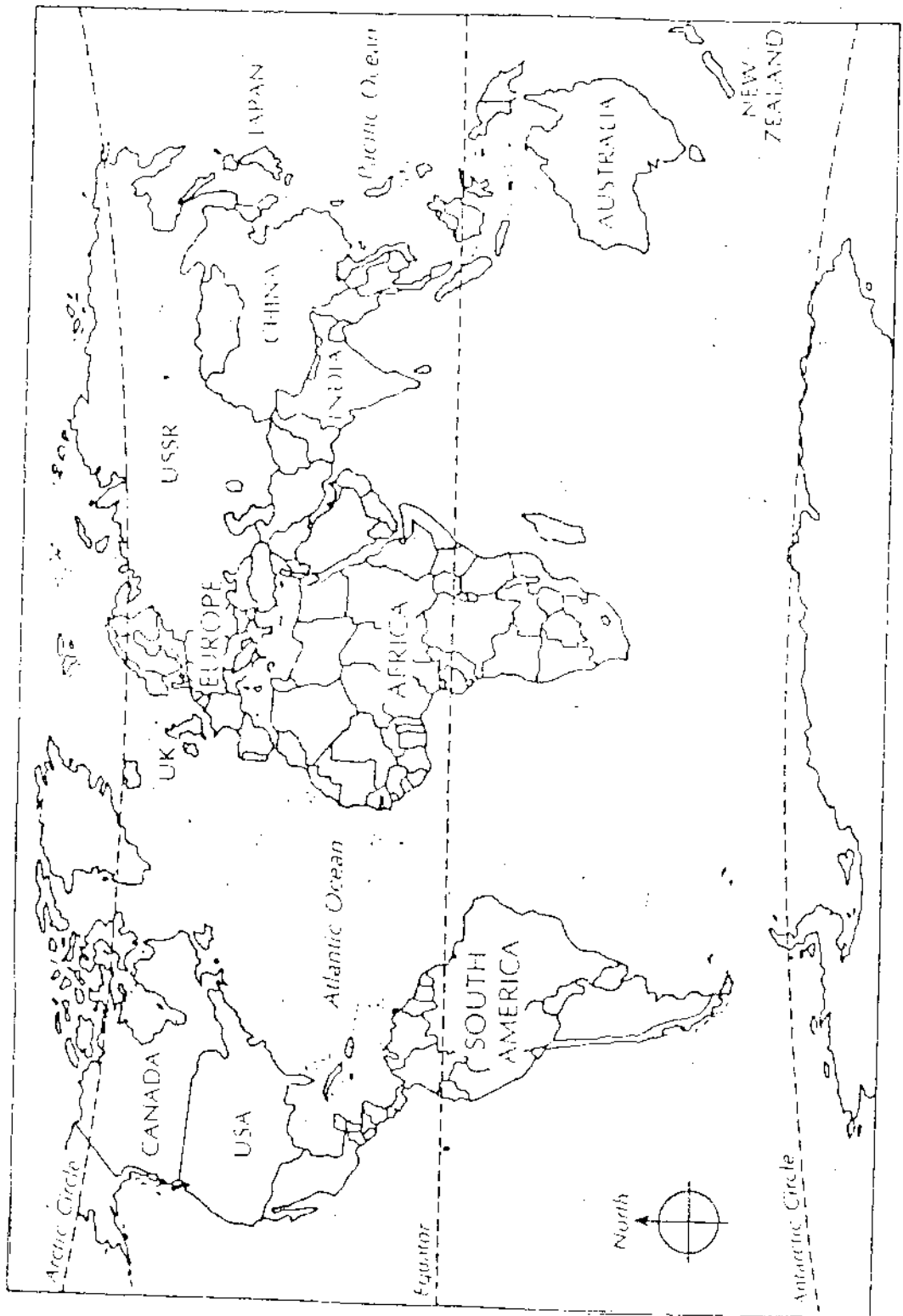
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Chapter I

THE UNITED KINGDOM OF
GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

The English Speaking World



Great Britain and Ireland



SNAPSHOT BRITAIN

The UK is one of the world's great trading powers and financial centers, and its economy ranks among the four largest in Western Europe. The economy is essentially capitalistic; over the past 13 years the ruling Tories have greatly reduced public ownership and contained the growth of social welfare programs. Agriculture is intensive, highly mechanized, and efficient by European standards, producing about 60% of food needs with only about 1% of the labor force. The UK has large coal, natural gas and oil reserves, and primary energy production accounts for 12% of GDP, one of the highest shares of any industrial nation. Services, particularly banking, insurance, and business services, account by far for the largest proportion of GDP while industry continues to decline in importance, now employing only 25% of the work

force. Exports and manufacturing out put have been the primary engines economic policy question for the UK in the 1990s is the terms on which it participates in the financial and economic integration of Europe.

GDP: purchasing power parity - \$1.1384 trillion

GDP real growth rate: 2.7%

GDP per capita: \$19,500

GDP composition by sector:

Agriculture: 1.7%

Industry: 27.7%

Services: 70.6%

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 3.1%

Labor force: 28.048 million

by occupation: services 62.8%, manufacturing and construction 25.0% government 9.1%, energy 1.9%, agriculture 1.2%.

Unemployment rate: 8%

From 'Country Studies' (Haniel National University - 1998)

UNIT I

COUNTRY AND PEOPLE

This is the chapter about Britain. But what exactly is Britain? And who are the British? The table below illustrates the problem. You might think that, when it comes to international sport, the situation would be simple - one country, one team. But you can see that this is definitely not the case with Britain. For each of the four sports or sporting events listed in the table, there are a different number of national teams, which might be called 'British'. This chapter

describes how this situation has come about and explains the different names, which are used when people talk about Britain.



GEOGRAPHICALLY SPEAKING

Lying off the northwest coast of Europe, there are two large islands and several much smaller ones. Collectively, they are known as The British Isles. The largest island is called Great Britain. The other large one is called Ireland (The British Isles).

POLITICALLY SPEAKING

In the British Isles there are two states. One of these governs most of the island of Ireland. This state is usually called The Republic of Ireland. It is also called 'Eire' (its Irish language name). Informally it is referred to as just 'Ireland' or 'the Republic'.

The other state has authority over the rest of the British Isles (the whole of Great Britain, the northeastern area of Ireland and most of the smaller islands). This is the country that is the main subject of this book. Its official name is The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland although it is usually known by a shorter name. At the Eurovision Song Contest, at the United Nations and in the European

parliament, for instance, it is referred to as 'the United Kingdom'. In everyday speech this is often shortened to 'the UK'. In other contexts it is referred to as 'Great Britain'. This, for example, is the name you hear when a gold medal winner steps onto the rostrum at the Olympic Games. The stickers on cars ('GB') are another example of the use of this name. In writing and speaking that is not especially formal or informal, the name 'Britain' is used. The normal adjective, when talking about something to do with the UK, is 'British'.

THE FOUR NATIONS

People often refer to Britain by another name. They call it 'England' but this is not strictly correct, and it can make some people angry. England is only one of the four nations of the British Isles (England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland). Their political unification was a gradual process that took several hundred years. It was completed in 1800 when the Irish Parliament was joined with the Parliament for England,

Scotland and Wales in Westminster, so that the whole of the British Isles became a single state - the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. However, in 1922, most of Ireland became a separate state.

At one time the four nations were distinct from each other in almost every aspect of life. In the first place, they were different racially. The people in Ireland, Wales and highland Scotland belonged to the Celtic race; those in England and lowland Scotland were mainly of Germanic origin. This difference was reflected in the languages they spoke. People in the Celtic areas spoke Celtic languages: Irish Gaelic, Scottish Gaelic and Welsh. People in the Germanic areas spoke Germanic dialects (including the one, which has developed into modern English). The nations also tended to have different economic, social and legal systems. Today these differences have become blurred. But they have not completely disappeared. Although there is only one government for the whole of Britain, and people

have the same passport regardless of where in Britain they live, some aspects of government are organized separately (and sometimes differently) in the four parts of the United Kingdom. Moreover, Welsh, Scottish and Irish people feel their identity very strongly.

THE DOMINANCE OF ENGLAND

There is, perhaps, an excuse for people who use the word 'England' when they mean 'Britain'. It cannot be denied that the dominant culture of Britain today is specifically English. The system of politics that is used in all four nations today is of English origin and English is the main language of all four nations. Many aspects of everyday life are organized according to English custom and practice. But the political unification of Britain was not achieved by mutual agreement, on the contrary. It happened because England was able to exert her economic and military power over the other three nations.

Today English domination can be detected in the way in which various aspects of British public life are described. For example, the supply of money in Britain is controlled by the Bank of England (there is no such thing as a 'Bank of Britain'). The present queen of the country is universally known

from their name.) For example, newspapers and the television news talk about 'Anglo-American relations' to refer to relations between the governments of Britain and the USA (and not just those between England and the USA).



Some of the famous Oxford colleges.

as 'Elizabeth the Second', even though Scotland and Northern Ireland have never had an 'Elizabeth the First'! (Elizabeth I of England and Wales ruled from 1553 to 1603.) The term 'Anglo' is also commonly used. (The Angles were a Germanic tribe who settled in England in the fifth century. The word 'England' is derived

NATIONAL LOYALTIES

When you are talking to people from Britain, it is safest to use 'Britain' when talking about where they live and 'British' as the adjective to describe their nationality. This way you will be less likely to offend anyone. It is, of course, not wrong to talk about 'people in England' if that is what

you mean - people who live within the geographical boundaries of England. After all, most British people live there. But it should always be remembered that England does not make up the whole of the UK.

There has been a long history of migration from Scotland, Wales and Ireland to England. As a result there are millions of people who live in England but who would never describe themselves as English. They may have lived in England all their lives, but as far as they are concerned they are Scottish or Welsh or Irish - even if, in the last case, they are citizens of Britain and not of Eire. These people support the country of their parents or grandparents rather than England in sporting contests. They would also, given the chance, play for that country rather than England. If, for example, you had heard the members of the Republic of Ireland World Cup football team talking in 1994, you would have heard several different kinds of English accent and some Scottish accents, but only a few Irish

accents. Most of the players did not live in Ireland and were not brought up in Ireland. Nevertheless, most of them would never have considered playing for any country other than Ireland!

The same holds true for the further millions of British citizens whose family origins lie outside the British Isles altogether. People of Caribbean or south Asian descent, for instance, do not mind being described as 'British' (many are proud of it), but many of them would not like to be called 'English'. And whenever the West Indian or Indian cricket team plays against England, it is certainly not England that they support!

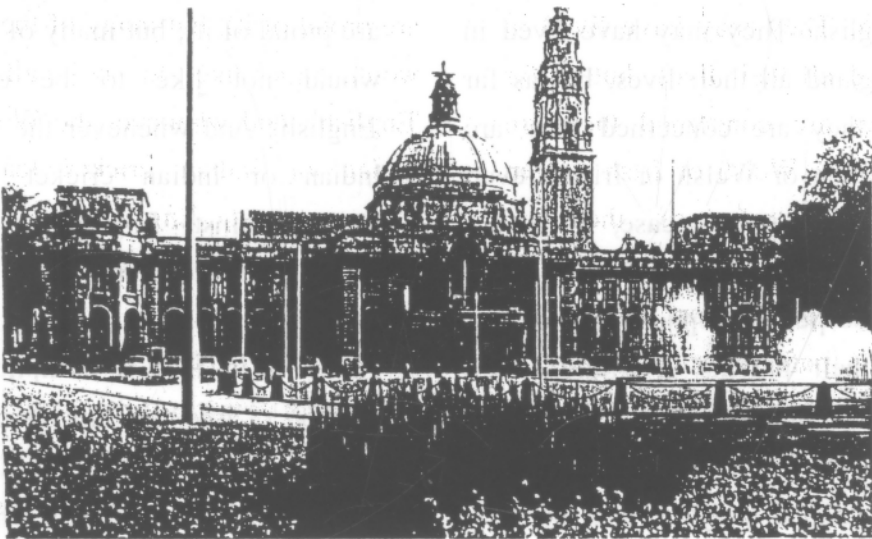
There is, in fact, a complicated division of loyalties among many people in Britain, and especially in England. A black person whose family is from the Caribbean will passionately support the West Indies when they play cricket against England. But the same person is quite happy to support England just as passionately in a sport such as football, which the West Indies do not play. A person

whose family are from Ireland but who has always lived in England would want Ireland to beat England at football but would want England to beat (for example) Italy just as much. This crossover of loyalties can work the other way as well. English people do not regard the Scottish,

from outside the British Isles tends to identify with that team as if it were English.

A wonderful example of double identity was heard on the BBC during the Eurovision Song Contest in 1992. The commentator for the BBC was Terry Wagon. Mr. Wagon is an Irishman who

Cardiff: a modern capital



the Welsh or the Irish as 'foreigners' (or, at least, not as the same kind of foreigners as other foreigners!). An English commentator of a sporting event in which a Scottish, Irish or Welsh team is playing against a team

had become Britain's most popular television talk-show host during the 1980s. Towards the end of the program, with the voting for the songs nearly complete, it became clear that the contest (in which European countries compete to

present the best new popular song) was going to be won by either Ireland or the United Kingdom. Within a five-minute period, Mr. Wagon could be heard using the pronouns 'we' and 'us' several times; sometimes he meant the UK and sometimes he meant Ireland!

From 'Britain' (Oxford University Press - 1999)

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the British Isles.

What is the difference between the United Kingdom and Great Britain?

2. Many people think that there were many ridiculous things about the four nations. How did they happen? Do you think they were ridiculous?

3. The dominance of England in Britain is reflected in the organization of the government. There are ministers for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but there is no minister for England. Do you think this is good for the people of the other British nations

(they have special attention and recognition of their distinct identity) or it is bad (it gives them the kind of second-class colonial status)?

4. Are there any distinct national loyalties in Vietnam (or are they better described as regional loyalties)?

If so, is the relationship between the "nations" in any way similar to that between the nations in Britain? If not, can you think of any other countries where such loyalties exist? Do these loyalties cause problems in those countries?

UNIT II

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

Britain is a democracy, yet its people are not, as one might expect in a democracy, constitutionally in control of the state. The constitutional situation is an apparently contradictory one. As a result of an historical process

the people of Britain are subjects of the Crown, accepting the Queen as the head of the state. Yet even the Queen is not sovereign in any substantial sense since she receives her authority from Parliament, and is subject to its

Royal London



The Queen and her family on the balcony of Buckingham Palace.

direction in almost all matters. In short, she 'reigns' but does not rule.

Technically, if confusingly, British sovereignty collectively resides in the three elements of Parliament: the Crown, and Parliament's two chambers, the House of Lords and the House of Commons.

This curious situation came about as a result of a long struggle for power between the Crown and Parliament during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In 1689 Parliament won that struggle, because it controlled most of the national wealth. It agreed to allow the Crown to continue to function within certain limits, and subject to Parliament's control. No constitution was written down either then or since, and the relationship between Crown, government, Parliament and people - and their respective constitutional powers - has been one of gradual development. The state - itself sometimes called the Crown - operates on precedent, custom and conventions, and on unwritten rules and assumptions.

THE ELECTORAL AND PARTY SYSTEMS

For electoral purposes the United Kingdom is divided into constituencies, each one of which elects a Member of Parliament to sit in the House of Commons. To ensure equitable representation four permanent Boundary Commissions (for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), make periodic reviews to adjust electoral boundaries and redistribute seats. Today there are 650 seats in the Commons, one seat on average for every 66,000 electors.

All British citizens (including citizens of the Irish Republic resident in the UK) may vote, provided they are aged eighteen or over, are registered, and are not disqualified by insanity, membership of the House of Lords or by being sentenced prisoners. Voting is not compulsory, and a general election normally attracts about 75 percent of the electorate, a decline in participation of about 8 percent since 1945. The candidate

in a constituency who gains most votes is returned as Member to the Commons. In this 'first-past the post' system, other candidates, even if they come close to the winner, will not get a seat in Parliament.

If a Member of Parliament (MP) resigns, dies or is made a peer during the life time of a Parliament, a by-election must be held in his or her old constituency to elect a new member. No candidate requires the backing of a political party in order to stand for election, but today no independent candidates succeed in being elected. MPs are normally chosen by the constituency branch of the party, from a list of suitable candidates issued by the party headquarters. Where the winning party of an election only just gains the greatest proportion of the national vote, this can lead to a substantial distortion of democratic will in actual representation in the Commons. The 1987 election results clearly reveal the problem:

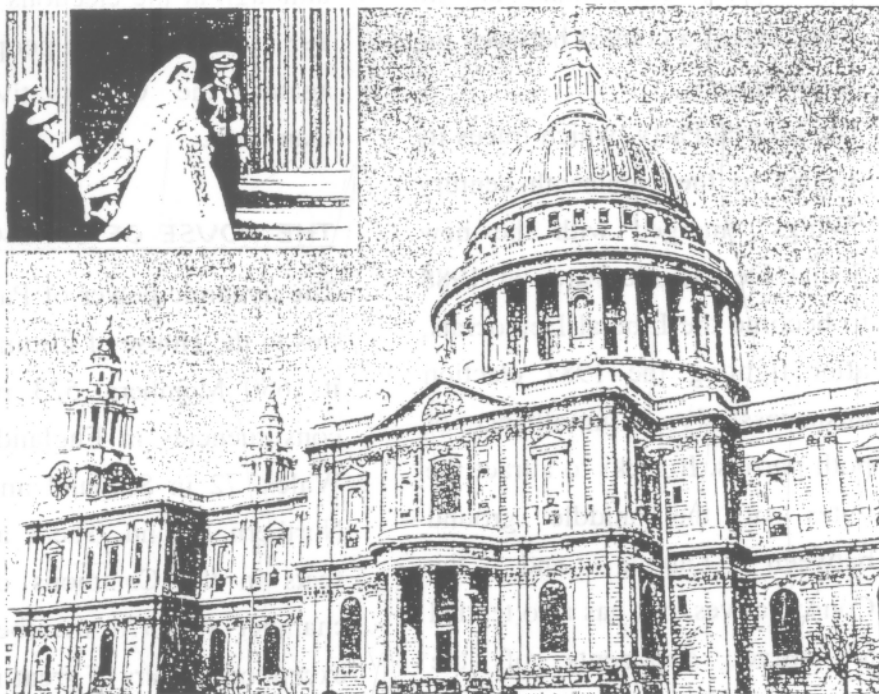
Party	% of vote	% of MPs
Conservative	42.2	57.7
Labour	30.8	35.2
Alliance (Liberal/SDP)	22.6	3.4

The political party system has evolved since the eighteenth century, and since the first half of the nineteenth century has been essentially a two-party system. Today, this two-party contest is between the Conservative Party (still known by their previous nickname, the 'Tories') and the Labour Party, which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century as a result of the introduction of universal male suffrage and the decline of the Liberal Party.

The Conservative Party is the party of the Right, identified with the idea of economic freedom and until 1979 with the idea of resistance to change. It has successfully portrayed itself as the party of patriotism. As in the nineteenth century, it appeals to a 'property-owning democracy', and as a result its support tends to lie with the wealthier classes, receiving much money from major business and financial

institutions. It gives emphasis to the importance of law and order, and the maintenance of strong armed forces to protect British interests. It is highly disciplined, and accepts the direction of the

leadership and other party members. Labour is preeminently the party of social justice, though its emphasis is less on equality than on the achievement of well being and opportunity for all



St Paul's Cathedral was designed by the famous architect Sir Christopher Wren, after the Great Fire of London in 1666. Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer were married there in July 1981.

Prime Minister. Conservatives tend to be reluctant to express dissent from the leadership publicly. The Labour Party is less disciplined but possibly more democratic, with more open disagreements between the

members of society. It tends to put the collective well being of society above individual freedom, in the economic sphere at any rate. Traditionally it has been committed to public ownership of major industries, and to economic planning. The trade union

movement, which founded the Labour Party, remains influential in the evolution of party policy. Each union executive is able to cast the vote of its entire membership, with the result that some party resolutions are to some extent a contest between the larger unions.

The Liberal Party, which traces its origins to the eighteenth century 'Whigs', merged with the new Social Democratic Party in 1988 to become the Liberal Democrats, after fighting the 1987 election unsuccessfully as an alliance of both parties. It seeks to attract the votes of the middle ground between Labour and the Conservatives, but has also tended to attract opponents of the Conservatives, dominant in the south of England, and opponents of the Labour Party, dominant in the north. Since 1945 the Conservatives have formed seven governments and Labour six, although in practice during the period 1945-90 the Conservatives have governed for twenty-eight years and Labour for only seventeen. Since 1979 the

domination of the Commons by the Conservatives reveals the strength and weakness of the first-past-the-post electoral system. They have enjoyed a large majority in the Commons although at the elections of 1979, 1983 and 1987 more people voted against the Conservative Party than for it.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

The dynamic power of Parliament lies in the House of Commons. Of its 650 Members, 523 represent constituencies in England, 38 in Wales, 72 in Scotland and 17 in Northern Ireland. There are only seats in the Commons debating chamber for 370 members, but except on matters of great interest, it is unusual for all members to be present at any one time. Many MPs find themselves in other rooms of the Commons, participating in a variety of committees and meetings necessary for an effective parliamentary process.

