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Л.А. Ласица, О.В. Евстафиади

МИР ИНОСТРАННОГО ЯЗЫКА (МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЕ ОТНОШЕНИЯ, ТРАДИЦИИ, КУЛЬТУРА ВЕЛИКОБРИТАНИИ)

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Методические указания «Мир иностранного языка (международные отношения, традиции, культура Великобритании)» содержат страноведческий материал о традициях и обычаях, культурных ценностях, национальном характере жителей страны и международных отношениях внутри Объединенного королевства, а также контрольные вопросы, тесты и задания для практических занятий по дисциплине «Мир иностранного языка (2 язык)».

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1 Education in Great Britain¹

1.1 Characteristics of education in Great Britain

The basic features of the British educational system are the same as they are anywhere else in Europe: full-time education is compulsory up to the middle teenage years; the academic year begins at the end of summer; compulsory education is free of charge, but parents may spend money on educating their children privately if they want to. There are three recognized stages, with children moving from the first stage (primary) to the second stage (secondary) at around the age of eleven or twelve. The third (tertiary) stage is 'further' education at university or college. However, there is quite a lot which distinguishes education in Britain from the way it works in other countries.

The British government attached little importance to education until the end of the nineteenth century. It was one of the last governments in Europe to organize education for everybody. Britain was leading the world in industry and commerce, so, it was felt, education must somehow be taking care of itself. Today, however, education is one of the most frequent subjects for public debate in the country.

It is a characteristic of the British system that there is comparatively little central control or uniformity. For example, education is managed not by one, but by three, separate government departments: the Department for Education and Employment is responsible for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own departments.

None of these central authorities exercises much control over the details of what actually happens in the country's educational institutions. All they do is to ensure the availability of education, dictate and implement its overall organization and set overall learning objectives (which they enforce through a system of inspectors) up to the end of compulsory education.

Central government does not prescribe a detailed programme of learning or determine what books and materials should be used. It says, in broad terms, what

¹ План семинарского занятия и тесты по теме – в приложениях Б,В.

schoolchildren should learn, but it only offers occasional advice about how they should learn it. Nor does it dictate the exact hours of the school day, the exact dates of holidays or the exact age at which a child must start in full-time education. It does not manage an institution's finances either; it just decides how much money to give it. In general, as many details as possible are left up to the individual institution or the Local Education Authority (LEA, a branch of local government).

In the late 1980s, the national curriculum was introduced by the government. For the first time in British education there is now a set of learning objectives for each year of compulsory school and all state schools are obliged to work towards these objectives. However decentralization is still left: actually there are three, not one, national curricula. There is one for England and Wales, another for Scotland and another for Northern Ireland. The organization of subjects and the details of the learning objectives vary slightly from one to the other. There is even a difference between England and Wales. Only in the latter is the Welsh language part of the curriculum.

1.2 Compulsory education (nursery school, primary school, secondary school)

Preschool education in England begins at the age of 3 or 4. About half of the children at this age attend nursery schools or playgroups mostly organized by parents. Little children need care as well as education. That's why kids play a lot, learn to listen attentively and to behave.

Compulsory primary education (5 – 11 year olds) begins at the age of 5. Children start their school career in an infant school. They are taught '3 R's': reading, writing, arithmetic. Pupils have a lot of fun at school, drawing, reading, dancing or singing.

When they are 7, pupils move to a junior school, which lasts four years till they are 11. They study a lot of subjects: English, Maths, Science, History and Geography along with Technology, Music, Art and Physical Education. All the children are

streamed into A, B, C, D classes. The most gifted attend A streams, the least talented are in D classes.

Nearly all schools work a five-day week, with no half-day, and are closed on Saturdays. The day starts at or just before nine o'clock and finishes between three and four, or a bit later for older children. The lunch break usually lasts about an hour-and-a-quarter. Nearly two-thirds of pupils have lunch provided by the school. Parents pay for this, except for the 15% who are rated poor enough for it to be free. Other children either go home for lunch or take sandwiches.

Methods of teaching vary, but there is most commonly a balance between formal lessons with the teacher at the front of the classroom, and activities in which children work in small groups round a table with the teacher supervising. In primary schools, the children are mostly taught by a class teacher who teaches all subjects. Parents are strongly encouraged to help their children, particularly with reading and writing, and small amounts of homework are set to all children, even during the early years at school.

Secondary education (11 – 16 year olds) begins at 11. The majority of secondary schools are Comprehensive schools where boys and girls study together. Besides, parents can take their children to Secondary Modern schools or to Grammar schools. Many children of working class families go to Modern schools, which give a very limited education but pupils get instruction in woodwork, metalwork, sewing, shorthand, typing and cooking there. Grammar schools are selective. Entrance is based on a test of ability, usually at 11 (11+ exam). Grammar schools provide an academic course from 11 to 18. They prepare pupils for colleges and universities. Grammar schools are single sexed schools i.e. children either go to a Boys Grammar School or a Girls Grammar School. There are grammar schools in Northern Ireland and some parts of England.