The shape of the Commons debating chamber makes an important comment on the

political process in Britain. Unlike many European chambers which are semicircular, thus reflecting the spectrum of political opinion in their seating plan, the Commons is rectangular, with the Speaker's (the Presiding MP) chair at one end, and either side of it five rows of benches running the length of the chamber. On one side, to the Speaker's right, sits Her Majesty's Government and its supporters, and on the other Her Majesty's 'Opposition', composed of all Members who oppose the government. The front benches on either side are reserved for members of the Cabinet and other Ministers, and Opposition spokesmen, known as the 'Shadow Cabinet', respectively.

Behind them sit MPs from their own party, known as 'backbenchers'. The layout implies two features of British political life: that is has traditionally been a two-party system and that the process is essentially adversarial (indeed, a red line on the floor in front of each front bench still marks the limit - a little more than two

swords' lengths - beyond which a Member may not approach the opposite benches).

The Speaker is chosen by a vote of the entire House, although in practice the party leaders consult their supporters in order to achieve informal agreement beforehand. The Speaker is responsible for the orderly conduct of business, and is required to act with scrupulous impartiality between Members in the House. In the words of the Speaker in 1988, "It's not my duty as Speaker to bend arguments in any way, but to ensure that everything that happens here is seen clearly by those who put us here. We are, after all, the servants of those who put us here: the electorate." The Speaker is assisted by three deputy speakers.

THE HOUSE OF LORDS

The upper chamber of parliament, the House of Lords, is not democratic in any sense at all. It consists of four categories of peer. The majority are hereditary peers, a total of almost 800, but of whom only about half take an active

interest in the affairs of state. A smaller number, between 350 and 400, are 'life' peers - an idea introduced in 1958 to elevate to the peerage certain people who have rendered political or public service to the nation. The purpose was not merely to honour but also to enhance the quality of business done in the Lords. Only one quarter of these life peers are women. All life peers are created on the recommendation of the Prime Minister of the day, with nominations also sought from opposition parties. Nine of the most senior judges, the Lords of Appeal In Ordinary, are also entitled to sit in the Lords. Finally, alongside these secular peers, the Lords Temporal, are the twenty-six most senior bishops and archbishops of the Church of England, the Lords Spiritual. The lords of appeal - known as the Law Lords - and the Lords Spiritual are the ancient non-hereditary component of the Lords.

Until 1911 the Lords were able to reject bills passed in the Commons, and thus frustrate not

only the government of the day, but also the will of the Commons. Since then the Lords have been unable to challenge financial legislation, and have only been able to delay other legislation (since 1949 for no more than one session) but not prevent it. Their only other surviving discretionary power is to veto an attempt by the Commons to prolong its own life beyond its five-year term. The role of the Lords, therefore, is now more to warn than to frustrate over-zealous governments, and they have done this more by the proposition of amendments to legislation which causes them unease, than by direct opposition.

Although there are over a thousand peers entitled to sit in the House of Lords, average daily attendance is only about 300 and most of these are life peers, who retain a strong interest in the affairs of state. The House is presided over by the Lord Chancellor is not impartial, but a government officer and besides, the Lords are expected to conduct their business in a far more

orderly fashion than the Commons. He is responsible for the administration of justice and he is also an automatic member of the Cabinet.

A large number of peers support the Conservative party then either Labour or the Liberal Democrats, who collectively with independent peers (who, unlike the Commons, have 'cross-benches' across the back of the chamber to sit upon), can marshal almost the same number of active peers as the Conservatives. In 1988 there were 446 Conservative peers, 117 Labour peers, 61 Liberal Democrats, 25 Social Democrats and 226 crossbenchers. This preponderance in favour of the Conservatives arises partly because the majority of hereditary peers sympathize more with the Conservative Party than its opponents, but also because Labour declined to nominate candidates for life peerages for a period during the 1980s since its party policy included abolition of the Lords, on the grounds that it was a undemocratic anachronism. Despite this preponderance,

however, no Conservative government can be absolutely sure of a majority, if its proposals are controversial. Peers, of whatever party loyalty, are far freer to vote according to their own convictions rather than party policy than are members of the Commons.

*From 'Britain in Close-up'
(Longman - 1999)*

QUESTIONS

1. Explain the main differences between the Conservative and Labour parties!
2. Do you think the dynamic power of parliament lies in the House of Commons? Give reasons for your opinion!
3. Do you think the Lords is a democratic institution? Give reasons for your opinion.
4. If you were British, which political party would you support, and why?

UNIT III

WORKING BRITAIN

THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

Little more than a century ago, Britain was 'the workshop of the world'. It had as many merchant ships as the rest of the world put together and it

nations able to compete with us to such an extent as we have never before experienced." Early in the twentieth century Britain was overtaken economically by the United States and Germany. After two world wars and the rapid loss



Stormont, Belfast.

led the world in most manufacturing industries. This did not last long. By 1885 one analysis reported, "We have come to occupy a position in which we are no longer progressing, but even falling back... We find other

of its empire, Britain found it increasingly difficult to maintain its position even in Europe.

Britain struggled to find a balance between government intervention in the economy and an almost completely free-market economy

such as existed in the United States. Neither system seemed to fit Britain's needs. The former seemed compromised between two different objectives: planned economic prosperity and the means of ensuring full employment, while the latter promised grater economic prosperity at the cost of poverty and unemployment for the less able in society. Neither Labour nor the Conservatives doubted the need to find a system that suited Britain's needs, but neither seemed able to break from the consensus based on Keynesian economics.

People seemed complacent about Britain's decline, reluctant to make the painful adjustments that might be necessary to reverse it. Prosperity increased during the late 1990s and in the 1960s, diverting attention from Britain's decline relative to its main competitors. In 1973 the Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath warned, "The alternative to expansion is not, as some occasionally seem to suppose, an England of quiet

market towns linked by steam trains puffing slowly and peacefully through green meadows. The alternative is slums, dangerous roads, old factories, cramped schools, stunted lives." But in the years of worldwide recession, 1974-79, Britain seemed unable to improve its performance.

By the mid 1970s both Labour and Conservative economists were beginning to recognize the need to move away from Keynesian economics, based upon stimulating demand by injecting money into the economy. But, as described in the Introduction, it was the Conservatives who decided to break with the old economic formula completely. Returning to power in 1979, they were determined to lower taxes as an incentive to individuals and businesses to increase productivity; to leave the labour force to regulate itself either by pricing itself out of employment or by working within the amount of money employers could afford; and finally, to limit government spending levels and use money

supply (the amount of money in circulation at any one time) as a way of controlling inflation. As Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher argued in the Commons, "If our objective is to have a prosperous and expanding economy, we must recognize that high public spending, as a proportion of GNP (gross national product), very quickly kills growth... We have to remember that governments have no money at all. Every penny they take is from the productive sector of the economy in order to transfer it to the unproductive part of it." She had a point: Between 1961 and 1975 employment outside industry increased by 40 percent relative to employment in industry. During the 1980s the Conservatives put their new ideas into practice. Income tax was reduced from a basic rate of 33 percent to 25 percent. (For higher income groups the reduction was greater, at the top rate from 83 percent to 40 percent.) This did not lead to any loss in revenue, since at the lower rates fewer people tried to avoid tax. At the same time, however, the

government doubled Value Added Tax (VAT) on goods and services to 15 percent.

The most notable success of 'Thatcherism' was the privatization of previously wholly or partly government-owned enterprises. Indeed, other countries, for example Canada, France, Italy, Japan, Malaysia and West Germany, followed the British example. The government believed that privatization would increase efficiency, reduce government borrowing, increase economic freedom, and encourage wide share ownership. By 1990 20 percent of the adult population were shareowners, a higher proportion than in any other Western industrialized country. There was no question of taking these enterprises back into public ownership, even by a Labour government.

Despite such changes, however, by 1990 Britain's economic problems seemed as difficult as ever. The government found that reducing public expenditure was far harder than expected and that by 1990 it still consumed about

the same proportion of the GNP as it had ten years earlier. Inflation, temporarily controlled, rose to over 10 percent and was only checked from rising further by high interest rates which also had the side effect of discouraging economic growth. In spite of reducing the power of the trade unions, wage demands (most notably senior management salaries) rose faster than prices, indicating that a free labour market did not necessarily solve the wages problem. By 1990 the manufacturing industry had barely recovered from the major shrinkage in the early 1980s. It was more efficient, but in the meantime Britain's share of world trade in manufactured goods had shrunk from 8 percent in 1979 to 6.5 percent ten years later. Britain's balance of payments was unhealthy too. In 1985 it had enjoyed a small surplus of £3.5 billion, but in 1990 this had changed to a deficit of £20.4 billion.

There were fears that Britain's industrial sector was becoming an assembly economy, serving

foreign-owned enterprises. In 1984 the National Economic Development Office reported, "It appears that the UK now enjoys an intermediate status between the AICs (Advanced Industrialized Countries) and NICs (Newly Industrializing Countries), and has features of both types of economy, in trade with the other." Certainly the level of commercial interpenetration by multinational companies greatly increased during the 1980s. A survey in 1987 showed Britain to be the major recipient of foreign investment in Europe. For example, 30 percent of Japan's total West European investment and 36 percent of US investment in the European Community came to Britain. By August 1988 over 1.2 million people, 10 percent of Britain's workforce, were employed in the top 1000 foreign-owned companies in the country.

On the other hand, while foreign companies invested over £49 billion in Britain during the decade 1977-87, British companies invested £91 billion abroad. In 1987 alone, British

companies spent almost \$32 billion buying American companies.

Government policy and the state of the world economy plunged Britain into the worst recession since the end of the Second World War. Britain suffered more than other industrialized countries, its share of world trade falling by 15 percent in the years 1979-86. To give a comparison, between 1979 and 1984 productivity rose by 20 percent in Japan, 10 percent in the United States, 6 percent in France, 4.3 percent in West Germany and only 3.9 percent in Britain. If one discounted income from North Sea oil, Britain's productivity rose by only about 1 percent. Britain's manufacturing sector shrank by 10 percent in this period, while at the same time the import of manufactured goods rose by 40 percent. As a result, in 1983, for the first time in more than 200 years Britain imported more manufactured goods than it exported. It did not recover its 1979 manufacturing level for almost ten years, but even so British manufacturing compared

poorly with its competitors. Car workers in Germany could produce a Ford Escort under virtually identical conditions in half the time take in Britain. As a House of Lords Select Committee on Overseas Trade reported in 1985: "It is neither exaggeration nor irresponsible to say that the present situation undoubtedly contains the seeds of a major political and economic crisis in the foreseeable future. By 1988 Britain's balance of payments deficit (the amount by which imports exceed exports) was larger than the total deficit for the previous forty years.

Furthermore, unemployment rose from 1.5 million in 1979 to over 3 million by 1983 and was reduced to 2.5 million by the end of the 1980s mainly by a fall in the workforce and by redefining unemployment. Although some expansion occurred between 1983 and 1989, 60 percent of all jobs created in this period were part-time."

The 1980s Conservative government believed that only painful restructuring would lead

to greater efficiency. It scored some successes, of which the most notable was in steel production. In the early 1980s British Steel was an industry in decline. By the late 1980s its future was bright, the industry having made a profit in 1988 of £410 million, a better result than that of any European competitor, and its own best result since its formation in 1967. This was achieved by shedding most of the workforce, from 130,000 in 1980 to 50,000 by 1987, and improving efficiency. In 1980 the production of one ton of steel had taken 12 man-hours. By 1988 it was taking only 3.7 man-hours.

However, although in certain areas efficiency was much improved, Britain still compared poorly with worker productivity elsewhere, and the prospects for real recovery remained bleak. In 1988 average productivity per employee was:

Switzerland	\$55,700
Japan	\$47,500
France	\$45,000
United States	\$41,700
Italy	\$38,200

Britain \$31,400

(Source: Institute for Labour Productivity and Production)

The only real bonus Britain enjoyed was the oil resources discovered mainly in the North Sea, whereby Britain became the world's sixth largest oil producer. It was oil revenue which softened the impact of the recession 1979-85, reaching an annual peak of £12 billion by 1985, but it then began to decline. Much of the oil revenue was spent on social security for those unemployed, and this apparently unproductive use of this precious resource became a hotly debated issue. Many felt that oil revenues distracted Britain from facing economic realities, and that they should have been invested to lay new foundations for Britain's industrial possibilities. For example, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) appealed in the early 1980s for investment in engineering, production, design, managerial and marketing practices: "This probably represents the only route available

to the United Kingdom to become a high-income, high-growth economy as the contribution of North Sea oil declines."

There were other areas for optimism during the 1980s. Small businesses began to increase rapidly. By 1984 officially there was a total of 1.4 million small businesses, though the real figure, including the 'black economy', was probably nearer two million. However proportionately there were 50 percent more in West Germany and the United States, and about twice as many in France and Japan.

Many small businesses fail to survive, mainly as a result of poor management, but also because, compared with almost every other European Community member, Britain offers the least encouraging conditions. But such small businesses are important not only because large businesses grow from small ones, but also because over half the new jobs in Britain are created by firms employing fewer than 100 staff.

It is not as if Britain is without industrial strength. It is one of the

world leaders in the production of microprocessors. Without greater investment and government encouragement it is doubtful whether Britain will hold on to its lead in this area. However, it has already led to the creation of 'hi-tech' industries in three main areas, west of London along the M4 motorway or 'Golden Corridor', the lowlands between Edinburgh and Dundee, nicknamed 'Silicon Glen', and the area between London and Cambridge. In the mid 1980s Silicon Glen was producing 70 percent of British silicon wafers containing the microchips essential for the new information technology. The Cambridge Science Park, symbolized by its Modernist Schlumberger Building, is the flagship of hi-tech Britain. Beginning in 1969, by 1986 the Park contained 322 hi-tech companies. In the words of a consultant, "The Cambridge phenomenon... represents one of the very few spontaneous growth centres in a national economy that has been depressed for all of a decade."

THE TRADE UNIONS

The other central actor in industry is the trade union movement, the organized labour of Britain. Its main characteristics are 1) the belief in collective bargaining with employers to protect the interests of its members, i.e. negotiations by one or more unions with an employer to achieve satisfactory rates of pay for the employees; 2) a willingness to be militant, using any form of industrial action to be effective; 3) affiliation to and support of the Labour Party.

Originally many of the unions were organized to protect their members not only against employers but often against other workers, especially where a particular skill was involved. In 1868 the Trade Union Congress (TUC) was established as a coordinating body to represent the collective interests of workers with industrialists and with government.

From 1945-79 the number of unions in the TUC increased, thus leading to a smaller number of

more powerful unions. In 1960 there were 650 unions with 9.8 million members, but by 1980 there were 438 unions with over 12 million members. This centralization was an inevitable response to the growing concentration of capital power. By the mid 1970s over 25 percent of the workforce were employed in firms of over 10,000 employees in the private sector alone. The largest union, the Transport and General Workers (TGWU) had 2 million members in 1979. More unions merged during the 1980s, partly because of falling membership, but also to adapt to the increased power of employers in insist on making arrangements with a single union at the workplace rather than several, as had traditionally happened.

During the 1960s and 1970s the unions became politically so powerful that no government could operate without closely consulting them. 'Beef and sandwich' lunches at which trade unionists and Prime Ministers discussed industrial strategy became a well-known feature of

life at 10 Downing Street. In 1974 a miners' strike brought down the Conservative government and five years later strike action brought down the Labour government. Throughout the period both Labour and Conservative governments had tried to introduce laws to limit union power, but both had been unsuccessful and decided that voluntary agreements were the only fruitful solution.

The Conservative government elected in 1979, however, was determined to limit union power by law and introduced a series of laws in 1980, 1982, 1984 and 1988. These laws had two main aims. The first was to restrict and regulate the power of unions in industry, and the second was to shift the balance of power within each union, in the belief that ordinary members of unions would moderate the behaviour of their officials. The laws reduced picketing rights (assembling outside workplace entrances to discourage anyone from entering) and the right to secondary action (sympathy strikes or other action

at workplaces not directly involved in the dispute); made union leaders liable to legal prosecution if they organized a strike without a secret ballot of membership; weakened the right of unions to insist that all workers at a particular workplace belonged to a union; threatened union funds for any violation of the new laws; insisted that all union leaders should be subject to periodic election by secret ballot; and required that the members of each union should vote on whether they should have a political fund (a clear attempt to destroy the financing of the Labour Party). Union power was further weakened by a fall in membership, from 12.2 million (53 percent of the employed workforce) in 1979 to 8.7 million by 1989. Most of the shrinkage was explained by growing unemployment, and by the shift in the national economy. Union membership was far lower in the new and growing service industries, so the loss in manufacturing was not made up in those industries. Union power was

also weakened by the exclusion of the TUC from consultation with government - no more beer and sandwiches at Downing Street.

Finally, changing economic circumstances, not only in Britain but in the industrialized world generally, brought great stress to the union movement, particularly to those most resistant to economic and technological change. In 1984-5 the miners, led by their Marxist leader, Arthur Scargill,¹ fought a prolonged and damaging strike which ended in their defeat at the hands of a triumphant Conservative government. According to one newspaper editorial it ended 'thirty years of dominant union power which had consigned this country to a third-rate industrial status'. As another newspaper commented:

"Scargill's failure achieved what decades of exhortation did not. It enabled the labour movement to sever its atrophied link with the tribal loyalties of the 1920s, and with the 'them' and 'us' mentality of class war slogans. In splitting his own union, losing its funds,

and sending strikers back to work with nothing, Scargill opened the way to a new unionism based upon the ballot box, free of ideological claptrap."

Apart from the damage to trade union morale, this defeat also led to a split in the miners union, with a small new Union of Democratic Miners being formed in Nottinghamshire. Four years later, in 1988, there were two further blows to union solidarity. The Ford Motor Company decided against building a large car factory in Dundee because the different trade unions involved could not agree on single union representation for the workforce, which Ford had demanded. A few months later the TUC felt obliged to expel one union from the movement because it had reached a special deal with employers which broke TUC guidelines. The union in question had agreed 'single union' deals and 'no-strike' undertakings with employers, in the belief that its agreement with employers reflected the realities of the modern economy, a view with

which at least one other union sympathized.

The tension between such modernists who wish to break away from old-style trade unionism, and provide a fresh type of service to its members, and the left of the trade union movement, which clings to the old working-class ideologies, is likely to continue through the 1990s. It is a struggle that the modernists are likely to win. One reason for this is that a majority of ordinary union members agree with the sense of single-union deals with employers. Furthermore the nature of union membership is changing, with a clear proportionate rise in the number of white-collar union members, a rising proportion of female members, and a dramatically increased proportion (25 percent) of members who by the end of the 1980s were share owners. Each of these three growing categories is likely to weaken the male-dominated/working-class/leftist ideologies of traditional trade unionism. It is indicative of the change that in 1987 58 percent of

union members voted either Conservative or Alliance (Liberal/Social Democrat). British trade unionism will either adapt to changing circumstances or it will continue to decline.

It is easy to exaggerate the decline of trade union power during the 1980s. In 1988 fewer days were lost through strike action than in any year since 1935. But it is also true that certain groups of workers went on strike successfully throughout the 1980s, particularly in essential services, like nursing, railways, and the ambulance service. With the loss of direct political power, unions become more skillful at winning the sympathy of the public. While the unions are likely to remain bound by legal restrictions, many Conservatives as well as the labour Party believe the unions must be brought back into constructive cooperation with government. As a result the unions are likely to regain in the 1990s some of the authority they lost in the 1980s.

The TUC itself, however many never recover its powers because,

in the words of one commentator, "The wave of mergers suggests that in a few years five or six mega-unions will dominate the TUC. They will also weaken it because they will need it less."

The trade union movement has often been blamed for Britain's disappointing economic performance since 1945. Many people, even union members, have highly contradictory attitude towards trade unionism. While a majority in the 1980s felt that the unions had too much power, a majority also believed that without union support most workers would receive worse pay and conditions. Despite a popular impression that trade unions have damaged the national economy, it should be remembered that even during the worst years of strikes, 1967-70, Britain was midway between the most and least strike-affected industrialized countries. The apparent irresponsibility of the union is partly explained by hostile press reporting. This has concentrated on industrial conflict but ignored other aspects of union activity, its voluntary workers and

social assistance to those suffering hardship. A survey in 1979-80 at 2,000 factories and other workplaces, for example, showed that 48 percent of employees believed management-worker relations were first rate, 34 percent good, 15 percent fairly good, 1 percent not bad and only 2 percent fairly poor or bad. The fact is that most union members never strike during their working life, and most unions will try every possibility to avoid strike action.

THE WORKFORCE

By 1991 there were 35.5 million people of working age one million more than in 1981. There will be no substantial change in the size of the workforce until after the year 2000. But the age pattern will change. By 1994 the number of 16-19-year-old will have fallen by nearly a million, compared with ten years earlier. By the year 2000 there are likely to be 1.8 million more people aged 34-54 in the workforce. This will have far-reaching implications. The workforce changes will be felt

unevenly during the 1990s, with a loss of 3.3 percent in Scotland and the north west, and of 4.9 percent in the north, compared with a growth of 7.6 percent in the south west and of 10.2 percent in East Anglia.

There have been significant changes in the labour force. In 1980 one in five jobs was part-time, by 1990 it was one in four. During the decade 1973-83 for the first time in British history white-collar workers outnumbered blue-collar workers, the former growing from 43 to 52 percent of the workforce. Mass unemployment was a major factor in blue-collar decline. But there has also been a sharp decline in the lower grades of clerical worker. A gap has grown between those sufficiently skilled to operate computers and other hi-tech equipment, and the lower paid manual workers who cannot. This is, today, the real divide between white and blue-collar classes. A more flexible employment pattern may grow, with more people sharing jobs on a part-time basis, some people

coming back from retirement, and many more women entering the workforce. If this is to happen government will have to help young mothers financially so that they can provide care for young children during working hours. By 1990 only 3 percent of companies had introduced child-care schemes. Information technology may change the pattern of workplace attendance. On average most workers in London spend over four hours weekly on commuting to work, yet with computer terminals and fax machines at home they might only need to attend their workplace for periodic meetings. A survey in 1988 suggested that by 1995 almost half the workforce could be doing part of their work from home. This would cut down office rents and other office costs. It might also make qualified people in depressed areas of the country more competitive than workers in the southeast. It could lead to a decline of payroll employees, and an increased use of self-employed workers hired for particular jobs.

Despite its unhappy reputation for industrial disputes, there is a high level of job satisfaction in Britain. Surveys in 1979 and 1989 show that almost 90 percent of the workforce are either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with their work situation. Furthermore, a comparative study by European trade unions in 1980 showed that the British worked almost an hour a day more, usually in less favourable work conditions, than elsewhere in Europe. But this does not mean that British workers are either efficient or hardworking. As Ralf Dahrendorf noted in 1982, "Any foreigner who watches the British at work cannot help being amazed at their leisurely pace." In 1990 a senior industrialist put it another way, "The British are insufficiently serious about earning a living."

Throughout the 1980s unemployment was a major problem. But its level varied on a regional and occupational basis. After a decade of mass unemployment, unemployment was below 2 percent in many prosperous towns of the south by

1989, for example Winchester, Crawley and Tunbridge Wells, compared with a national average of 6.5 percent. In occupational terms, unemployment among unskilled labourers in 1986 was around 35 percent, compared with another recession; in 1990-92 unemployment again rose sharply, hitting white-collar occupations in the southeast harder of all. During 1990 unemployment rose by 22.5 percent nationally, but by 51 percent in the south. By comparison the job losses in the north were well below the national average.

Unemployment, the weakening of trade unions and the reduction of higher rates of income tax have all helped increased the gap between higher and lower rates of pay in Britain. A century ago, in 1889, the first reliable earnings figures were published. They showed that the highest-paid fifth of the workforce earned 143 percent more than the national average and the lowest-paid fifth earned 31 percent less than the average. Exactly a century later official figures showed that, in spite of the

policies of the welfare state 1945-79, the gap between top and bottom earners had widened rather than narrowed. In 1989 the top fifth earned 158 percent more and the bottom fifth 35 percent less than the national average. Most of this new inequality occurred in the 1980s. At the bottom of the scale, almost six million full-time workers, 37 percent of the total full-time workers, 37 percent of the total full-time workforce, earned less than the 'decency thresh-old' defined by the Council of Europe as 68 percent of average full-time earnings. At the top of the scale senior executives of British companies in 1988 were receiving salary increases averaging 28 percent, compared with average earnings increases of 9.25 percent. Even the increases in average earnings, it should be noted, were substantially above the inflation rate at the time of under 5 percent.

From 'Britain in Close-up'
(Longman - 1999)

QUESTIONS

1. What were the successes of "Thatcherism"? What were the failures?
2. How far are the trade unions responsible for Britain's disappointing economic performance?
3. What happened to the workforce as a result of social changes in Britain in the 1980s? What will happen to it in the 1990s?
4. Is Britain's economic decline inevitable? Can its economic position improve? Find arguments to support both points of view.

UNIT IV

A SOCIAL PROFILE

It is easy to assume that the population of a Western industrialized country like Britain is stable, but it is a

present 57 million, until about 2025. As already noted, the population is unevenly distributed across the land, and there has been



Trafalgar Square is a famous meeting place.

dangerous assumption to make. There is plenty of change going on, even though the population will not reach 60 million, from its

an insistent drift to the south and south east since the 1980s. But the shape of Britain's population in age and composition has been

changing substantially too. Since the middle of the century fertility has fluctuated, rapidly increasing and decreasing (up to 30 percent variation) in a single decade. This has serious implications for health and education services, and for employment.

Overall, the 'baby boom' that followed the end of World War II, followed by an overall decline in births (to slightly under replenishment level) during the 1970s, is leading to major changes in balance between age groups. The higher birth rate of the 1960s exacerbated unemployment levels in the 1980s, since there were 30 percent more young people leaving school than a decade previously. In the period 1971-81 the number of infants (0-4 age group) fell by 12 percent, while those aged 65 or over increased by 34 percent (to become 17.7 percent of the total population). Primary school enrolment in 1986 was 26 percent lower than in 1971.

The British population is already one of the oldest in Europe, and it is slowly getting older. In 1990

the median age in Britain was thirty-six but it will rise to forty-one by 2020. At the end of the 1990s the number of pensioners will begin to rise rapidly, and the workforce will shrink. One result will be that by 2020 there will be twice as many people aged eighty-five or over as in 1990. A disproportionate number of the old, incidentally, choose to retire to the south coast and East Anglia, creating regional imbalances.

In the 1980s there were too many school leavers, but in the 1990s there will be too few to fill the job vacancies created by retirement. This could have important implications for some of the presently unemployed, for the fuller employment of women and for deferring retirement until a later age, a logical step for those who wish to continue working in view of the better health most enjoy today.

Britain is also changing ethnically. There used to be an assumption that the British were nearly all Anglo-Saxon, in spite of the substantial immigration of people from continental Europe during

the first half of the century. Since black people from the Caribbean were recruited to fill job vacancies during the 1950s over two million Afro-Caribbean and Asian people have come to live and work in Britain, becoming 5.7 percent of Britain's population by 1990, but concentrated particularly in London and Leicester (where their density is three times the national average), and in Bradford, Slough and Birmingham (where it is twice the national average).

Despite such changes, broad stereotypical views concerning British society persist. Take, for example, the classic family.

FAMILY

"There is no such thing as society," Mrs. Thatcher once said. "Only individual men and women, and families" Many people disagree with her, but there remains a strong feeling that the immediate or 'nuclear' family is the basic unit of society, and that traditional family values remain the mainstay of national life.

The nuclear family is usually pictured as a married couple, with two children, ideally a girl and a boy, and perhaps their grandmother, or granny, in the background. As a picture of the way most British live, this becomes increasingly unrealistic each year. If the picture includes the traditional idea of the man going out to work while the wife stays at home, it is probably true of less than 10 percent of the country. Even without such a limited definition, only 42 percent of the population live in nuclear family households, and even within this group a considerable proportion of parents are in their second marriage with children from a previous marriage. In fact, it is expected that by the year 2000 only half the children born in Britain will grow up in a conventional family with parents already married when they were born and remaining married after they have grown up.

Social attitudes and behaviour are undoubtedly changing. The number of people living alone has risen significantly, from one in ten

in 1951 to one in four thirty years later. By the end of the century it is expected to rise to one in three. In the same period the proportion of households containing five or more people has dropped from one in five to fewer than one in ten. The British are clearly becoming a more solitary nation in their living habits. This will have social implications for example housing needs in the future. There is an increasing proportion of men and women living together before marriage. For example, in 1961 only 1 percent of first-time married couples had previously been living together, compared with 24 percent in 1988. By the year 2000 it is estimated that most couples will live together before marrying. Others living together, or 'cohabiting', never do get married. In 1979 only 3 percent of all women between the ages of 18 and 49 were cohabiting, but ten years later the level had risen to over 8 percent.

This does not mean that there are fewer marriages in Britain. Marriages are as popular as ever,

with 400,000 weddings yearly. But in 1961, 85 percent of all marriages were for the first time, while today 37 percent are second-time marriages for at least one partner. This figure implies a high yearly divorce rate, and this has risen to be the highest in Europe. In 1961 the yearly divorce rate was 2 per thousand, but by 1988 this had risen to 12.9 per thousand, almost twice the European average of 6.9 per thousand. In fact, more than one in three first marriages ends in divorce, one quarter of first marriages failing in the first five years. Research shows that the rate is highest among those on a low income and those who marry very young, say under the age of 24.

What happens to those who do not marry? Remarriage may keep up the number of total marriages each year, but there has also been an increase in the number of couples choosing to live together but not marry, and also of women who choose to marry later in life. Only one in seven women aged between 25 and 29 was still single

in 1979, compared with one in three by the end of the 1980s. Some, undoubtedly, choose to cohabit, but other women prefer a measure of independence, either by cohabiting or by living alone, which they fear they will lose by marriage. The preference of pursuit of career rather than marriage was characteristic of the 1980s. Personal development must also partly explain the growing divorce rate. Alongside a social acceptance of divorce greater today than in the 1950s and 1960s, women have been increasingly dissatisfied by the traditional expectations of the woman's role in marriage. They also frequently want the right to pursue a career. Sometimes the husband's difficulty in adapting to the new situation puts a strain on the marriage.

One inevitable consequence of the climbing divorce rate has been the rise of single parent families. These families often experience isolation and poverty. Single parent families have been increasing, doubling from 8 percent of all families in 1972 to

16 percent by 1988. The great majority of single parents are women. Children, of course, are main victims. One in three children under the age of five has divorced parents. Forty percent of children experience the divorce of their parents before the age of eighteen.

There has also been an increase in babies born outside marriage. It is a sign of both increase in numbers and changing social attitudes that these babies, once described as 'illegitimate' (a permanent punishment for the innocent baby), are now described officially as 'non-marital'. In 1961 only 6 percent of births were non-marital, but the rate rose steeply during the 1980s, from 16 to 23 percent in the years 1983-87. This rapid rise reflects the increase in cohabitation, which accounts for 48 percent of non-marital births. Unfortunately, cohabitation is no indication of a long-term stable environment for children. Statistics show that cohabiting parents are three times more likely to split up than married parents. The remaining non-marital births

are to single mothers, with the rate being highest in areas of high unemployment and the greatest poverty, suggesting to some analysts that the birth of a child gives a woman in such circumstances someone to love, a purpose in life and also state assistance. There is also an ethnic dimension. On account of the traditional weakness of family life resulting from centuries of slavery, 43.4 percent of West Indian families are single-parent families.

What can be made of such evidence? For some members of the Conservative Party, such statistics are evidence of moral decline, and they argue the need to return to traditional values. In the face of the evidence this sounds like wishful thinking, but it is true that during the 1980s, in the words of an official survey, "the pendulum is swinging against the more liberal attitudes of the 1960s and 1970s". By the end of the 1980s there was a more censorious attitude towards sex outside marriage (but not towards sex before marriage), towards

homosexuality, the availability of pornography and the provision of contraception for those under the age of sixteen.

Is Britain really in moral decline?

It would be safer to say that moral values are changing, with less attention on traditional definitions of immorality, and greater emphasis on personal morality being rooted in kindness and respect for others. Many, however, would disagree with this verdict, pointing to the high divorce and non-marital birth rates as evidence of fundamental failure to be kind or to respect others. One retired school teacher and Devon magistrate has this to say:

"You cannot give young people moral tuition in this (sex) area any more. They regard it as an intolerable intrusion into their privacy." Yet, he continues, "I must admit that I also find older children more mature, more responsible, more considerate to each other." It is too easy simply to blame a moral decline on the failure to uphold family values. There are other things which must be considered to understand what

is going on in society and why. A fundamental one is the matter of social class.

SOCIAL CLASS

Britain has a deeply individualistic society. Nevertheless, it is also described as having a class-ridden one. Is it really true? The answer is not simple. Undoubtedly Britain is a class-conscious society but this does not mean that society is more divided than, for example, in France. Many people feel that class divisions exist less in reality than in the imagination. In part the sense of division probably comes from that love of hierarchy and sense of deference about which Walter Bagehot wrote over a century ago. Not only the Royal Family, but also the surviving titled families and old land-owning families are treated with greater deference than might be expected in a democracy. There can be no doubt that they enjoy special status.

But such people are a very small minority of the population. Most people are classified according to their work occupations falling

into two broad groups, as in other industrialized societies, the middle class (or blue-collar workers). The kind of work done not only indicates education and how much is earned, but also the kind of social contact that is usual. Most people generally mix socially with the same kind of people as those with whom they work. Manual workers tend to mix with each other, as do professionals (doctors, lawyers and senior civil servants) and managers. Such a picture suggests a static situation, but in fact there is major movement between classes. Many people move from one category to another or increase their level of responsibility during their working lives. More importantly, the working class is rapidly declining. In 1911 three out of every four employed or self-employed people were manual workers. By 1950 that proportion had fallen to two out of three, but since then has fallen to only one in three. Since the 1950s there has been a massive growth of the middle class.

The middle class embraces a range of people from senior professionals, for example judges, senior medical specialists and senior civil servants, through to clerical workers - in other words, almost all people who earn their living in a 'non-manual' way. To this extent, the middle class embodies much variety and cannot claim a single identity. The sense of social class or group is affected by social circle, education and comparative wealth, although these do not necessarily work together. A relatively poor but highly educated family may find itself associating with wealthier but similarly highly educated friends. An extremely rich but less highly educated family will probably associate with others of similar educational level.

The middle class is the engine room of the economy. Unlike the working class, the middle class has great fluidity and mobility. During the twenty years 1971-91 approximately two million jobs are created in the professional and managerial fields alone, and the

whole middle class is constantly expanding. Over half of today's middle class started life in the working class.

Beyond the middle class lies a small but powerful upper class, which survives from one generation to another. Although the upper class seems to be merely an extension of the middle class, it is actually separated by three things: property, networks and power. For example, the top 1 percent of wealth holders probably own about one quarter of the nation's wealth, a large drop from the two thirds they controlled in 1914, but larger proportion than one might expect in a modern democracy. The reason that the top 1 percent has remained so wealthy is inheritance, which is spread around the family to minimize the effects of taxation. Without inheritance the top 1 percent would be far less wealthy and would not be able to sustain their position from one generation to another. The core of the class is probably only between 25,000 and 50,000 strong, but they control

key areas of capital in the national economy. For example, a study in 1976 showed how just eleven people held fifty-seven directorships in the top 250 companies in Britain. Nine of the eleven, through their directorships, linked thirty-nine major companies. Members of the upper class share a very specific identity. The sons all go to public schools, usually the more famous ones. As one sociologist has noted, "The ruling minority has survived all the transformations from medieval to modern society by a long series of concessions and accommodations in return for retention of privileges and property." In fact in the 1980s, after thirty years of a more egalitarian mood, there was a growing nostalgia for the upper-class life style, exemplified by the television dramatization of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* in 1979 and stimulated by a general political mood which encouraged the acquisition and display of wealth as a symbol of success. Perhaps the publication of a bestseller in 1982, entitled *The*

Official Sloane Ranger Handbook, which parodied the upper classes for whom Sloane Street was the centre of their London life.

Those who think that Britain has a class-ridden society usually think of the contrast between this small group, maintained by its great wealth, property and privileged education, and the shrinking unskilled manual working class, which has been characterized by significantly higher unemployment than other groups. But these two extremes are where there is the least social mobility. Almost half those born into the upper class remain in it, while 40 percent of sons of unskilled manual workers themselves remain in that class. But among the intermediate categories of people, skilled manual workers, clerical workers, supervisors, managers and professionals, there is a high degree of social mobility. Nevertheless, the perception of class conflict remains. Since 1964 opinion polls have asked a random sample of people, "There used to be a lot of talk in politics about the 'class struggle'. Do you

think there is a class struggle in this country?" In 1964 48 percent thought so, and this figure increased to 60 percent in 1975 and 74 percent in 1984. One reason for this may be the way in which the slow redistribution of wealth from the top 5 or so percent (which still controls 47 percent of marketable wealth) has only filtered down through the richer half of society. In relative terms, the bottom 50 percent has remained almost wholly unaffected.

From 'Britain in Close-up'
(Longman - 1999)

QUESTIONS

1. Since the middle of the century, fertility in Britain has increased and decreased significantly. What effect does this have on employment?
2. Why is the number of "non-marital" births increasing?
3. Are class divisions in British society real or imagined? Find evidence in the text to support your argument.

4. The traditional picture of the British family with a married couple and two children is becoming increasingly unrealistic. In what major ways is the family changing? Are similar changes taking place in Vietnam?

UNIT V

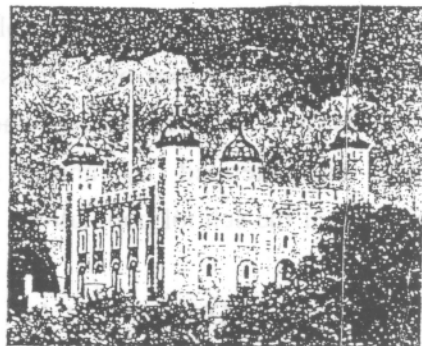
THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Education in Britain is provided by the Local Education Authority (LEA) in each county. It is financed partly by the Government and partly by local taxes. Until recently, planning and organization were not controlled by central government. Each LEA was free to decide how to organize education in its own area. In September 1988, however, the 'National Curriculum' was introduced, which means that there is now greater governmental control over what is taught in schools.

NURSERY EDUCATION (UNDER 5 YEARS)

Children do not have to go to school until they reach the age of five, but there is some free nursery-school education before that age.

However, LEAs do not have nursery-school places for all who would like them and these places are usually given to families in special circumstances, for example families with one parent only. Because of the small number of nursery schools, parents in many areas have formed play groups where children under 5 years can go for a morning or afternoon a couple of times a week.



The Tower of London was first built by William the Conqueror more than 900 years ago, and was famous as a prison.

PRIMARY EDUCATION (5 TO 11 YEARS)

Primary education takes place in infant schools (pupils aged from 5 to 7 years) and junior schools (from 8 to 11 years). (Some LEAs have a different system in which middle schools replace junior schools and take pupils aged from 9 to 12 years.)

PRIVATE EDUCATION (5 TO 18 YEARS)

Some parents choose to pay for private education in spite of the existence of free state education. Private schools are called by different names to state schools: the preparatory (often called 'prep') schools are for pupils aged up to 13, and the public schools are for 13 to 18 year-olds. These schools are very expensive and they are attended by about 5 percent of the school population.

SECONDARY EDUCATION (11 TO 16/18 YEARS)

Since the 1944 Education Act of Parliament, free secondary education has been available to all

children in Britain. Indeed, children must go to school until the age of 16, and pupils may stay on for one or two years more if they wish.

Secondary schools are usually much larger than primary schools and most children - over 80 percent - go to a comprehensive school at the age of 11. These schools are not selective - you don't have to pass an exam to go there.

In 1965 the Labour Government introduced the policy of comprehensive education. Before that time, all children took an exam at the age of 11 called the '11+'. Approximately the top 20 percent were chosen to go to the academic grammar schools. Those who failed the '11+' (80 percent) went to secondary modern schools.

A lot of people thought that this system of selection the age of 11 was unfair on many children. So comprehensive schools were introduced to offer suitable courses for pupils of all abilities. Some LEAs started to change over to comprehensive education

immediately, but some were harder to convince and slower to act. There are a few LEAs who still keep the old system of grammar schools, but most LEAs have now changed over completely to non-selective education in comprehensive schools.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

Comprehensive schools want to develop the talents of each individual child. So they offer a wide choice of subjects, from art and craft, woodwork and domestic science to the sciences, modern languages, computer science, etc. All these subjects are enjoyed by both girls and boys.

Pupils at comprehensive schools are quite often put into 'sets' for the more academic subjects such as mathematics or languages. Sets are formed according to ability in each subject, so that for example the children in the highest set for maths will not necessarily be in the highest set for French. All pupils move to the next class automatically at the end of the year.

EDUCATIONAL REFORM

In the late 1980s the Conservative Government made important changes to the British educational system. One of the most fundamental changes was the introduction of a new 'National Curriculum'. The aim was to provide a more balanced education.

In secondary school, for example, 80% of the timetable must be spent on the 'core curriculum'. This must include English, Mathematics, Science and a Modern Language for all pupils up to the age of 16. (Before 1989 pupils of 13 or 14 used to choose the subjects they wanted to continue studying.) At the same time, the new curriculum places greater emphasis on the more practical aspects of education. Skills are being taught which students will need for life and work, and 'work experience' - when pupils who are soon going to leave school spend some time in a business or industry - has become a standard part of the school program.

Together with the 'National Curriculum', a program of 'Records of Achievement' was introduced. This program is known as 'REACH', and it attempts to set learning objectives for each term and year in primary school, and for each component of each subject at secondary school. This has introduced much more central control and standardization into what is taught. Many people think this will raise educational standards, but some teachers argue that they have lost the ability to respond to the needs and interests of *their* pupils, which may be different from pupils from other areas.

As part of the 'REACH' program, new tests have been introduced for pupils at the ages of 7, 11, 13 and 16. The aim of these tests is to discover any schools or areas, which are not teaching to high enough standards. But many parents and teachers are unhappy. They feel that it is a return to the days of the '11+' and that the tests are unfair because they reflect differences in home background rather than in ability. Some

teachers also fear that because of preparation for the tests, lessons will be more 'narrow', with a lot of time being spent on Mathematics and English, for example, while other interesting subjects which are not tested may be left out.

Educational reform is bringing other changes too. City Technology Colleges (CTCs) are new super-schools for scientifically gifted children, who - the Government hopes - will be the scientists and technological experts of the future. These schools are partly funded by industry.