The Comprehensive schools have their own 'Grammar schools' classes and 'Modern classes'.

At about 16 years old teenagers take some exams and course-work to get General Certificate of Secondary Education. Those who choose to stay on at school

usually study for two more years to pass A level (Advanced level) exams. These exams will give them chance to enter the university. However some comprehensive schools don't have enough academic courses for six-formers, so students can transfer to either to a grammar school or to a six-form college to get the courses they want.

1.3 Types of schools

The main types of school are:

- local authority maintained schools (State Schools) – free to all children between the ages of 5 – 16
- independent schools (Private/Public Schools) – parents pay for their children's education.

1.3.1 State Schools

In the UK 93% of the children in England and Wales go to 'state schools'. State schools are non fee-paying, funded from taxes and most are organized by Local Authorities (LA).

Parents are expected to make sure that their child has a pen, pencil, ruler etc. but the cost of other more specialized equipment, books, examination fees are covered by the school.

Parents are, however, expected to pay for their child's school uniform and items of sportswear. Charges may also be made for music lessons and for board and lodgings on residential trips. Schools may ask for voluntary contributions for school time activities – but no pupil may be left out of an activity if their parents or guardian cannot or do not contribute.

1.3.2 Fee Paying Schools (Independent Schools)

7% of the children in England go to independent schools. Independent schools are known as private schools or public schools. Parents pay for their children to attend these schools.

Nursery/Kindergarten	2 to 4 years
Pre-preparatory	3 or 4 to 7 years
Preparatory	7 to 11 or 13 years
Public	11 or 13 to 18 years

A preparatory school is a school to prepare pupils to go to a public school.

A public school is an independent secondary school. Public schools in England are not run by the government. The entrance exams used by most public schools are known as Common Entrance exams and are taken at the age of 11 (girls) or 13 (boys).

The most famous public schools are Eton, Harrow, Rugby and Winchester.

1.4 Higher education in Great Britain

Young people get higher education at the universities. Not everybody can afford it because it is not free. There are about 50 universities and 350 colleges and institutes of higher education in Great Britain. The oldest and the most famous are Oxford and Cambridge Universities which were founded in the 12th and 13th centuries.

A university consists of a number of faculties: divinity, medicine, philosophy, law, music, natural science, economics, engineering, agriculture, commerce and education. After three years of study a university graduate will leave with the Degree of Bachelor of Arts, Science, Engineering, Medicine, etc. Later, having studied for two more years at the post-graduate courses they get the Master's Degree and then the most talented people may proceed to a Doctor's Degree.

English universities greatly differ from each other. They differ in date of foundation, history, traditions, general organization, internal government, methods of instruction, way of students' life, size, etc. Each university has its own problems, each looks at them in its own way. But there are some tendencies common to them all.

One of the tendencies of higher education in Britain is the increase in number of students. This leads to the expansion of universities. On the whole, British universities are comparatively small. The approximate number is seven-eight thousand students, most universities having under three thousand, some even less than 1,500 students.

Another tendency is the increase in student studying technical sciences. One more factor is the tendency of university study to extend beyond the first degree. The further development of postgraduate courses appears to be reasonable. Some universities have extra-mural departments where students study by correspondence. London University, for example, has about 12,000 students at this department.

At present students may receive a grant from their local authority, which covers the cost of the course and some living expenses.

1.5 Types of universities

There are no state universities in Great Britain; each of the universities, of which there are thirty six in England, one in Wales, eight in Scotland and two in Northern Ireland, has its own independent government.

For several hundred years Oxford and Cambridge, the two greatest Universities in the country, dominate the British education. Admission to them is very difficult, the examinations are very severe. But if a fellow gets admission, gets through, gets his degree he is made for life.

An Oxford and Cambridge degree is accompanied by all sorts of privileges. And it is no accident that Oxford and Cambridge are familiarly known as Oxbridge (Oxford+Cambridge): this term is regarded in Britain as the sum of everything best in university life. The majority of Prime Ministers, political leaders and leaders in

public life are Oxbridge. Big Business men and all the other Bigs of the country mostly belong to the Oxbridge category. And if it comes to getting a job, an Oxonian or Cambragian will get the preference, though he may have less brain and knowledge than a Redbrickman.

In the 20th century 13 major provincial universities were housed in dreary redbrick buildings to educate students in industrial regions, emphasizing technical subjects rather than the classics. They contrasted with the Gothic grey stone of Oxford and Cambridge. Now the more recent universities are all glass and steel buildings. There are some excellent Redbrick universities in Britain, many of which (for example, in London, Manchester or Bristol) are not in the least inferior to the Grey Stone; in some fields of learning they maybe even superior. But the prejudice is firmly implanted in the minds of a great number of people, even to this day.

In addition to the 47 universities which can award degrees, there is a body called the National Council for Academic Awards (NCAA) which gives degrees to students who have taken degree courses at Polytechnics or Colleges of Technology. Many of these courses are ‘sandwich’ courses, because a student spends six months of each year of his four year course studying at the College and the other six months he works in a related occupation in industry.