In addition to the CTCs, since 1998 the Government has given ordinary schools the right to 'opt out of' (choose to leave) the LEA if a majority of parents want it. Previously all state schools were under the control of the LEA, which provided the schools in its area with money for books etc., paid the teachers, and controlled educational policy. Now schools, which 'opt out', will receive money directly from the Government and will be free to spend it as they like. They can even pay teachers

more or less than in LEA schools if they want to, and they can accept any children - the pupils do not have to come from the neighborhood. Many people fear that this will mean a return to selection, i.e. these schools will choose the brightest children. The Government says that the new schools will mean more choice for parents.

EXAMS

At the age of 14 or 15, in the third or fourth form of secondary school, pupils begin to choose their exams subjects. In 1988 a new public examination - the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) - was introduced for 16 year-olds. This examination assesses pupils on the work they do in the 4th and 5th year at secondary school, and is often internally assessed, although there may also be an exam at the end of the course.

Pupils who stay on into the sixth form or who go on to a Sixth Form College (17 year-olds in the Lower Sixth and 18 year-olds in the Upper Sixth) usually fall into

two categories. Some pupils will be retaking GCSEs in order to get better grades. Others will study two or three subjects for an 'A' Level. This means that if pupils wish to study more than two or three subjects in the sixth form they can take a combination of 'A' and 'AS' Levels. In Scotland the exam system is slightly different.

LEAVING SCHOOL AT SIXTEEN

Many people decide to leave school at the age of 16 and go to a Further Education (FE) College. Here most of the courses are linked to some kind of practical vocational training, for example in engineering, typing, cooking or hairdressing. Some young people are given 'day release' (their employer allows them time off work) so that they can follow a course to help them in their job.

For those 16 year-olds who leave school and who cannot find work but do not want to go to FE College, the Government has introduced the Training Credit Scheme. This scheme allows young people £2,000 to buy

training leading to a National Vocational Qualification from an employer or training organization that participates in the scheme. Because the young people pay for their own training it encourages employers to give them work. It also gives the trainee valuable work experience.

*From 'Spotlight on Britain'
(Oxford University Press - 2001)*

QUESTIONS

1. Do you think secondary education should be selective or comprehensive?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of both systems?
3. What do you think of the Vietnamese education?
4. Should young people take a break of one or two years between leaving school and continuing with further education?

UNIT VI**CULTURE - LEISURE - ENTERTAINMENT -
SPORT AND HOLIDAYS****THE BRITISH OUT OF DOORS**

The British spend as much time as they can out of doors, in spite of the weather. Sometimes in summer it is grey and wet for day after day, while in winter it can be sunny and dry and even warm. Families who can afford it, keep ponies, and many people hire horses from riding stables, for riding is very popular, especially among girls. You can go pony trekking of Britain, on Exmoor and Dartmoor in the West Country, and on the hills and mountains of northern England, Scotland and Wales. Pony trekking is one of the best ways of seeing Britain, because there are so many bare hilltops with wonderful views.

Family holidays by the seaside in towns like Blackpool, Brighton or Scarborough are very English. The

children build sand castles on the beach, while their parents dip their feet in the waves or sleep in deck chairs, and the whole family eats shell fish and enjoys all the different amusements on the piers. People who want a quiet seaside holiday go to the unspoilt rocky coasts of Devon and Cornwall, Scotland and Wales.

From spring until autumn many young people spend their holidays hiking - walking long distances from place to place with packs on their backs. It doesn't cost much and is the best way of escaping from crowds. Britain is one of the most thickly populated countries in Europe. Yet there are large areas where there are no towns, only a few old villages and farms. In some of the loneliest and loveliest areas there are long-distance footpaths. The longest,

the Pennine Way, is over 300 km long. It winds through forests, along the top of tall, grassy hills, down into deep valleys called 'dales'. Some farms will offer hikers bed and breakfast. There are also Youth Hostels and plenty of places to camp. The Pennine hills are called the backbone of England. Walking in the mountains of Britain can be dangerous. Paths made by sheep suddenly drop into thin air and every year walkers and rock-climbers fall to their death. Ben Nevis, in Scotland, Britain's highest mountain, is only 1342m high, but it has a rock face of 300m from top to bottom.

From 'Background to English - speaking Countries' (Macmillan Publishers - 1997)

A NATIONAL PASSION

Sport probably plays a more important part in people's lives in Britain than it does in most other countries. For a very large number, and this is especially true for men, it is their main form of entertainment. Millions take part in some kind of sport at least once

a week. Many millions more are regular spectators and follow one or more sports. There are hours of televised sport each week. Every newspaper, national or local, quality or popular, devotes several pages entirely to sport.

The British are only rarely the best in the world at particular sports in modern times. However, they are one of the best in the world in a much larger number of different sports than any other country (British individualism at work again). This chapter looks at the most publicized sports with the largest followings. But it should be noted that hundreds of other sports are played in Britain, each with its own small but enthusiastic following. Some of these may not be seen as a sport at all by many people. For most people with large gardens, for example, croquet is just an agreeable social pastime for a sunny afternoon. But to a few, it is a deadly serious competition. The same is true of other games such as indoor bowling, darts or snooker. Even board games, the kind you buy in a toyshop, have their national

champions. Think of any pastime, however trivial, which involves some element of competition and, somewhere in Britain, there is probably a national association for it which organizes contests.

The British are so fond of competition that they even introduce it into gardening. Many people indulge in an informal rivalry with their neighbours as to who can grow the better flowers or vegetables. But the rivalry is sometimes formalized. Through the country, there are competitions in which gardeners enter their cabbages, leeks, onions, carrots or whatever in the hope that they will be judged the best. There is a similar situation with animals. There are hundreds of dog and cat shows throughout the country at which owners hope that their pet will a prize.

THE SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF SPORT

The importance of participation in sport has legal recognition in Britain. Every local authority has a duty to provide and maintain playing fields and other facilities,

which are usually very cheap to use and sometimes even free. Spectator sport is also a matter of official public concern. For example, there is a law which prevents the television rights to the most famous annual sporting occasions, such as the Cup Final and the Derby, being sold exclusively to satellite channels, which most people cannot receive. In these cases it seems to be the event, rather than the sport itself, which is important. Every year the Boat Race and the Grand National are watched on television by millions of people who have no great interest in rowing or horse-racing. Over time, some events have developed a mystique which gives them a higher status than the standard at which they are played deserves. In modern times, for example, the standard of rugby at the annual Varsity Match has been rather low - and yet it is always shown live on television.

Sometimes the traditions which accompany an event can seem as important as the actual sporting contest. Wimbledon, for instance, is not just a tennis tournament. It

means summer fashions, strawberries and cream, garden parties and long, warm English summer evenings. This reputation created a problem for the event's organizers in 1993, when it was felt that security for players had to be tightened. Because Wimbledon is essentially a middle-class event, British tennis fans would never allow themselves to be treated like football fans. Wimbledon with security fences, policemen on horses and other measures to keep fans off the court? It just wouldn't be Wimbledon!

The long history of such events has meant that many of them, and their venues, have become world-famous. Therefore, it is not only the British who turn in to watch. The Grand National, for example, attracts a television audience of zoo million. This worldwide enthusiasm has little to do with the standard of British sport. The cup finals of other countries often have better quality and more entertaining football on view-but more Europeans watch the English Cup Final than any other. The standard of British tennis is

poor, and Wimbledon is only one of the world's major tournaments. But if you ask any top tennis player, you find that Wimbledon is the one they really want to win. Every footballer in the world dreams of playing at Wembley, every cricketer in the world of playing at Lord's, Wimbledon and Lord's are the spiritual homes of their respective sports. Sport is a British export!

FOOTBALL

The full official name of 'soccer' (as it is called in the USA and sometimes in Britain) is 'association football'. This distinguishes it from other kinds such as rugby football (almost always called simply 'rugby'), Gaelic football, Australian football and American football. However, most people in Britain call it simply 'football'. This is indicative of its dominant role. Everywhere in the country except south Wales, it is easily the most popular spectator sport, the most-played sport in the country's state schools and one of the most popular participatory sports for

adults. In terms of numbers, football, not cricket, is the national sport, just as it is everywhere else in Europe.

British football has traditionally drawn its main following from the working class. In general, the intelligentsia ignored it. But in the last two decades of the twentieth century, it has started to attract wider interest. The appearance of fanzines is an indication of this. Fanzines are magazines written in an informal but often highly intelligent and witty style, published by the fans of some of the clubs. One or two books of literary merit have been written which focus not only on players, teams and tactics but also on the wider social aspects of the game. Light-hearted football programmes have appeared on television which similarly give attention to 'off-the-field' matters. There has also been much academic interest. At the 1990 World Cup there was a joke among English fans that it was impossible to find a hotel room because they had all been taken by sociologists!

Many team sports in Britain, but especially football, tend to be men-only, 'tribal' affairs. In the USA, the whole family goes to watch the baseball. Similarly, the whole family goes along to cheer the Irish national football team. But in Britain, only a handful of children or women go to football matches. Perhaps this is why active support for local teams has had a tendency to become violent. During the 1970s and 1980s football hooliganism was a major problem in England. In the 1990s, however, it seemed to be on the decline. English fans visiting Europe are now no worse in their behaviour than the fans of many other countries.

Attendances at British club matches have been falling for several decades. Many stadiums are very old, uncomfortable and sometimes dangerous. Accidents at professional football matches have led to the decision to turn all the country's football grounds into 'all-seater' stadiums. Fans can no longer stand, jump, shout and sway on the cheap 'terraces' behind the goals (there have been

emotional farewells at many grounds to this traditional 'way of life'). It is assumed that being seated makes fans more well-behaved. It remains to be seen whether this development will turn football matches into events for the whole family.

HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Britain is a country governed by routine. It has fewer public holidays than any other country in Europe and fewer than North America. (Northern Ireland has two extra ones, however). Even New Year's Day was not an official public holiday in England and Wales until quite recently (but so many people gave themselves a holiday any way that it was though it might as well become official!). There are almost no semi-official holidays either. Most official holidays occur either just before or just after a weekend, so that the practice of making a 'bridge' is almost unknown. Moreover, there are no traditional extra local holidays in particular places. Although the origin of the

word 'holiday' is 'holy day', not all public holidays (usually known as 'bank holidays') are connected with religious celebration.

The British also seem to do comparatively badly with regard to annual holidays. These are not as long as they are in many other countries. Although the average employee gets four weeks' paid holiday a year, in no town or city in the country would a visitor ever get the impression that the place had 'shut down' for the summer break. (In fact, about 40% of the population do not go away anywhere for their holidays.)

MODERN HOLIDAYS

Both of the traditional types of holiday have become less popular in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The increase in car ownership has encouraged many people to take caravan holidays abroad. By 1971, the British were taking 7 million foreign holidays and by 1987, 20 million. These days, millions of British people take their cars across the channel every year and nearly half of all

the nights spent on holidays away from home are spent abroad.

Most foreign holidays are package holidays, in which transport and accommodation are booked and paid for through a travel agent. These holidays are often booked a long time in advance. In the middle of winter the television companies run programmes which give information about the packages being offered. People need cheering up at this time of the year! In many British homes it has become traditional to get the holiday brochures out and start talking about where to go in the summer. Boxing Day, Spain is by far the most popular package-holiday destination.

Half of all the holidays taken within Britain are now for three days or less. Every bank-holiday weekend there are long traffic jams along the routes to the most popular holiday areas. The traditional seaside resorts have survived by adjusting themselves to this trend. (Only the rich have second houses or cottages in the countryside to which they can escape at weekends.) But there are

also many other types of holiday. Hiking in the country and sleeping at youth hotels has long been popular and so, among an enthusiastic minority, has pot-holing (The exploration of underground caves). There is also a wide range of 'activity' holidays available, giving full expression to British individualism. You can, for example, take part in a 'murder weekend', and find yourself living out the plot of detective story.

An increasing number of people now go on 'working' holiday, during which they might help to repair an ancient stone wall or take part in an archaeological dig. This is an echo of another traditional type of 'holiday' - fruit picking. It used to be the habit of poor people from the east end of London, for example, to go to Kent at the end of the summer to help with the hop harvest (hops are used for making beer).

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

Christmas is the one occasion in modern Britain when a large number of customs are enthusiastically observed by most

ordinary people within the family. The slow decrease in participation in organized religion, and the fact that Christmas in modern times is as much a secular feast as a religious one, has had little effect on these traditions. Even people who consider themselves to be anti-religious quite happily wish each other a 'Happy Christmas' or a Merry Christmas'. They do not (as in some other countries) self-consciously wish each other a 'Happy New Year' instead.

Indeed, the 'commercialization' of Christmas has itself become part of tradition. Every November in Oxford Street (one of the main shopping streets in the centre of London), a famous personality ceremoniously switches on the Christmas lights' (decorations thus 'officially' marking the start of the period of frantic. Between that time and the middle of January, most shops do nearly half of their total business for the year (most have 'sales' in early January when prices are reduced). Most people buy presents for the other members of their household and also for other relatives,

especially children. Some people also buy presents for their close friends. And to a wider circle of friends and relatives, and sometimes also to working associates and neighbours, they send Christmas cards. Some people even send such greetings to people, whom they have not seen for many years, often using the excuse of this tradition to include a letter passing on the year's news.

People also buy Christmas trees (a tradition imported from Germany in the nineteenth century). Almost every household has a tree decorated in a different way (in many cases, with coloured lights). Most people also put up other decorations around the house. Exactly what these are varies a great deal, but certain symbols of Christmas, such as bits of the holly and mistletoe plants, are very common, and the Christmas cards which the household has received are usually displayed. A 'crib', which is a model depicting the birth of Christ, also sometimes forms part of the Christmas decorations. In December, as

Christmas gets closer, carols (usually, but not always, with a religious theme) are sung in churches and schools, often at special concerts, and also, though less often than in the past, by groups of people who go from house to house collecting money for charitable causes.

The role of Father Christmas (or Santa Claus) and the customs associated with the giving of gifts vary from family to family. Most households with children tell them that Father Christmas comes down the chimney on the night of Christmas Eve (even though most houses no longer have a working chimney!). Many children lay out a Christmas stocking at the foot of their beds, which they expect to see filled when they wake up on Christmas morning. Most families put wrapped presents around or on the Christmas tree and these are opened at some time on Christmas Day.

Other activities on Christmas Day may include the eating of Christmas dinner and listening to the Queen's Christmas message. This ten-minute television

broadcast is normally the only time in the year when the monarch speaks directly to 'her' people on television. (When, in 1993, a national newspaper published the text of her speech a few days beforehand, it was a national scandal.)

The general feeling is that Christmas is a time for families. Many of the gatherings in houses on Christmas Day and Boxing Day consist of extended families (more than just parents and children). For many families, Christmas is the only time that they are all together (so it is often a time of conflict rather than harmony, in fact).

Parties on New Year's Eve, on the other hand, are usually for friends. Most people attend a gathering at this time and 'see in' the new year with a group of other people, often drinking a large amount of alcohol as they do so. In London, many go to the traditional celebration in Trafalgar Square (where there is an enormous Christmas tree which is an annual gift from the people of Norway).

In Scotland, where the Calvinists disapproved of parties and celebrations connected with religious occasions (such as Christmas), New Year, called Hogmanay, is given particular importance - so much importance that, in Scotland only, 2 January (as well as New Year's Day) is also a public holiday (so that people have two days to recover from their New Year's Eve parties instead of just one!). Some British New Year customs, such as the singing of the song Auld Lang Syne, originated in Scotland. Another, less common, one is the custom of 'first footing', in which the first person to visit a house in the new year is supposed to arrive with tokens of certain important items of survival (such as a lump of coal for the fire).

As a well-known Christmas carol reminds people, there are twelve days of Christmas. In fact, most people go back to work and school soon after New Year. Nobody pays much attention to the feast of the epiphany of 6

January (the twelfth day of Christmas), except that this is traditionally the day on which Christmas), except that this is traditionally the day on which Christmas decorations are taken down. Some people say it is bad luck to keep them up after this date.

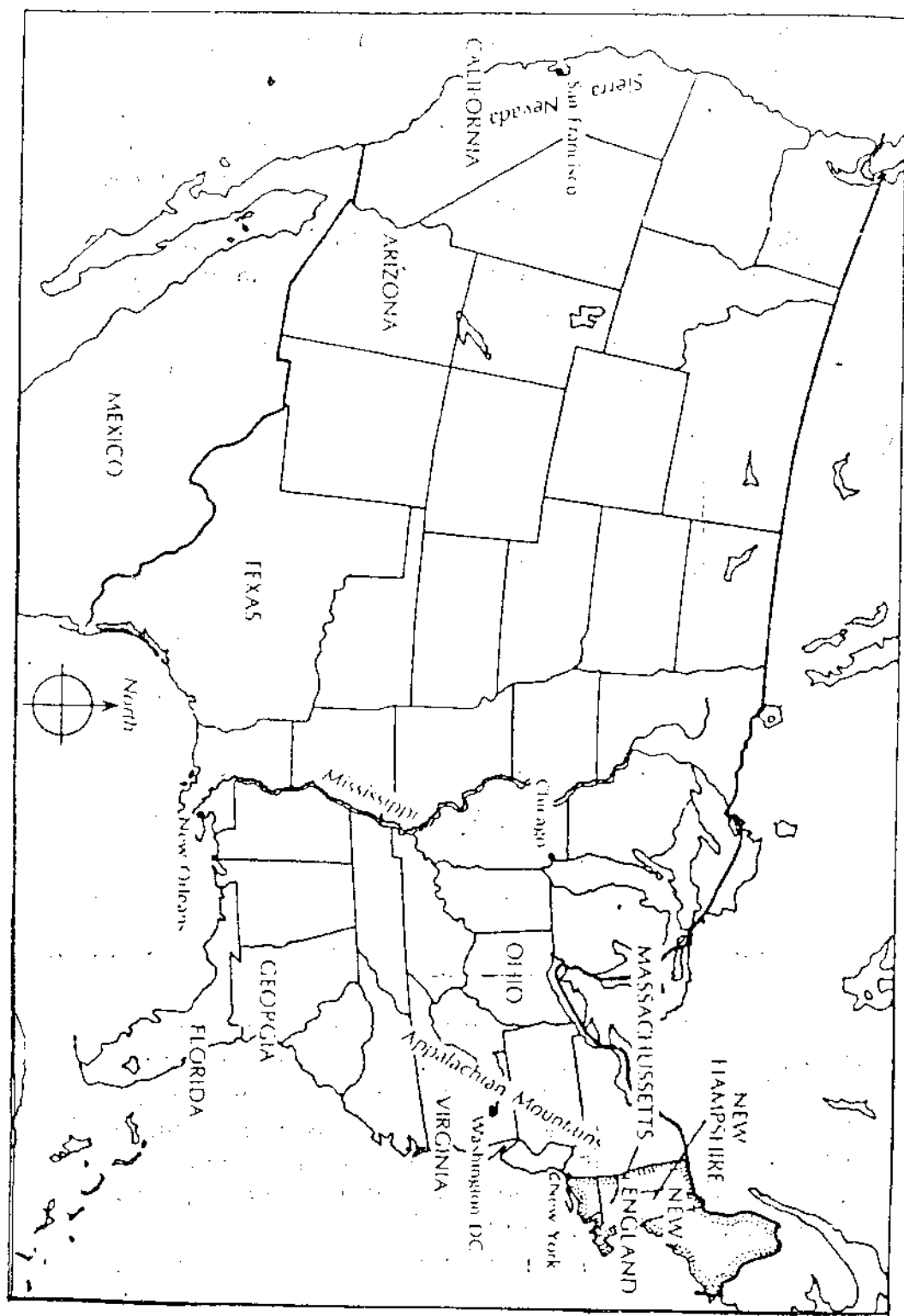
From 'Britain' (Oxford University Press - 1999)

QUESTIONS:

1. What do the British often do in their free time?
2. Find out as much as you can about holidays in the UK.
3. What is their attitude towards their sports?

Chapter 2

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



SNAPSHOT AMERICA

The US has the most powerful, diverse, and technologically advanced economy in the world, with a per capita GDP of \$27,500, the largest among major industrial nations. In this market-oriented economy, private individuals and business firms make most of the decisions, and government purchases of goods and services are made predominantly in the marketplace. US business firms enjoy considerably greater flexibility than their counterparts in Western Europe and Japan in decisions to expand capital plant, lay off surplus workers, and develop new products. At the same time, they face higher barriers to entry in their rivals' home markets than the barriers to entry of foreign firms in US markets. In all economic sectors, US firms are at or near the forefront in technological advances, especially in computers, medical equipment and aerospace,

although their advantage has steadily narrowed since the end of World War II. The onrush of technology largely explains the gradual development of a "two-tier labor market" in which those at the bottom lack the education and professional/technical skills of those at the top and, more and more, fail to get pay raises, health insurance coverage, and other benefits. The years 1994-95 witnessed moderate gains in real output, low inflation rates, and a drop in unemployment below 6%. The capture of both houses of Congress by the Republicans in the elections of 8 November 1994 has intensified the debate over how the US should address its major economic problems. These problems include inadequate investment in economic infrastructure, rapidly rising medical costs of an aging population, sizable budget and trade deficits, and stagnation of family income in the lower

economic groups. The outlook for 1996 is for continued moderate growth, low inflation, and about the same level of unemployment.

GDP: purchasing power parity -
\$7,2477 trillion

GDP real growth rate: 2.1%

GDP per capita: \$ 27.500

GDP composition by sector:

Agriculture: 2%

Industry: 23%

Services: 75%

Inflation rate (consumer prices):
2.5%

Labour force: 132,304 million
(includes unemployed)

Unemployment rate: 5.6%

*From 'Country Studies' (Hanoi
National University - 1998)*

UNIT VII

HOW THE USA GREW

Nowadays people are beginning to use the term 'Native Americans' rather than 'Indians' for the original peoples of America. They probably crossed over from Asia while there was still a land bridge between the two continents.

The first 'white' Americans left England in 1606 to settle in Virginia. They suffered terribly. After five years only 50 colonists were left out of 500. As for the colonists who landed in New England from the Mayflower in 1620, more than half died of disease during the first winter.

But the energy and determination which was one day to make the USA a superpower began to show itself. The two colonies were so successful that soon other English men, women and children came out to join them. Virginians who had been farm labourers at home made fortunes out

of growing tobacco or cotton on large plantations, and they lived in great houses similar to country houses in England. Colonists no longer judged a man by where he came from, but by what he was. The New Englanders were successful too, especially the Puritans, who believed in a very simple 'pure' form of Protestantism, and who became known as the Pilgrim Fathers. They had left England because the Church would not let them worship as they wished. Their religious faith, their courage and determination gave strength and encouragement to the Americans of the future.

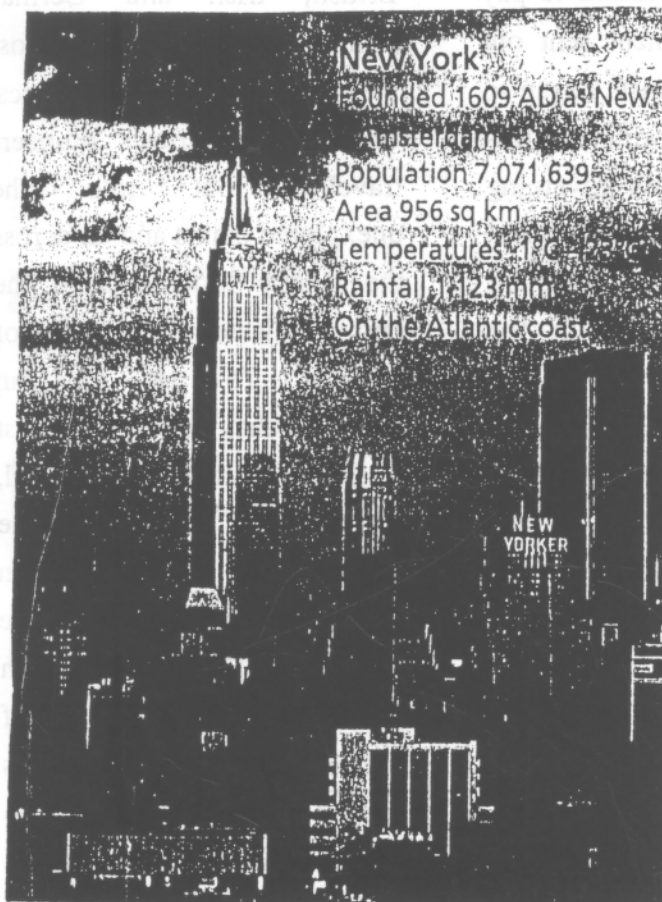
In New England the colonists made friends with the Indians at once, but in Virginia there was no friendship until the chief's daughter, Pocahontas, started

visiting the colony and fell in love with John Rolfe, a successful tobacco planter. They married, and it is claimed that there are 50,000 descendants from their one son. But the Indians soon realized that the white men were after their land, which they had at first sold to the colonists for almost nothing at all. A deep and bitter hatred grew up between the whites and the Indians.

In 1664, the first African slaves were brought to Virginia and put to work on the tobacco and cotton plantations.

Immigrants continued to come to America, mostly from Britain and Ireland, and by the middle of the 18th century there were thirteen colonies, stretching from New Hampshire and Massachusetts in the north to

Georgia in the South. But Britain's old enemy, France, had colonies in Canada and forts down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. In 1764 the French went to war with the Americans and the British, who fought side by side against them. The American, George Washington, got his first experience of warfare as an officer in a British regiment. The French were



heavily defeated and were driven out of North America.

The American Revolutionary War of 1775-83 seemed at the time a stupid and unnecessary war. It was caused by an unpopular British government encouraged by a king, George III, who was a German and knew very little about the colonies. The Government tried to force the colonists to pay taxes which were unjust. The colonists refused to pay them, so the Government sent out more troops. The colonists began to fear that the British Government was threatening their self-governing parliaments. There were powerful members of the British parliament who disagreed strongly with the Government and did their best to prevent a war, and there were many British and American people who felt that a war would be like brother fighting brother, but in 1775 war broke out.

The British army was commanded by a lazy, luxury-loving general who took his mistress around with him in his carriage. The colonists were led by George Washington and helped by friendly Indians. It was an unpleasant war. The British soldiers

were not trained to fight guerilla bands or Indians, who attacked them by surprise in the forests. Then the French sent an army to help the Americans, and before long the Americans won their independence.

The thirteen colonies formed a federation, which they called the United States of America. During the next eighty years British, Irish and German immigrants continued to cross the Atlantic to settle in America. The first American pioneers travelled out into the unexplored plains and on across the Rocky Mountains to the burning, waterless deserts of Nevada. To get to San Francisco they crossed the most fearful mountain range of all, the Sierra Nevada. The discovery of gold near San Francisco started a rush to the West, but the rich, fertile earth was the real 'gold' of California. Mountain streams brought water to crops and to plantations of fruit trees. In the foothills of the Rockies cattle ranches were set up and farmers

grew corn and wheat in the Great Plains of Montana and North and South Dakota.

After the Civil War (1861-65), which freed the slaves in the South and prevented the Southern states from leaving the Union, the USA really began to grow. Immigrants from all over Europe poured into New York, and from there moved to the factories of the rapidly growing industries, which needed workers. The great transcontinental railway was built, despite fierce attacks by the Indians. In 1860 the population of the USA was about 30,000,000, largely of British origin, but including 3,500,000 African slaves. Today it has swollen to 230,000,000 less than 45% of which are of British origin.

From 'Background to English-speaking Countries' (Macmillan Publishers - 1997)

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the formation and development of the USA!

2. What makes them overcome all difficulties and hardship to make the country a superpower?

3. What do you know about George Washington?

UNIT VIII**AMERICAN PEOPLE****THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

There is no such thing as a typical American, but here are some views of Americans which many think a fair.

Ordinary Americans are friendly and not afraid to show their feelings. They are generous, lively and amusing. They are not as snobbish or class-conscious as the English, and the way people speak is not important to them. A university professor can talk to his students in a broad Brooklyn or Southern accent and no one will be surprised or shocked. In Britain, 'accent snobbery' is dying, but people are sometimes criticized for the way they speak and this upsets them. However, there is 'money snobbery' in the USA, which sometimes takes strange forms.

The American's dream is success in his job, success earned by his own skill and hard work. There is no one an American admires more than the self-made man, no matter what kind of family he comes from, whereas upper-class people in Britain still tend to dislike self-made men and find them socially unacceptable.

Despite the great wealth of the USA, there is an 'underclass' of some 20 million people, black, white and Hispanic. Because of the awful conditions under which many of these unfortunates live, all hope drains from them and they do not have the strength they need to rise out of their misery. A great part of the violence in the American society begins in the

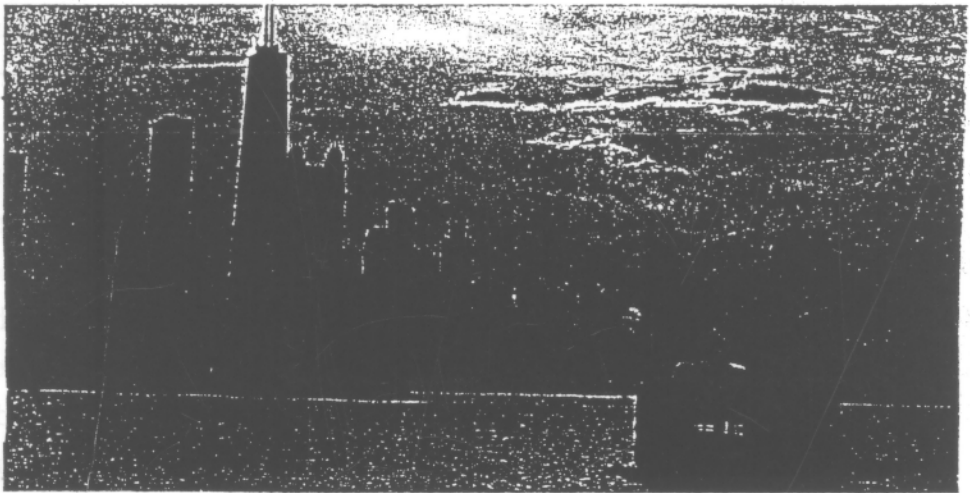
ghettos and inner cities where this underclass lives.

The USA is not a welfare state, yet it spends more on the very poor than many nations with a complete welfare system. Even the poorest Americans do not starve to death, and they are not left to die on the street after an accident. Whatever hospital they are taken to, they

much welfare. Unemployment pay is certainly much higher than in Britain.

Many foreigners have the false idea that there is no public transport in the USA. Since the vast majority of Americans own at least one car, buses aren't necessary, it is believed, so the very poor have to walk. This is

Chicago



Sunset over Chicago and Lake Michigan

receive very careful treatment without cost. Even the millions of illegal immigrants who pour every night across the Mexican border get enough food to live on, despite the fact that they are not American citizens. Many Americans feel that the poor and the unemployed get too

quite untrue. There is public transport. There is a cheap and regular bus service in every city. Many cities also have a new subway system, equally cheap. But better-off Americans in many parts of the USA never go by bus. In fact, they

wouldn't want to be seen in one, in case someone thought they couldn't afford a car!

The elderly middle class sometimes find themselves in terrible situations. Take Mrs. Vorst, a middle-aged widow with a small pension. Her doctor told her she must have an operation immediately. She had the operation, but did not leave the hospital until six weeks later. When she received her bill, she almost fainted, for she wasn't old or poor enough for Medicare (free medical treatment). Then a lawyer heard about her difficulties and suggested she should sue the doctor and the hospital for keeping her in bed too long. The lawyer won her case for her, but he kept as his fee 50% of the money the judge allowed her, so she still couldn't pay the whole bill. Honourable American lawyers are worried by such dishonest members of their profession.

The USA has many serious problems-crime, violence, unlawful immigration across the Mexican border, pollution, unemployment, race relations, and many more. But the Americans face their problems boldly and with determination.

Twenty years ago blacks and whites were fighting each other in many American cities. Today more and more blacks hold positions of authority in every walk of life. Fear, dislike, even hatred, are still there in places, but there has been an improvement in race relations that few non-Americans know much about.

There is no Communist party in the USA. It is forbidden, and this pleases most Americans, because they are afraid of Communism. Some Americans call all socialists and left-wing people in their own and other countries 'Commies'. The Americans believe in 'free enterprise' (the freedom to do business without any interference from the Government). The only political parties, which count in the USA, are the Democrats and the Republicans. Most Democrats are more liberal than Republicans. They want arms control, more Health Insurance. But there is more difference between the British Labour and

Conservative parties than there is between Democrats and Republicans.

From 'Background to English-speaking Countries' (Macmillan Publishers - 1997)

AMERICAN PEOPLE

The United States has the third-largest population in the world (after China and India). In 1990, population in the United States passed the 250,000,000 mark. Who are the American people?

The most distinctive characteristic of the United States is its people. As nineteenth-century poet Walt Whitman said, the United States "is not merely a nation but a nation of nations." people from around the world have come to the United States and influenced its history and culture.

THE NATIVE AMERICANS

The first people on the American continent came from Asia. They came across the Bering Strait from Siberia to Alaska at various times when the sea level dropped. The first migration might have been as early

as 40,000 years ago. Once in America, these people migrated east across North America and south through Central and South America. When Columbus arrived in the fifteenth century, there were perhaps 10 million people in North America alone. They had developed many different kinds of societies. These were the people that Columbus called "Indians," in the mistaken belief that he had reached the East Indies.

The story of the westward growth of the United States was also the story of the destruction of the Native Americans, or Indians. Today there are about 1.5 million Indians in the United States. Western states - especially California, Oklahoma, Arizona, and New Mexico - have the largest Indian populations. About one-third of the Native Americans live on reservations, land that was set aside for them. Most of the others live in cities. Poverty and unemployment are major

problems, especially on the reservations.

THE BRITISH

Beginning in the 1600s, the British settled the eastern part of North America. By the time of the American Revolution (1776), the culture of the American colonists (their religion, language, government, etc.) was thoroughly British - with an American "twist." In a sense, then, the British culture was the foundation on which America was built. Also, over the years, many immigrants to the United States have come from the United Kingdom and Ireland.

AFRICAN-AMERICANS

From 1620s to 1820s by far the largest group of people to come to the United States came, not as willing immigrants, but against their will. These people were West Africans brought to work as slaves, especially on the plantations, or large farms, of the South. In all, about 8 million people were brought from Africa. The Civil War, in the 1860s, ended slavery and established equal rights for black Americans. But many states, especially in the South, passed laws segregating (separating)

and discriminating against black Americans. The civil rights movement, in the 1950s and 1960s, helped get rid of these laws.

However, the effects of 200 years of slavery, 100 years of segregation, and continued prejudice are not as easy to get rid of. Despite many changes, black Americans are still much more likely than white Americans to be poor and to suffer the bad effects that poverty brings. Today about 12 percent of America's population is black. Many black Americans live in the South and in the cities of the Northeast and Midwest.

IMMIGRANTS FROM NORTHERN AND WESTERN EUROPE

Beginning in the 1820s, the number of immigrants coming to the United States began to increase rapidly. Faced with problems in Europe - poverty, war, discrimination immigrants hoped for, and often found, better opportunities in the United States. For the first half-

century, most immigrants were from northwestern Europe - from Germany, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Sweden, and Norway. In the late 1840s, for example, widespread hunger resulting from the failure of the potato crop led many Irish people to emigrate to the United States.

During these years, the United States was expanding into what is now the Midwest. There was a lot of land available for farming. Many new immigrants became farmers in the Midwest. To this day, German and Scandinavian influence is obvious in Midwestern foods and festivals.

IMMIGRANTS FROM SOUTHERN AND EASTERN EUROPE

Although immigration from northwestern Europe continued, from the 1870s to the 1930s even more people came from the countries of southern and eastern Europe - for example, Italy, Greece, Poland, and Russia. Like the earlier immigrants, they came to escape poverty and discrimination. From 1900 to 1970 alone, almost 9 million people arrived from these and other countries.

During this period, the United States was changing from a mainly agricultural to a mainly industrial country. The new immigrants helped make this change possible. Many settled in cities and worked in factories, often under conditions that were quite bad. In the 1920s discrimination and prejudice in the United States led to laws limiting immigration. Immigration slowed down until the 1960s, when these laws were changed.

HISPANIC-AMERICANS

Hispanics are people of Spanish or Spanish-American origin. Some Hispanics lived in areas that later became part of the United States (for example, in what are now the states of California and New Mexico). Many others immigrated to the United States. Hispanic immigration has increased greatly in recent decades. Hispanics come from many different countries. Three especially large groups are Mexican-Americans (who make up about two-thirds of the total

Hispanic population), Puerto Ricans, and Cuban-Americans. (Puerto Rico was a U.S. territory and since 1952 has been a self-governing commonwealth.) While the groups have much in common (especially the Spanish language), there are also many differences. The groups are also concentrated in different areas - Mexican-Americans in Texas and California, Puerto Ricans in New York, and Cuban-Americans in Florida. Many recent immigrants are from Central American countries.

Hispanics are one of the fastest growing groups in the United States population. Within 25 years, they will be the largest minority group.

ASIAN-AMERICANS

In the nineteenth century, laws limited Asian immigration. Also, Asians in the United States, such as the Chinese and Japanese who had come to California, met with widespread discrimination.

Since the mid-1960s, with changes in immigration laws and with conflicts in Southeast Asia, Asians have been a major immigrants group. In the 1980s, for example, almost half of all immigrants were Asian. Countries that Asian-

Americans have come from include China and Taiwan, Japan, the Philippines, Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and India. Many have settled in California, Hawaii, New York, and Texas.

MELTING POTS AND MOSAICS

For years, it was thought that the United States was and should be a "melting pot" - in other words, that people from all over the world would come and adopt the American culture as their own. More recently, some people have compared the United States to a mosaic - a picture made of many different pieces. America's strength, they argue, lies in its diversity and in the contributions made by people of many different cultures. America needs to preserve and encourage this diversity, while making sure that everyone has equal opportunity to succeed.

*From 'Spotlight on the USA'
(Oxford University Press-2001)*

QUESTIONS

1. Who are the Americans?
2. What is the population of the USA?
3. What do you think of the Americans?

UNIT IX

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

The United States is an indirect democracy - that is, the people rule through representatives they elect. Over time, the vote has been given to more and more people. In the beginning, only white men with property could vote. Today any citizen who is at least 18 years old can vote.

THE CONSTITUTION

The United States Constitution, written in 1787, established the country's political system and is the basis for its laws. In 200 years, the United States has experienced enormous growth and change. Yet the Constitution works as well today as when it was written. One reason is that the Constitution can be amended or changed. (For example, the Fifteenth Amendment gave black Americans the right to vote and the Nineteenth Amendment gave women the right to vote.) Another reason is

that the Constitution is flexible: its basic principles can be applied and interpreted differently at different times.

FEDERALISM

The United States has a federalist system. This means that there are individual states, each with its own government, and there is a federal, or national, government. The Constitution gives certain powers to the federal government, other powers to the state governments, and yet other powers to both. For example, only the national government can print money, the states establish their own school systems, and both the national and the state governments can collect taxes.

THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

Within the national government, power is divided among three branches: the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

The legislative branch consists of Congress, which has two parts - the House of Representatives and the Senate. Congress's main function is to make laws. There are 100 senators (two from each state) and 435 representatives (the number from each state depends on the size of the state's population).

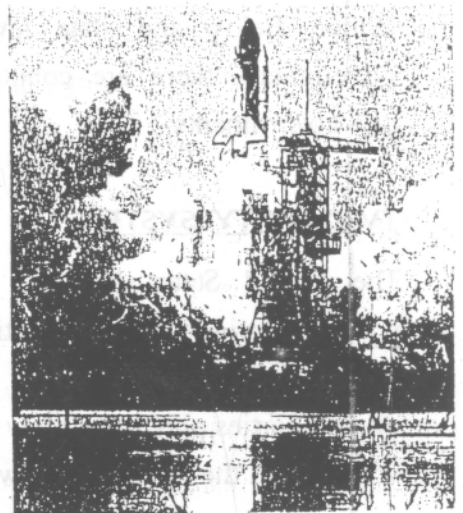
The President is the head of executive branch and the country. The executive branch administers the laws (decides how the laws should be carried out). In addition to the President, the Vice-President, and their staffs, the executive branch consists of departments and agencies.

There are now 14 departments, including Treasury, State, Defense, and Health and Human Services. Each department has different responsibilities. For example, the Treasury Department manages the nation's money, while the State Department helps make foreign

policy. The President appoints the department heads, who together make up the president's Cabinet, or advisers. The agencies regulate specific areas. For examples, the Environmental Protection Agency tries to control pollution, while the Securities and Exchange Commission regulates the stock markets.

The judicial branch interprets the laws and makes sure that new laws are in keeping with the Constitution. There are several levels of federal courts. The Supreme Court is the most important. It has nine members, who are appointed for life.

The system of checks and



balances, established by the Constitution, is meant to prevent any branch from having too much power. Each branch has certain controls over the other branches. For example, Congress makes the laws but the president can veto, or reject, a law and the Supreme Court can decide a law is unconstitutional.

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Each state has its own constitution. Like the national government, state governments are divided into legislative, executive, and judicial branches. There are state senators and representatives and state court systems. Just as the President is the leader of the national government, each state has a governor as its leader. Below the state level of government, there are county and city governments.

TWO-PARTY SYSTEM

The United States has two main political parties - the Democratic and Republican parties. Many other smaller parties play little if any role. Voters elect the president, as well as senators, representatives, etc. A voter

can choose candidates from different parties (e.g., vote for Republicans for President and Vice-President and a Democrat for Senator), so the President does not have to be from the party that has a majority in Congress. In recent years, in fact, voters have tended to choose Republican presidents and Democratic congress people.

There are not clear differences between the Republican and Democratic parties. In general, the Republicans tend to be more conservative and to have more support among the upper classes, while the Democrats tend to be more liberal and to have more support among the working classes and the poor.

RECENT TRENDS

In the twentieth century, as society has become more complex, government has taken a much more active role. However, many Americans worry about too much government interference in their lives. Still, compared to

many other countries, the role of the U.S. government remains limited.

In recent years, fewer people are voting. In the 1988 presidential election, for example, only 50 percent of people of voting age actually voted. Some experts think television may have contributed to the problem. Candidates today often campaign mainly through brief TV appearances and commercials. Instead of explaining their views in detail, they try to make their opponents look bad. Understandably, in the end many voters may not feel enthusiastic about any candidate.

From 'Spotlight on the USA' (Oxford University Press - 2001)

QUESTIONS

1. Why do the people say the USA is an indirect democracy?
2. Is it true to say that the USA has a federalist system? Explain the reason why.
3. Find out as much as you about the political system of the USA.

UNIT X**THE ECONOMY****THE FREE ENTERPRISE
SYSTEM**

The United States economy is based on the free enterprise system: Private businesses compete against one another with relatively little interference from the government. Since the depression of 1930s, when the economy essentially collapsed, laws have been made giving the government a more active role in economic and other matters.

CHANGES OVER TIME

Until the second half of the 19th century, the United States was a mainly agricultural nation. The Civil War (1861-1865) helped stimulate industry. In the years that followed, industrialization transformed the country, although many areas, especially the South, remained mainly agricultural and rural.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the U.S. economy grew rapidly. Many companies moved to the South and Southwest, and these areas experienced change and growth. Then, in the mid-1970s, economic growth began to slow down.

Just as there had been a shift from agriculture to industry, there is now a shift from industry to services. (Services are provided by hospitals, banks, law firms, hotels and restaurants, and so on.) In recent years, most new jobs have been service jobs.

THE SITUATION TODAY

The United States is a large country and is rich in natural resources. It is a leading producer of fuel-of oil, natural gas and coal. It is also a leading producer of many other

minerals, including copper, gold, aluminum, iron, and lead. The United States grows wheat, corn and other crops and raises many cows, pigs, and chickens.

However, the United States is also a major consumer of resources. This means, for example, that the United

and telecommunications equipment, oil, cars, metals and chemicals.

Today, the United States faces some major economic challenges. One important challenge is increasing its productivity, or the efficiency

Las Vegas, Nevada



Las Vegas lit up in neon at night

States must import much of the fuel it uses.

Not surprisingly, international trade is important to the United States. Major exports include machinery and high-technology equipment, chemicals, cars, aircraft, and grains. Major imports include machinery

of the labor force, in order to increase the rate of economic growth. Another challenge, as the country shifts from manufacturing to services, is to train people to fill new kinds of jobs.

WORKING AND GETTING TO WORK IN AN INDUSTRIAL SUPERPOWER

The United States has most of what every country would like to have - coal and oil and other minerals, cereals (wheat, barley, maize) beef cattle, fruit plantations of all kinds, as well as flourishing industries. Yet, as in most countries, there is unemployment and the fear of unemployment, and few people like being unemployed more than the Americans. They are paid well, even in quite simple jobs, and their taxes are low, so they don't often come out on strike for unimportant reasons. Union officials in the factories are employed not only to make sure the workers get fair treatment, but also to see that they work as well as they can.

Managers and workers usually get on well together. They call each other by their first names, and the bosses usually give more encouragement than criticism. They also let the Union leaders know how much money the firm has in the bank, so that Unions do not usually ask for higher wages when the firm can't afford it. They know it doesn't

help them if they get a firm into difficulties. A lot of Americans do two jobs at the same time, and unemployment is not as high as in many countries. People are not popular if they refuse to take a job that is offered to them and live instead on unemployment pay.

During most of the 19th century, Britain was the world's greatest industrial power. Then, towards the end of the century, the Americans began to catch up. By 1913, Henry Ford was mass-producing his Model T Ford, using machines to make the parts. The USA now makes each year more cars, trucks and buses than are made in the whole of Europe. Today 85% of American families own at least one car, and 35% own two or more. There are more than 3,000,000 miles (4,830,000 km) of paved road in the USA.

Gene, an American, explained to Andy, a visiting Englishman, how important the automobile is. 'Our whole social system and our whole industrial system

are build round the automobile. We cannot do without it.'

'Isn't that true of all modern societies?' Andy asked.

'Yeah, but more so in the US. Most British commuters drive, or are driven, to the station, and from there travel by train to London. From the railway terminal they go on to their place of work by underground, bus or cab.'

'You, too, have commuters that come in to Grand Central or Penn stations,' Andy replied. 'I've seen them. And from there they take a taxi or the Subway.'

'Yeah,' said Gene, 'but most people in the USA drive to work. American cities have at least one freeway (motorway with at least six lanes), often coming right into the city. So commuting by automobile is no longer the headache it was. It means that people can get right away from work and live in the suburbs. Many businesses have moved out of the inner cities, too. It's fine for the bosses and office workers. They avoid the hassle of the big city. But it's not so good for the blacks who still live in the inner cities. Most of them just lose their jobs.'

'So your railways don't have much to do now?' Andy asked.

'Oh, yes, they do! A train can be made up of over 100 freight cars, loaded with coal, iron ore, wheat and petroleum and pulled by three huge locomotives - it's a great sight! But trucks carry the most valuable freight, like, manufactured goods or food.'

'What about passengers?'

'They travel by plane, except for very short distances. Most towns, even quite small ones, have a comfortable airport. All airlines are independent, but airlines get extra money from the Government so they can keep the cost of fares down.'

'Don't Americans use their cars for business trips?'

Not for long journeys. The distance between cities is usually too great. From New York to New Orleans, for example, is 2883 km. If air passengers need a car the other end, they rent one. There are car rental firms in every airport.'

'Do you build most of your own planes?'

'Sure, we do! We build more planes than any other country in the world. Your BA (British Airways), and most European airlines, in fact, fly American aircraft, especially Boeings - and as for our space program, we're miles ahead of everyone.'

Andy laughed. 'And what about the Russians?'

The businessmen who create so much of the USA's wealth often work extremely hard. Some of them drink too many cocktails, smoke too much, and sooner or later start to worry about their health. Their doctors tell them, if they carry on like that they'll get heart trouble, they must lose weight and pay more attention to what they eat. So, since jogging is now considered to be dangerous for some people, they take up a healthy diet (eat special food).

From 'Spotlight on the USA' (Oxford University Press - 2001)

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the changes in the economy of the country.

2. What are the two major economic challenges does the USA face?

3. Find out as much as you can about the economy of the USA.

UNIT XI

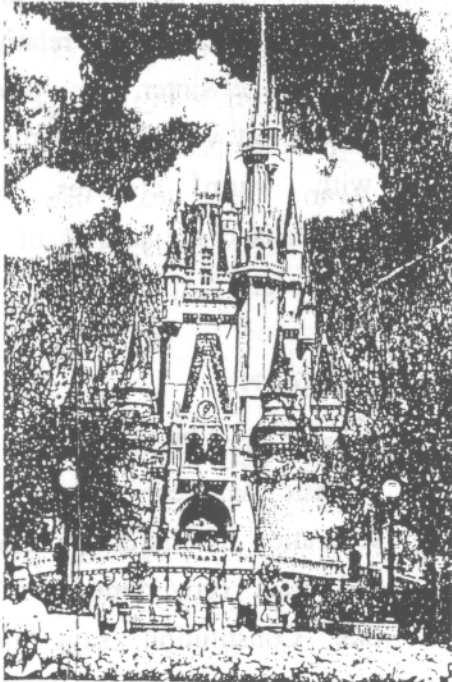
CULTURE - LEISURE - ENTERTAINMENT - SPORTS AND HOLIDAYS

The United States is an international center of culture. Its major cities (like New York, Boston, Washington, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles) regularly host many concerts, art exhibitions, lectures, and theatrical performances. And on a smaller scale, the same is true of smaller

cities. Some of the world's greatest museums, orchestras, theaters, and concert halls are located in the United States. Performances and exhibitions are usually very well attended. Tickets can be hard to get, despite their high prices! Many cities also have large communities of artists, actors, dancers, and musicians.

The national and state governments, as well as private organizations, have traditionally supported the arts with money. Recently, however, problems in the U.S. economy have decreased this support.

Though art and "high" culture are important in America, the most popular sources of entertainment and information are television, movies, radio, and recorded music. With cable



Cinderella Castle (© The Walt Disney Company)

TV, a lot more programs are available, but many people still complain about the low intellectual level of TV. They also feel that the emphasis on youth, sex, and money teaches children (and adults) the wrong values and goals. These criticisms are often made about American movies too. But despite the "bad" movies, many wonderful and internationally successful movies are produced in the U.S. The rapid spread of videotaped movies, watched nightly by millions of Americans in their homes, has made movies an even more popular and influential form of entertainment in recent years.

Most Americans enjoy sports - both playing sports themselves and watching their favorite sports and teams. Major professional sports events - baseball, football, basketball, and hockey, as well as golf and tennis - are witnessed by tens of thousands of fans, and by millions more on TV. Boys and girls play on sports teams in school and after school. Many adult Americans regularly engage in sports like tennis, softball, golf, and bowling.

Americans also love to travel. Weekend automobile trips are a tradition for many families, as are longer summer vacation trips. Car travel is the most common leisure activity in America.

When Americans take car trips, they don't usually just drive and sightsee. They like to have a destination. Amusement parks, beaches, and other special attractions are always crowded when the weather is good.

Airplane travel is also common in America. At holiday time, many people fly to other cities to visit friends and relatives. During the winter, many people take short vacations to places with warm climates, like Florida and the islands of the Caribbean.

RELIGION

Separation of Church and State

A basic American principle is separation of church (religion) and state (government). The U.S. Constitution says that people have the right to

worship as they choose and that no religion can be made the official religion. In keeping with this principle, government money cannot be used to support church activities and prayers may not be said in public schools. (The U.S. Congress, however, opens each year with a prayer.)

THE DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

Studies show that about 9 in 10 Americans identify with a religion and that about 6 in 10 belong to a church.

About 94 percent of Americans who identify with a religion are Christians. Among Christians, there are more Protestants than Catholics. However, there are many different Protestant denominations, or groups. For example, Protestants include, among others, Baptists, Methodists, and Lutherans, and each of these groups is divided into smaller groups. So Catholics, although outnumbered by Protestants, are the single largest religious group.

Jews are the largest non-Christian group, with about 4 percent of the population. About 2 percent of the population is Moslem, and smaller numbers are Buddhists and Hindus.

Native Americans often preserve their tribal religions.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

There are some differences among the regions when it comes to religion. In part these differences are related to where difference immigrant groups settled. For example, the Lutheran religion was strong among Germans and Scandinavians. Many Germans and Scandinavians settled in the Midwest. So today there are many Lutheran churches in the Midwest.

The Baptist religion really developed in the South. Today there are still many Baptists in the Southern states. The state of Utah, in the West, was settled by Mormons. (The Mormon religion began in the United States, in the 1800s.) The majority of people in Utah today are mormons.

Sections of the South and, to some extent, the Midwest are sometimes called the "Bible Belt." In these areas there are many Protestant fundamentalists, who believe

that the Bible is literally true and that its message should be at the center of a person's life.

HOLIDAYS

Many people spend *New Year's Day* resting. That's because they've stayed up most of the night greeting the New Year! Some went to parties at friends' homes or at nightclubs. Others were out on the streets, throwing confetti and blowing noisemakers. Many people make New Year's resolutions (to eat less, to work more, etc.). Few people keep their resolutions.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Martin Luther King, Jr., led the civil rights movements - the struggle for equal rights for black Americans. King was assassinated in 1968. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day which falls in January, around King's birthday, is a time to celebrate the life and achievements of this great American.

Two other great Americans are honored on Presidents' Day. George Washington was the country's first president. Abraham Lincoln brought the country through the Civil War. Their birthdays were both in

February and are celebrated together.

Memorial Day honors American soldiers killed in war. There are many parades on Memorial Day. Memorial Day, which comes on the last Monday in May, is also the unofficial beginning of the summer vacation season. On Memorial Day, many people go to the beach.

The most important American holiday is the Fourth of July, or Independence Day. On July 4, 1776, the American colonies declared their independence from Britain. Many families celebrate the Fourth of July by having picnics and, at night, watching fireworks.

Labor Day honors the American workers. Just as Memorial Day means the beginning of summer, Labor Day, which falls on the first Monday in September, marks the end of summer. For many students, the school year starts the day after Labor Day.

Columbus Day celebrates Christopher Columbus's arrival

in the Americas in 1492. As Columbus was Italian, working for Spain, Columbus Day is an especially important holiday for many Italian-Americans and Hispanic-Americans.

Although Halloween, on October 31, is not an official holiday, it is a very special day. On Halloween, children dress in costume as any kinds of things - as witches, ghosts, monsters, pirates, TV characters, and even computers and cereal boxes. The windows of many house have Halloween decorations and jack-o'-lanterns. (Jack-o'-lanterns are pumpkins that have been carved with strange faces and have a candle inside.) In the evening, the children go from house to house, knocking on doors and saying "trick or treat." The people in the house give the children candy or some other treat. If they don't, the children might play a small trick on them!

In 1620 one of the first British settlements in America was established in Massachusetts. These settlers, known as Pilgrims, had come to America to freely practice their religion. They arrived in November, when it was too late to

plant crops. Although many people died, the Pilgrim settlement survived the winter because of help from Indians who lived nearby. The Indians taught the Pilgrims about corn and showed them where to fish. The next November, after the crops were harvested, the Pilgrims gave thanks to God at a feast to which they invited the Indians.

Every year, Americans celebrate Thanks-giving. Families and friends get together for a big feast. The meal usually includes roast turkey with stuffing and gravy, a sweet sauce made from cranberries, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin pie. What a meal! It's not surprising that a recent Thanksgiving tradition is to sit after dinner in front of the TV watching a professional football game.

Christmas, marking the birth of Christ in the Christian religion, is another time when many families get together. Christmas is an important time for giving gifts. In fact, people start

buying gifts right after Thanksgiving, although Christmas is a month away. Many families put up a Christmas tree and bake lots of special Christmas cookies.

Small children believe that their gifts come from Santa Claus. Their parents tell them that Santa lives in the North Pole and, on the night before Christmas, he travels the world in a sled pulled by reindeer. He goes down the chimneys of houses to leave gifts for children who have been good. Naturally, children are the first to get out of bed on Christmas morning.

THE FAMILY

The American family has changed greatly in the last 20 or 30 years. Many of these changes are similar to changes taking place in other countries.

MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

Young people are waiting longer before getting married. Women are also waiting longer to have children. It's not unusual today for a woman to have her first child in her mid-thirties. And families are having

fewer children. The typical family used to have three children. Today most families have one or two children.

DUAL-EARNING FAMILIES

In the traditional family, the wife stayed home with the children while the husband earned money. Now 60 percent of all married women work outside the home. So a majority of couples have two wage earners. One reason for this change is that women want and expect to have careers. Another reason is economics. With rising prices, many families cannot survive on one person's salary.

SINGLE-PARENT AND OTHER NONTRADITIONAL FAMILIES

The United States has a high divorce rate: Approximately 1 in every 2 marriages ends in divorce. One result of this high divorce rate is that many American children live in single-parent families.

Although some women wait until their thirties to have their first child, other women become mothers while they are still teenagers. Many of these teenage mothers are not married. Many are also poor. Poverty among children in homes headed by single mothers has become a serious problem in the United States.

Often people who are divorced get married again. This has led to a new kind of family - the "reconstituted family," in which there are children from previous marriages as well as from the present marriage.

AN AGING POPULATION

In the past, it was common for three generations - grandparents, parents and children - to live together. Now most older people live on their own. They generally stay in contact with their children but might live in a different part of the country. People are also living longer - often for 20 years after they've retired from their job. Modern American culture tends to value youth rather than age. All of this creates an interesting challenge for older people - and for the country, since by the year 2002, 1 in

every 6 Americans will be over the age of 65.

FUTURE OF THE FAMILY

Is the American family in trouble? People point to the divorce rate, to the fact that working mothers might have less time with their children, and to the "generation gap," or the problems that parents and children sometimes have understanding each other. Experts say, however, that the family is as strong as ever. Family is still at the center of most people lives.

*From 'Spotlight on the USA'
(Oxford University Press-2001)*

QUESTIONS

1. What is their attitude toward their religions?
2. Find out as much as you can about holidays in the USA.
3. Is it true to say that the American family has changed greatly in the last 20 or 30 years?

UNIT XII

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL

There are three basic levels in the U.S. educational system - elementary school, which usually goes from kindergarten to sixth grade; junior high school, from seventh through eighth or ninth grade; and high school, from ninth or tenth through twelfth grade. Children are required to be in school from the ages of 7 through 16.

About 90 percent of all children attend public school, which is free. The remaining 10 percent go to private schools, which often are associated with a religion. About half of all private schools are Catholic.

In the United States, education is mainly the responsibility of state and local governments, rather than the national government. The amount of money spent on education varies

considerably from state to state. The subjects studied also vary somewhat. The school year usually runs from September to June.

At the high school level there are some specialized schools, including schools that emphasize vocational subjects like business or auto mechanics. Most high schools, however, are general schools. High school students are often involved in non-academic activities that their school offers - for example, in drama clubs, sports teams, or the school newspaper.

ADVANCED SCHOOLING

Many students, upon finishing high school, choose to continue their education. Community colleges, also known as junior

colleges, offer two-year programs. They are public schools and the tuition costs are usually low. Colleges and universities have four-year programs leading to a bachelor's degree (as well as, in many cases, further programs leading to higher degrees). These schools may be public or private; private schools cost a lot more U.S. colleges and universities have many students from around the world, especially from Asia.

TRENDS IN EDUCATION

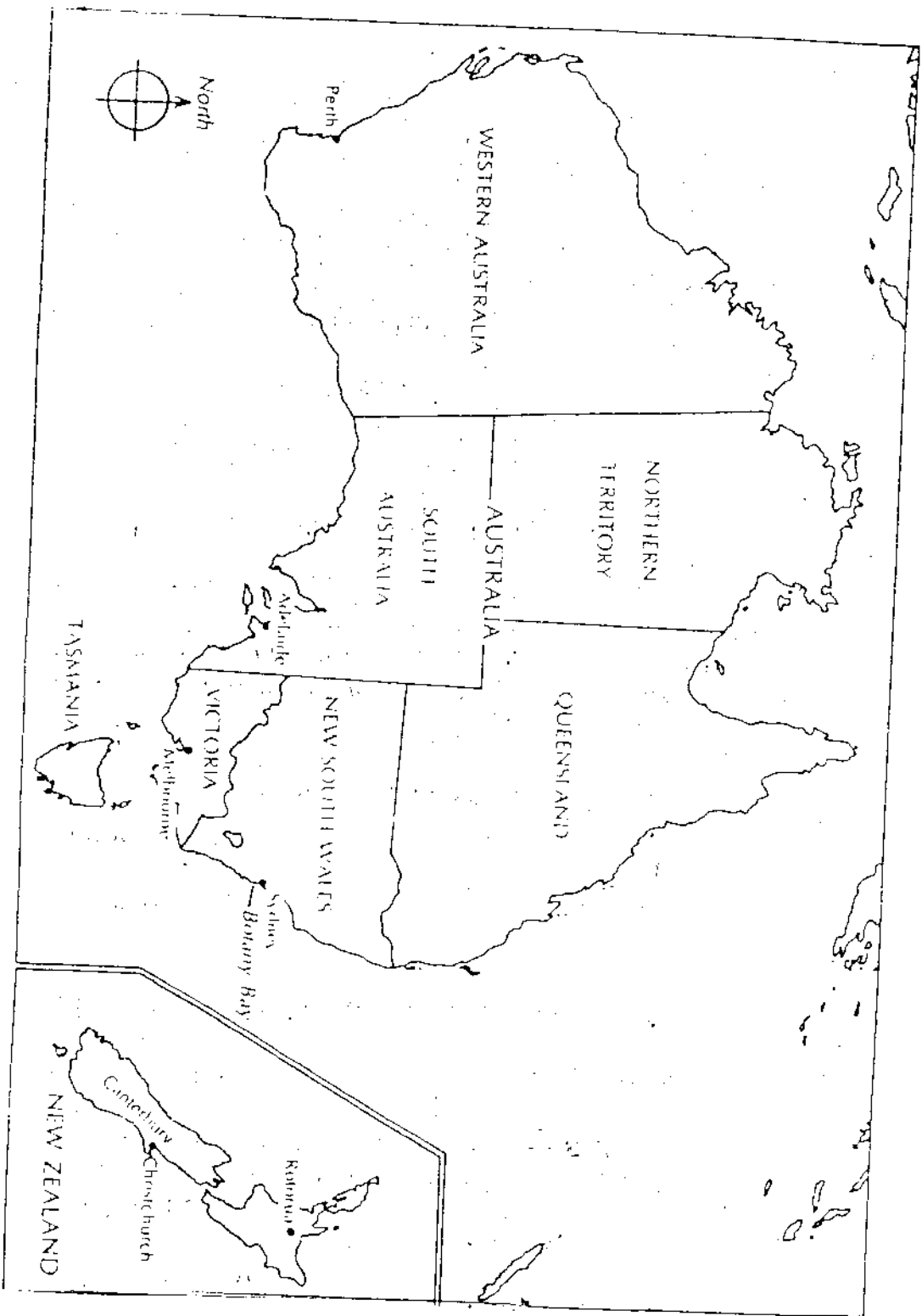
Many more Americans than ever before are finishing high school and college. More than 20 percent of all adults have finished college, and more than 75 percent have finished high school. Although the number of years of schooling is going up, there are signs that the quality of education may be going down. This is of great concern, especially since education is considered crucial to the American ideal that each person should achieve all that he or she can. There are many theories about where the problems lie. Some think that

students have too many 'electives', or courses they choose, and too few courses in basic subjects. Others think students watch too much TV and do too little homework. Everyone agrees the problems must be addressed.

*From 'Spotlight on the USA'
(Oxford University Press-2001)*

QUESTIONS

1. Find out as much as you can about the educational system of the USA.
2. Are there any differences between the educational system in the USA and the educational system in Vietnam?
3. Describe the main differences.



Chapter 3

AUSTRALIA

SNAPSHOT AUSTRALIA

Australia has a prosperous Western-style capitalist economy, with a per capita GDP comparable to levels in highly industrialized West European countries. Rich in natural resources, Australia is a major exporter of agricultural products, minerals, metals, and fossil fuels. Commodities account for more than 80% of the value of total exports, so that, as in 1983-84, a downturn in world commodity prices can have a big impact on the economy. The government is pushing for increasing exports of manufactured goods, but competition in international markets continues to be severe. Australia has suffered from the low growth and high unemployment characterizing the OECD countries in the early 1990s. In 1992-93 the economy recovered slowly from the prolonged recession of 1990-91, a

major restraining factor being weak world demand for Australia's exports. Growth picked up so strongly in 1994 that the government felt the need for fiscal and monetary tightening by yearend. Australia's GDP grew 6.4% in 1994, largely due to increases in industrial output and business investment. A severe drought in 1994 reduced the value of Australia's net farm production, but rising world commodity prices are likely to boost commodity exports by 15% to 42.4 billion in 1995-96, according to government statistics. Short-term economic problems include a balancing of output growth and inflationary pressures and the stimulation of exports to offset rising imports.

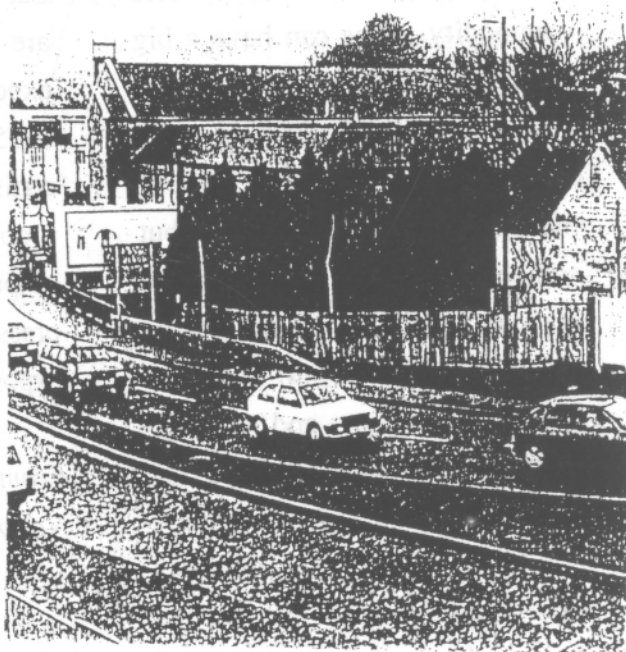
From 'Country Studies' (Hanoi National University - 1998)

UNIT XIII

THE DISCOVERY OF AUSTRALIA

Australia was discovered in 1642 by the Dutch explorer, Tasman, but for more than a hundred years after that they remained vague lines on the map. It was thought that they were part of a Great South Land in which civilized human beings lived. Scientists in Britain were anxious to find out if this land really did exist, so in 1768 they sent an expedition to the southern seas to look for it. The leader of the expedition was Captain James Cook of the Royal Navy, one of the greatest explorers of all time. He took with him on board his ship, *Endeavour*, scientist and artists whose job it was to make a record of all the strange things

they might discover on the voyage. Cook never discovered the mysterious South Land, but far down in the southern ocean he did discover the east coast of New Zealand, and he raised the Union Jack to claim it for Britain. He then sailed right round the two islands, making maps of the whole coast and naming mountains and bays and islands,



which still bear the same names today.

Cook and his companions came face to face with the Maoris, the native people who had come to New Zealand from the South Sea Pacific Islands in the 14th century. They were more warlike than the South Sea Islanders. One sailor returned white - face and trembling from a trip ashore. 'What be the matter with you, Master Simkins?' asked a shipmate. 'The matter! I see'd one o' them savages gnawing a roasted forearm!'

After leaving New Zealand, Cook sailed northwest. He believed that with luck he might find another land, and nineteen days later, that is exactly what he did. It was Australia. They landed in a bay on the north east coasts which is today part of Sydney, and to their astonishment they saw plants and creatures that no white man had ever seen before: Kangaroos and wombats and koalas, brilliantly coloured birds and butterflies, and grey-green eucalyptus trees of all kinds. Cook named the place 'Botany Bay'. They also met the

dark - skinned Aborigines. The crew were scornful of them and called them animas, but Cook admired their simple way of life. He wrote in his diary: With all our possession and comfortable way of life, we do not seem as happy as they are. He realised what would happen to them one day, and he was saddened.

Ten years later, Australia's first settlers landed in Sydney Harbour, which was only a few miles up the coast from Botany Bay. Captain Arthur Philip, the commander of the little fleet, wrote: 'We had the satisfaction of finding the finest harbor in the world.' Not many people would disagree with him today. These first settlers were convicts, women as well as men, who had been sent to this wild land as a punishment. There were also soldiers to guard them. Only 10% of Australians are descended from convicts, most of whom were not really criminals. There were rebellious Irishmen, English laborers who had formed unlawful trade unions, girls who

had stolen half a loaf of bread for their starving children.

By 1823 there were only about 30,000 settlers in Sydney but gradually Australia took shape. By 1840 the borders of six separate colonies had been decided. These, colonies stretched right round the coast from Queensland in the north east to Western Australia in the far south west. But to begin with the colonists had very little say in governing themselves. Each colony was ruled by a governor appointed by the British Government. The Australians, who have never liked being told what to do, particularly by upper class 'Poms', (the Australian nickname for the English), demanded self-rule, and they got it, for the British had not forgotten how they lost the American colonies. In 1901 the six colonies formed a confederation of states which was called the Commonwealth of Australia.

The exploration of the vast unknown continent went on throughout the 19th century. In 1803 Matthew Hinders sailed right round Australia, noting how bare

and uninviting most of the coast was. Then two explorers broke through the great mountain wall which runs all the way down the east coast, and discovered the outback, which stretches inland and west for hundreds of miles, getting drier and drier until it becomes waterless desert.

From 'Background to English-speaking Countries' (Macmillan Publishers - 1997)

QUESTIONS

- 1- Describe the formation and development of Australia!
2. What do you know about James Cook?
3. What do you think of the Aborigines?

UNIT XIV**PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT**

It happens in history that conquerors sometimes destroy whole peoples in their empires. The British killed every single Aborigine in the Australian island of Tasmania. But in New Zealand, although there were fierce battles, the British and the Maoris had a respect for one another. The fighting stopped, and before long Maoris and whites began to intermarry: Today the Maoris have equal rights with the whites, but they still do not always have equal opportunities.

The Aborigines of Australia –



there are some 160,000 of them – have a more ancient and simple way of life than the Maoris. Nobody knows where they came from, or when. They once wandered freely over the vast continent, of which they were the only inhabitants. Now some live in reserves, away from white people. Others work on sheep stations (ranches), but the rest have moved into towns, where they live in awful poverty, unemployed and uneducated. However, most Australians now agree that the Aborigines have been cruelly neglected and that they have just the same right to a good life – as white Australians.

SOME VIEWS ON THE AUSTRALIANS

Here are some common views that the British have of

Australians. Some Australians would agree, others might not. They are fiercely independent and they say exactly what they think, even if it sometimes sounds rude. The sharp-faced, leathery-skinned horseman rounding up his flocks of sheep is typical only of the men who work in the outback. Five out of six Australians live in the suburbs- '(called 'slurbs') of towns and cities, and they like to own the house they live in. It is still sometimes said that Australia is not a place 'for women, and some men still like to spend more time with their mates than with their wives. But more and more Australians have wider interests, now that Australia has citizens from so many different countries. Since World War 2, nearly 4,000,000 immigrants from 120 countries have settled in Australia, and the population- has risen from 7,500,000 in 1945 to 15,400,000 in 1980. Sydney has 3,500,000 inhabitants, Melbourne 3,000,000. Australians now take a much greater interest in the Arts. The Australians demand 'fair-goes' (fair treatment), not only for

themselves, but also for their mates. Loyalty to their mates is of great importance to them, more important than obeying rules. They work to earn enough to enjoy themselves, preferably out of doors. Some Aussie men pride themselves on being 'macho' (very masculine), and fights in pubs are not uncommon. They tend to be carefree. An Aussie flying to London in the middle of a 'down-under' summer, arrived at Heathrow in a snow storm, wearing only- an open-neck shirt and a pair of shorts.

The Australians are becoming more and more attracted towards the USA, but not the New Zealanders, who do not have much love for the Americans. Both Australians and New Zealanders, especially the younger ones, have a great pride in their own countries. They no longer have strong ties with the mother country.

Australia has been criticised for refusing- to accept non-white immigrants, but she has allowed in a large number of Vietnamese refugees.

GOVERNMENT

Like the USA, Australia is a federation of states, but both federal and state governments are run on British, not American lines. Australian members of Parliament are elected by proportional representation. Everyone aged 18 and over has to vote in federal and state elections. Anyone who does not bother to vote has to pay a fine. There are two main parties, Labour, a middle-of -the-road socialist party, and the Liberal Party, which stands for free enterprise.

The New Zealand Parliament has only one House, which it calls the House of Representatives. Otherwise the whole New Zealand parliamentary system is very like that of the UK. There are two parties, the Labour Party and the National Party, which is conservative welfare -Party. The Queen is head of both the Australian and the New Zealand governments, but is represented in both cases by a Governor-General.

From 'Background to English-speaking Countries' (Macmillan Publishers - 1997)

QUESTIONS

- 1- Find out as much as you about the Australians.
2. Describe the political system in Australia.
3. How many main political parties are there in Australia? What are they?

UNIT XV**THE RICHES OF NEW LANDS**

Gareth Williams stopped off at Perth, capital of Western Australia, to visit his uncle, Phil Edwards, who was a doctor with the Royal Doctors' Flying Service. The Flying Service has saved many lives the outback.

The small corner of Western Australia where most people live is like a huge oasis, with the Indian Ocean on two sides and the endless desert on the other two. Perth's nearest neighbour, Adelaide, is over 2,600 km away, and between them lies the vast Nullabor Plain, which is dead flat and without a tree for 800 km. Yet along the coast on either side of Perth, Gareth was amazed by the variety of crops and plantations.

His uncle drove him through forests of huge eucalyptus trees, whose wood is so hard that it can be used for underwater posts.

Further up the coast, they stopped in a vast plantation of fruit trees. 'There was every kind of tree, from bananas and mangoes to oranges and lemons, and there were vegetable gardens: too, in which a small black-haired man was hard at work. Phil called to him: 'Alberto! Come and explain to my Welsh nephew what has made the desert flower'.

"We found water and brought it to the crops-irrigated them, in fact. There's a river which floods and then dries up. Now we catch the flood water and store it, and we've found water under the sand, too"

"Are you getting on better with your neighbours?" asked Phil.

They still say, "You work too hard, Alberto. It's not fair goes!"

They drove on through wheatfields. "We export a lot of wheat, you know, Gareth," said

Phil. 'We used to export it to Britain, but now it's china. We've turned our faces to the east. Odd, isn't it. when you come to think of it? But Australia is an exciting country to live in. We're gradually discovering that more of it is fit to live in than we'd thought. Take the Kimberly Range, up north They've changed the course of the river and turned the land 'into cattle country.'

'I suppose you still export a lot of wool?' asked Gareth.

'My goodness, yes! Do you know how many sheep we've got, scattered all over the continent? 135,000,000!

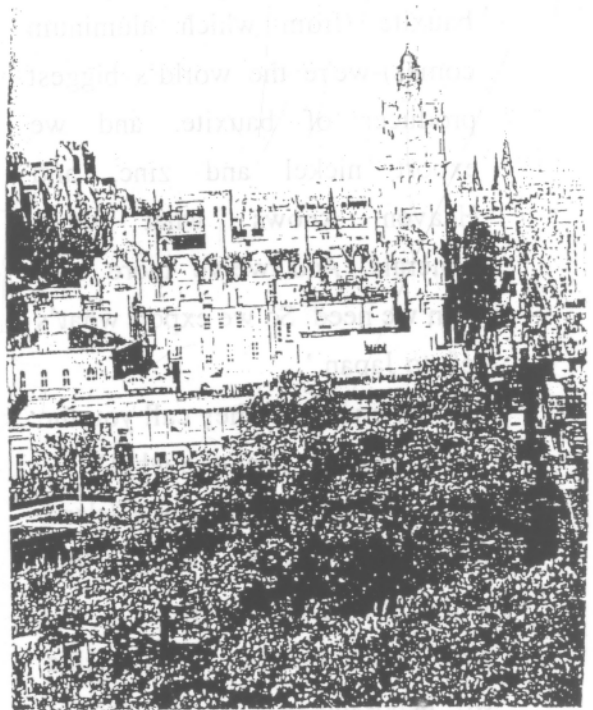
That's about 14% of all the sheep in the world, and they give us the softest wool anyone could want. There's such a demand for our wool, ladies, that we export 90% of it, and that's a world record! Australians -raise cattle, too, you know, lots of 'em, and we sell most of our beef and veal to the USA.'

One day Phil got a call from an iron ore mine. A miner had had a bad heart attack. Gareth went

with him. They were soon flying low over the desert. Below them a black metalled road cut straight through the red earth with hardly a bend. Dirt roads branched off it, leading to broken-down huts and ruined mine shafts

'I was called out here once,' Phil said, pointing. 'Had to go into that shaft down there. Old man had gone crazy and killed himself because he couldn't find any gold.'

Soon a range of mountains



appeared, rust-red humps, none of them much more than 1200 metres high. 'The Hammersley

Range,' Phil said. 'Once we thought all the plateau was barren and useless. Now we know there's enough iron ore in those 'mountain. to keep the world supplied for a hundred years.'

'What do they do with the ore?' asked Gareth. 'Load it as it is?'

'No, first it's broken up on the spot, then it's carried 500 km by rail down to Port Hedland oz Dampier, From there ifs shipped straight to Japan. Japan's the big market for all our ores, especially bauxite (from which aluminum comes)-we're the world's biggest producer of bauxite. and we export nickel and zinc, and Heaven knows what other minerals. And we've more coal than we need. So we export what's left-to Japan.'

Gareth grinned. 'They call you the lucky country. I can see why!'

'They're right! Off Barrow Island there are scores of oil rigs. In 960 we didn't know we had any oil. Now we produce almost as much s we need-and we've got natural gas, too.'

They picked up the sick man and flew him back to Perth, where he

was rushed to one of the city's public health hospitals.

From 'Background to English-speaking Countries' (Macmillan Publishers - 1997)

QUESTIONS

- 1- Find out as much as you about Australia.
2. Is it easy for them to make the country develop? Explain the reason why.
3. It is said that Australian wool is the softest anyone could want. Is it true? Explain the reason why.

UNIT XVI**ENJOYING ONESELF DOWN UNDER**

Eastern Australia, where most Australians live, has two frontiers. There is the vast South Pacific Ocean and inland, beyond the mountains, there is the vast desert of the outback. The bush, on the edge of the desert, is the most exciting part of the outback, with its slender, papery-barked eucalyptus trees and yellow-flowered wattle, the sun shining through the grey-green leaves, and the blackened stumps of past fires. At times the heat of the midday sun sets fire to the bush, and flames roar through the dry scrub, threatening outback towns and sheep stations. But on the seaward side of the mountains the climate is pleasant, sub-tropical in Queensland, while in New South Wales and Victoria there's a nip in the air in winter, though the sun shines most of the time throughout the whole year.

Mark Odell, a Sydney bank clerk, has never been to the outback. Few Australians have. Mark is married with two young children and lives in his own small house overlooking Botany Bay. His garden just has room for a hard tennis court. The suburbs of Sydney are full of private tennis courts, since they are cheap to build. Most sports in Australia are cheap. For instance, anyone can play golf. There are no expensive clubs as in Britain. Australians strongly disapprove of special advantages for the rich. In the evening Mark likes, once or twice, a week, to meet his mates at the pub. His wife, Jean, goes to the opera whenever she can. Some people claim that the Sydney Opera House is the most exciting place in the world for listening to music. All the great orchestras and

opera singers visit Sydney and Melbourne.

Thanks to the climate, Mark and his family can be out of doors summer and winter. At winter weekends, he and Jean go up into the mountains to ski. Alongside a jetty in Sydney Harbor there is a small yacht which Mark shares with three mates. At weekends the harbor is crowded with sailing boats, large and small. The Australians are fine yachtsmen. Their greatest success was winning back in 1983 the America's Cup, which the Americans had held since 1851.

In summer, as soon as the day's work is over, the whole Odell family go off to the beach to 'sunbake' and swim and go surfing. Mark is an expert surfer and enjoys taking risks and riding the tops of the great waves. Jean was a champion swimmer when she was sixteen. Australians have won a number of Olympic and Commonwealth gold medals for swimming. They have also produced several world-class runners. Each city has a number of

small stadiums where athletes can train without cost. -

Jean often takes her young son to one of the many concrete cricket pitches in the parks, and bowls to him with a tennis ball. Cricket is the national sport. Rivalry with the English goes back a hundred years. Australia has so far won more Test Matches than England. Recently the Australians had a tigerish fast bowler. As he ran up to bowl, the crowd cried, 'Kill, kill, kill!' The Aussies are not at all pleased when they lose a Test Match. Betting on horses, or anything else, is another popular pastime.

The New Zealand climate is mild, so New Zealanders, like Australians, can spend most of their free time out of doors. It is a mountainous country, with many peaks over 2000 metres, and streams rush down the steep slopes. Trout, brought from England, have been very successful in New Zealand, and anyone can fish for them. 'When I was in England,' Len Meade of Christchurch told his English cousin, Bob, 'I had to pay the

owner of a stream £20 a day for the right to fish. I didn't even see a trout! I told him he could keep his fish!

'Don't miss Rotorua,' Len. told his cousin. 'It's wonderful! It's got geysers and hot springs. You can have a hot bath, if you feel like it, and you'll have Maori guides - Yes, the volcanoes round about are active ... Nothing to worry about! They won't erupt! Of course, there's always the chance of an earthquake! The last big one was in 1931...' Yes, it destroyed Napier completely.'

The broad chain of mountains which run all the way down the west coast of South Island have fine sidling slopes and splendid trails for hikers in summer. In the far south there are tall mountains and forests which have now been made into a national park, and there are great cliffs dropping straight down to the inky black waters of the narrow sounds, which are like Norwegian fjords, only much more wild and lonely.

New Zealanders play the same sports as Australians, but their national sport, rugby, is more than

a game, for winning is a matter of national pride. The New Zealand team is called 'The All Blacks' - they wear black shirts and shorts - and they are usually all-conquering. -

'Emma Chizzit?'

The shop assistant looked bewildered. I'm afraid you've got the wrong person. I'm Susan Brown.

'OK, Susan! Don't yer like the mickey owt o' me! Emma Chizzit?'

He put his hand on the model of Big Ben, and suddenly Susan understood. 'Oh, how much is it! Abe Connors snapped. 'That's what I said! Emma Chizzit?'

'I'm sorry. I'm afraid..

Abe was getting annoyed 'I come from Sydney, Aus-tra-lia. Where you from, Buckingham Palace?'

'Emma Chizzit' is a well-known joke about the Australian accent. Unlike Americans, many Australians don't like the English public school accent. Sometimes they make fun of it.

Australian and New Zealand speech has its origins in Cockney London. The vowel a in words

like 'day', 'late', 'basin' is pronounced like the i in 'bite', ie 'di', 'lite', 'bison' (which makes 'basin' sound exactly the same as 'bison', the American word for a buffalo). Here's a joke which is both Cockney and Australian: 'What's the difference between a buffalo ion?' 'I don't know. What is the difference?' 'Yer can 't wash yer hands in a buffalo!'

The o in 'old' is pronounced "owld", as in Cockney; the ending of English countries, 'He lives in Derbyshire' (etc) is pronounced - sheer instead of the standard English - sher; and the ending - ly, in 'My Sheila is lovely' is pronounced 'lovelee' by both Cockney and Australians, but 'loveli' in standard English. Australian and New Zealand accents depend on where the speakers grew up, and on their families, schools, etc. Many Australians and even more new Zealanders, speak an English which is very like British English. Some Australians deliberately exaggerate their 'Strine', particularly in the presence of 'Poses'. 'Strine' is how some

Australians pronounce 'Australian' (the language).

Here are a few Australian words which are in the Oxford English Dictionary? outback; bush in its outback sense; bushranger, meaning a convict who escapes into the bush to hide and uses it as a base from which to attack and rob travelers; brumby, an unbroken (wild, untrained) horse on an Australian sheep station; tucker, food eaten by hands (workers) on a sheep station; crook, meaning 'ill', a word much used in Australia and New Zealand; to whinge, an old English slang word meaning 'make a fuss', which is beginning to be used again in Britain: My Sheila always whinges when she's crook, but she won't go and see a doctor.'

The Australians have not changed the old Aboriginal words for animals and places, or for some of the customs which have become a part of Australian life: koala (bear); kangaroo, wallaby (animals); kookaburra, budgerigar (birds); boomerang, a hunting weapon which returns to the

hunter if he misses; billabong, the tributary of a river; carroboree, a noisy dance or party. I tie charming name, Wagga- Wagga, given to a town in New South Wales, is the Aboriginal word for the cawing of a crow; the Murrumbidge River means 'big water'; Woomera, which is a testing ground for rockets, means 'spear-throwing stick'.

New Zealanders use Maori words in the same way: kiwi, the flightless bird which has become a symbol of New Zealand, just as the kangaroo and wallaby have become symbols of Australia; Wangamui, the North Island port, is the Maori word for 'big mouth'; Waikete, the longest river in New Zealand, means 'flowing water', and Hokiitika, another river, means 'direct return'. One in eleven New Zealanders are at least half Maori, so the Maori language is having an influence on New Zealand English. One word that rugby fans know all over the world is the Haaka, a Maori war dance that New Zealand rugby teams perform before every international

match: The object of the Haaka is to frighten the opposing teams

The eucalyptus tree once grew only in Australia, but has now spread all over the world. The name 'eucalyptus' was given it by one of the scientists who went with Cook on his great voyage of discovery. 'The Australians call it a 'gum tree'.

The English language 'down under' is being influenced by American English in the same way as it is being influenced in Britain, and for the same reasons. Australians and New Zealanders watch even more American T.V programmes than the British do. 'They belong to the New World and their linguistic ties with the mother country are being loosened all the time.

From 'Background to English-speaking Countries' (Macmillan Publishers - 1997)

QUESTIONS

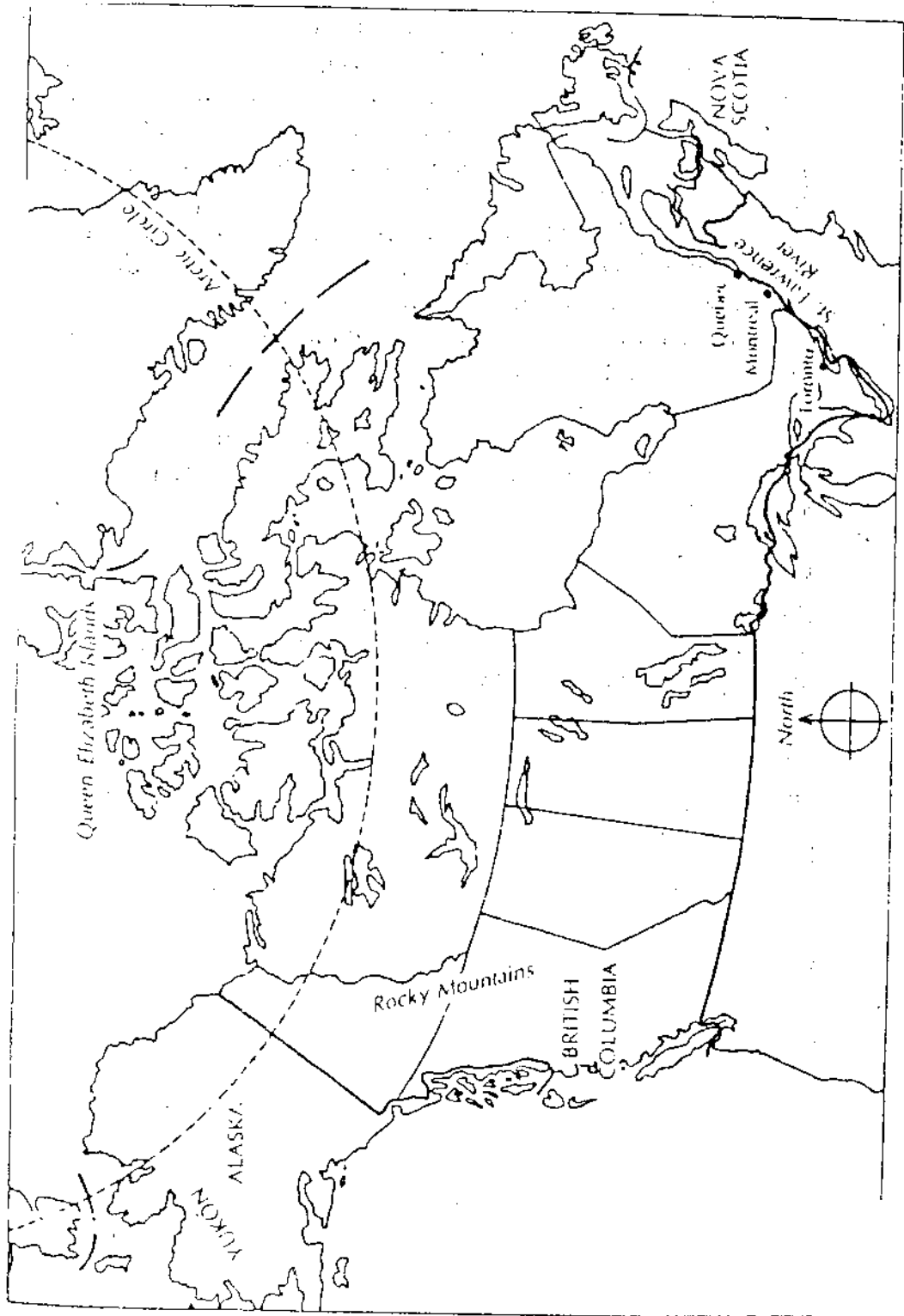
1. Why can anyone play golf in Sydney?

2. Find out as much as you about
Australian sport!

3. What do the Australians do in
their free time?

Chapter 4

CANADA



SNAPSHOT CANADA

As an affluent, high-tech industrial society, Canada today closely resembles the US in per capita output, market-oriented economic system, and pattern of production. Since World War II, the impressive growth of the manufacturing, mining, and service sectors has transformed the nation from a largely rural economy into one primarily industrial and urban. Canada started the 1990s in recession, and real rates of growth have averaged only 1.1% so far this decade. Because of slower growth, Canada still faces high unemployment and a large public sector debt. With its great natural resources, skilled labour force, and modern capital plant, however, Canada will enjoy better economic prospects in the future. The Continuing constitutional impasse between English- and French-speaking

areas is raising the possibility of a split in the confederation, making foreign investors somewhat edgy.

From 'Country Studies' (Hanoi National University - 1998)

UNIT XVII

THE MAKING OF CANADA

John Cabot, an Italian sea captain in the pay of the British, discovered Canada in 1497, five years after Columbus discovered America. He planted a huge cross on the shore and then sailed home, with the news that he had reached north east China, the land of the Great Khan, and that the sea was full of fish.

In 1534, the French explorer, Jacques Cartier, sailed right down the St Lawrence River until he could go no further. Among the great forests along the shore he met Indians who welcomed him, but in return he kidnapped some of their chiefs. He was the first European to treat the Indians with cruelty and treachery. It was almost another hundred years before French colonists settled on the banks of the St Lawrence and

founded Quebec. They were sent there to give good and shelter to the French fur traders, who were carrying on a profitable trade with the Indians.

By the middle of the 18th century, the French in North America realized that they



could not avoid a fight to the death with the British and their American colonists, but back in France the French King Louis XV, was too busy with his wars with Prussia to bother much about what was going on in the 'Land of Ice and Snow'. So the

French troops in Canada did not receive the supplies they needed so badly, and the few ships that did try to get through were usually captured by British warships.

Yet this colonial war ended in a famous battle. The British surprised the French by climbing the cliffs at Quebec in the middle of the night. After their defeat, the French were forced to give up every inch of land in North America. But the British allowed the French colonists, all 60,000 of them, to stay on, and they did not try to change the French way of life or their religion. The French were all Catholics. But the British warned them that Louis XV of France was no longer their King. Their King from now on, would be King George III of England.

At that time there were very few British colonists in Canada. The first British settlers in Canada were American refugees who refused to fight against the British army in the Revolutionary War, because they felt they were more British than American. They called themselves Loyalists, but their fellow Americans accused them of being traitors and took away their possessions. 80,000

Loyalists helped the British to defend Canada against an invading American army during the Revolutionary War.

During the first half of the nineteenth century one million immigrants, mostly British, settled in Canada, but there were hardly any French immigrants from France. However, the French Canadians' birth rate was high, so that in just over two centuries the French Canadian population increased from 60,000 to 6 million.

Joe Mulloy, a student from London was interested in the French Canadians and asked a Quebecois friend, Pierre Charcot, about them. 'What would happen, Pierre, if Quebec declared itself independent?'

'It'd be very unfortunate for everybody,' Pierre replied. 'It's what a lot of French Canadians want, but I don't think it'll ever happen.'

'Why do they want to leave Canada?' asked Joe.

'Because Quebec is much more French than Canadian. The way of life of Anglophone (English-speaking) Canadians is American, with some British mixed in.'

'French and British Canadians get on all right, don't they?'

'Well, Montreal is a bit of a problem. It's Francophone (French-speaking) and the second biggest city in Canada. But there are a lot of Anglophone businessmen there, and they usually employ Anglophone workers. Now there are more and more Francophone employers who will only employ Francophone workers! So more and more Anglophones are moving to Ontario where mostly English is spoken.

Canada spread from the Atlantic right across the prairies* and the Rocky Mountains to British Columbia; and northwards to the bare but beautiful Yukon and the ice-covered islands of the Arctic. The pioneer farmers found that the black earth of the Prairie Provinces could grow some of the finest grain in the world. The tracks of the Canadian Pacific Railway pushed on westwards through Indian lands. To protect their land the Indians made

fierce attacks on the railway-builders and the farmers.

Canada moved slowly towards self-rule during the second half of the nineteenth century. A federation of provinces was formed from Nova Scotia on the Atlantic coast to British Columbia on the far side of the Rockies. In 1936 Canada became a Dominion (a self-governing nation) within the British Commonwealth and Empire. The Dominions of Canada, New Zealand and South Africa went to war alongside Britain in 1918 and again in 1939.

From 'Background to English-speaking Countries'

(Macmillan Publishers - 1997)

QUESTIONS

- 1- Describe the formation and development of Canada.
2. Where did the first British settlers in Canada come from?
3. What do the pioneer farmers grow on the prairies?

UNIT XVIII**PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF CANADA**

Canada is a good example of the way peoples of different ways of life and different languages can live side by side under one government. The population of Canada has risen from 11.5 million in 1941 to 25 million in 1980. Most of the newcomers are from Europe, Asia and the USA, so that today less than 44% of Canada's population is of British origin. Quebec province is still 90% French. There are some groups of French-Canadians in Ontario and Manitoba, but the numbers are quite small.

There are many Indians, Pakistanis and Chinese, and also blacks from the USA, among the immigrants who are pouring into Canada now. Some Canadians are afraid that before long Canada will have more colored citizens than white. Other Canadians are disturbed by the growing racism in their country Canada, like so many other countries, has only just

begun to treat her own non-white citizens, the Eskimos (or Inuit) and the Indians, as generously as they deserve. The Indian and Eskimo populations have grown quite a lot in the last few years. The government is at last realizing that it has a duty towards these people that it has neglected for so long.

All Canadian children have to learn both French and English at school, but Francophones and Anglophones do not enjoy learning each other's language. Still, most Quebecois middle class families living in Montreal are bilingual - they speak English and French equally well.

Until the Second World War, every-Canadian province except Quebec was overwhelmingly British, both by blood and in feeling. Some Canadians were

more patriotic than the British themselves and were really angry if anyone walked out of a cinema while *God Save the King* was being

played. Now Canadians think of themselves as a people in their own right, not tied to either Britain or the USA. The USA has

How do you think most Eskimos live today?



not been a threat to Canada for almost two hundred years. In fact, the 6,416 km US-Canadian frontier, the longest continuous frontier in the world, has no wire fence, no soldiers, no guns on either side. It is called 'the Border'.

Joe Mulloy met an American girl, Suzie, who had moved to Toronto. 'Why did you leave the USA?' he asked.

'Because I have a boyfriend here, but chiefly because Detroit, where we used to live, is such an awful city. My mother and father were both mugged.'

'You mean there's no violence in Toronto?'

'Very little' said Suzie. You can walk anywhere, night or day, or ride the Subway, and feel quite safe. There are really no poor neighbourhoods in Toronto, no ghettos. And the laws against guns are stricter.'

'But don't you find Canada dull after America?'

'It was rather dull, people say, just after the war, but it isn't now, not since all the European immigrants have settled here. I've made friends with some Italians. They've opened a restaurant, and it's very good, too.

There are thousands of Italians in Toronto now. That's a lot, and they bring the place alive.'

'Still, don't you find Toronto rather provincial?' asked Joe.

'Provincial? You're kidding! It has a population of three million, you know. Canada is an exciting place to be these days, because it's building up a culture of its own. Lots of Canadians are crazy about music and theatre.'

'So don't you find life very different, then?'

'Well, if you were taken up in a plane and dropped in a Toronto shopping mall, you wouldn't know if you were in Canada or the USA. But life here is calmer,' said Suzie.

The Canadian government is more British in style than American, except that it is a federal government. The head of government is the Prime Minister, often called the 'PM', as in Britain.

The Federal Government has a Senate and House of Commons, and each province also has a House of Commons.

Canada now belongs to the Commonwealth of Nations (nations which once belonged to the British Empire.) Her ties with the mother country are not as strong as they were. She has a new flag, which has two red bands at either end with a red maple leaf in the middle. The maple tree is the national tree of Canada. In the fall maple leaves turn a brilliant red and orange.

Queen Elizabeth II is still Queen of Canada. She is head of the government, as in Britain, but has a Governor-General to represent her. She is still quite popular among Anglophone Canadians, but she is more popular still in the USA!

From 'Background to English-speaking Countries'

(Macmillan Publishers - 1997)

QUESTIONS

1. What do you think of the Canadians?
2. Find out as much as you can about the political system of Canada.
3. What shows that the Canadians do not regard the USA as a threat?

UNIT XIX**LIFE AND INDUSTRY IN CANADA'S FAR NORTH**

Canada buys most of what she needs from the USA, and the USA buys most of what Canada sells. Canada's prairie provinces grow vast crops of grain, but the great forests which stretch from the Pacific to the St Lawrence, and far up into the Northwest Territories, are much more valuable. Canada is one of the world's greatest timber producers.

Canada also has many different minerals. In the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, prospectors found that many of these minerals lay in the Arctic: lead, zinc, copper, gold, silver, coal, uranium, asbestos, above all oil and natural gas.

Few places are more windswept or bitterly cold than the Canadian Arctic, an empty, treeless, icy land stretching all the way from Alaska to Greenland. From September until June, everything lies buried beneath

snow and ice. Yet in the short summer, rocks and pools gleam in the midnight sun (for a few days in midsummer the sun never sets). Tiny willows burst into leaf, and there are places where millions of wild flowers, of all colours spread for miles across the ice-cold earth.

This Arctic land is called the tundra. It is the land of the Eskimo, or Inuit means 'the people' whereas 'Eskimo' is an Indian word meaning eaters of raw flesh. The Inuit used to be nomads, hunting seals on the ice in winter and caribou on the tundra on summer. They slept in tents made of caribou skins. They were a peaceful people who lived their lives cheerfully, and they joked and laughed a great deal. Then the white hunters came and shot caribou and polar bears and musk oxen

and wolves and the government had no control over them. Other white men came in search of minerals beneath the tundra and found oil and natural gas. The arrival of the white men with their guns and machinery changed the lives of the Inuit. They gradually gave up living as nomads and moved into settlements, where they had little to do except drink in the saloons. They were no longer happy and they did not laugh very often.

But now things have changed once more. The Inuit have started hunting again - with guns and snowmobiles. The hunters still live in tents, but they keep a store of canned food in case they cannot get enough to eat from their hunting. The government has built towns for them, like Inuvik, where they can get training in many kinds of jobs, and where their children can go to school. Their health is looked after, and the Inuit now live longer than they did when they were nomads.

Some years ago the oilmen found oil, and also natural gas, beneath the sea not far from the Mackenzie River, and further north still, on the Queen Elizabeth Islands. The search

for oil and gas in these frozen regions is a dangerous adventure, almost as dangerous as gold rush across the Rocky Mountains in the last century. Between the Queen Elizabeth Islands and the North Pole there is no more and only snow and ice which never melts in summer or winter. The oilmen have only one link with civilization, the aeroplane, and their lives depend on the skill of the pilots. There have been some bad crashes.

'It's just about as far north as you can go,' Mark Grigson, a roughneck, said in an interview with a reporter. 'Look at the map and you'll see. You can only get there by plane, and that can be frightening, because we're right near the magnetic pole, which means you can't use a compass. We don't see the sun for most of the year. It makes you miserable after a while, so we work for 12 hours a day for two weeks, then go south for a week's vacation... It's an awful place. The temperature sometimes stays at

60° below zero for weeks and weeks, and there are blinding snowstorms. The cold is unbelievable. I once saw a man with all the skin torn off his hand. He'd lost one of his gloves and took hold of an iron railing. It was just as if it was red hot.... You can see why alcohol is forbidden up there. You could easily drink too much, and then you'd be done for. Summer's not much better, though at least we don't get mosquitoes as far north as that. But there are plenty of fogs and polar bears are a danger, too. I had to shoot one once - in self-protection. Still, we're pretty comfortable in our huts.... There's plenty of gas up there. The problem is getting it back to civilization. But the company reckon they can do it by pipeline - once they've found enough gas to make it worth the cost. The construction of a pipeline will cost a fortune.'

The attitude of these new pioneers is, 'Anything is possible if you really want it.'

From 'Background to English-speaking Countries'

(Macmillan Publishers - 1997)

QUESTIONS

- 1- Find out as much as you can about the country.
2. Describe the Inuit's life many years ago and now.
3. What do you think of their life in Canada's far north?

UNIT XX**THE CANADIAN SPORTSMAN, ODD MAN OUT?**

Canada has not done as well at international sport as the other Dominions in the Commonwealth of Nations. One cause may be the climate. Canadian athletes must find it difficult to train during the long, cold winters. Perhaps that's why they win few medals at the Commonwealth and Olympic Games. As for other Commonwealth sports, such as cricket and rugby, they are minor sports in Canada. Canadian football is like American football, but not quite, so American and Canadian teams never play each other. The Canadians play baseball, but their professional teams belong to the American leagues. They do not often play international matches.

'You just don't understand!' Suzie said crossly to her English Cousin, Sam. 'You're suggesting that we're no good at anything, because we don't very often get our name on the

sporting pages of the world's newspapers. Do you really think it's so important to be famous for beating other countries? You ought to be here when the big freeze starts. We have water everywhere - lakes, pools, rivers, and they always freeze and stay frozen right through the winter. When it snows, we just brush the snow away so, you see, we have natural skating rinks in every town and city, and the sun shines nearly all the time. It's very cold, of course, but the cold doesn't worry you if wear gloves and a woolly cap to cover your ears. Everybody can skate in Canada. You should see tiny kids learning to skate and falling on their bottoms!'

'But doesn't it give kids ambitions, skating so well?'

asked Sam, 'Like English kids kicking a football about?'

Yes, it does. When they're old enough, the kids come out with sticks and play hockey. Then, if a boy starts playing really well, he might get noticed and be given the chance of playing in a professional team. Hockey - what you call 'ice hockey' - is the sport Canadians usually enjoy playing most. There are about twelve teams in this part of North America - three Canadian teams and the rest in the USA.'

'So the Americans...?'

'No!' Suzie interrupted. 'The players in the US teams are 95% Canadian. When the Chicago Blackhawks play the Toronto Maple Leafs, the crowd shouts and cheers throughout the game. You said the other day you thought the Canadians were a quiet, serious people. You wouldn't think so if you went to a hockey game at the Maple Leaf arena! It's the most violent game there is, and we all love it and cheer on the Maple Leafs!'

'What do you mean, 'violent'?
Asked Sam.

'Well, they play it at a very great speed. It is supposed to be the fastest

game in the world. Players reach speeds of more than 50 km an hour. Their bodies are protected with thick padding, but when they crash into each other, they often start fighting and hitting each other with their sticks. Players who start a fight get sent to the penalty box to cool off for a while. Being hit by the puck is no joke, either. It can speed across the ice at 160 km an hour, and sometimes it travels through the air. That can be dangerous.'

'But your international team isn't too good. It never seems to win a gold medal at the Olympics,' Sam said.

'That's because our best team is professional, and so it can't take part in the Olympics.'

'Doesn't your top professional team play other international teams?'

'Not often', said Suzie, 'but Canada and the USSR played a series of eight games recently. We only just won-by four games to three, with one tied. That wasn't bad when you consider Russia's population,

and the Russian climate is like ours, only worse! Still, it was a shock.'

'Do the French Canadians play?'

'Of course. They have a very good team, the Montreal Canadians.'

There is a Canadian game, a really ancient game invented by the Indians many centuries ago. It is played with a stick bent at the end, where there's a small net. The ball is carried in this net and thrown from one player to another. The French called it 'lacrosse', because the stick looked like a crosier, the curved stick carried by a bishop. The Indians called it 'the little brother of war'! The goals were several miles apart and there were hundreds, sometimes thousands, of players on each side, who tried to knock out as many of the other side as possible, so as to leave a clear path to the goal. The winning side left a trail of injured warriors behind it. It was a way of testing a man's courage and skill.

The modern team has 12 players, but it is still a rough game. It is quite fair to knock a man over with your stick. Lacrosse is called Canada's national game, but today far more men play ice hockey. Lacrosse is more popular

women and is played in many girls' schools in Canada, the USA, Britain and Ireland. Women may knock the ball out of an opponent's stick, but body blows and violence of any kind are strictly forbidden.

From 'Background to English-speaking Countries'

(Macmillan Publishers - 1997)

QUESTIONS

- 1- Why is it difficult for Canadian athletes to train during winter?
2. Find out as much as you can about Canadian sports.
3. What do you think of the ancient Indian game?

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