Degrees are also now awarded by the ‘Open Universities’, which accept adult students for spare-time study by mainly correspondence.

The Open University is the most recently established university in Great Britain. It was set up in 1969 for those people who missed the chance of going to an ordinary university. The university differs from other universities in that its students work in full-time jobs and can study only in their free time by means of distance teaching materials, through correspondence and broadcasting. Students study about ten hours a week and they do a lot of watching and listening to the weekly lectures through different communication systems.

As the university is really ‘open’ neither formal entrance examinations, nor qualifications are required at undergraduate level. Students are admitted on a ‘first

came, first served' basis. Each student gets the help of his own tutor whom he meets regularly.

The university has some faculties and three programmes of study – undergraduate, associate and postgraduate. The Bachelor of Art degree is built up on a credit system. Students' final mark is based on the exams in October and on the written assignments during the year. It takes six or eight years of study at the usual speed of a course.

1.6 World-known educational centers: Oxford and Cambridge.

Student life

Oxford. At a distance of some 70 miles from London there are two world-known educational centers – Oxford and Cambridge.

The towns are almost identical. They both trace their long history back to the same period – 12th century.

Oxford, situated on the bank of the river Thames, is the seat of the most ancient university. Besides the University colleges, the town has the University Museum and the majestic building of the Sheldonian Theatre. According to the ancient tradition the degree-giving ceremony is conducted in the Sheldonian Theatre built by the famous Christopher Wren. About 125 thousand people live in this town.

Oxford University is a sort of federation of 23 colleges for men and five for women. All these colleges, including twelve thousand students, are parallel and equal institutions, and none of them is connected with any particular field of study. No matter what subject a man wants to study, he may study at any of the men's colleges. Each college has a dining-room, chapel, and residential rooms (enough to accommodate about half the student membership, the rest living in lodgings in the town). The college is governed by its Dons, of whom there are usually about twenty or thirty. They elect the Head of the college; they are also responsible for teaching the students of the college through the tutorial system.

The University prescribes syllabuses, arranges lectures, conducts examinations and awards degrees, but there is no single building which can be called ‘the University’. The colleges and university buildings are scattered about the town, mostly in the central area, though the scientific laboratories and the women's colleges are quite a long way out.

The university teachers are mostly Dons of colleges, who may at the same time hold university appointments as lecturers or professors. Part of the teaching is by means of lectures organized by the university, and any student may attend any university lecture. At the beginning of each of the three terms in the Oxford academic year a list is published showing all the lectures being given during the term within each faculty. Every student can choose which lecture he will attend, though his own college tutor will advise him which lectures seem likely to be more useful. Attendance at lectures is not compulsory, and no records of attendance are kept.

Cambridge. Cambridge with the population of about one hundred people is the second university town in Britain. The river Cam flows slowly and calmly behind the college buildings and curls about the town in the shape of a horseshoe. To the left, across the stream, there are no buildings, merely meadows and gardens.

Cambridge University was founded in 1284, when the first college Peterhouse was built. Now Cambridge comprises 19 colleges for men and three for women. Peterhouse is the oldest college, Trinity, founded in 1546 is the largest, Churchill College (1959) – the most recent one.

The founder of the most famous college of Cambridge – King’s College – was the unfortunate king Henry VI. He founded Eton, the famous public school as well. The King was most unlucky in warfare – he was captured by his enemies, put in the Tower of London, and there put to death by strangling.

Under King Henry VIII, in the 16th century, Cambridge became a bastion of Protestantism. The king’s favourable attitude caused new Professorships to be created: of Divinity, Civil Law, Physics, Greek. Erasmus of Rotterdam was the first to teach Greek in the University.

Cambridge colleges have the same pattern as Oxford: quadrangles, walls, gates, common rooms, dining-rooms, gardens.

Cambridge is a great centre of research. Here the Cavendish, the most famous of Britain's scientific laboratories was built in 1874. It is known all over the world as a great centre of research where a number of Nobel Prize physicists and nuclear scientists have worked, Thomson and E. Rutherford and the eminent Russian scientist Petr Kapitza were among them.

Student life in Oxford and Cambridge. Every college of the Oxbridge universities has students of all kinds; it has its medical students, its engineers, its art students, etc.

The Tutorial system is one of the ways in which Oxford and Cambridge differ from all other English universities. It is the system of individual tuition organized by the college. Each Don in a college is a tutor in his own subject; he has five or six undergraduates and plans the work for them. Besides attending lectures, the student has chosen, he comes to see his Don once a week. The Don discusses the work the student has done, gives him advice and helps him in his study. The student is free to go to any lecture or seminar he chooses, or not to attend any at all. But he is in constant contact with his tutor whose guiding hand and tuition he feels in every way.

A student does not necessarily go only to his own tutor but may be assigned to another Don in his own college or in another college when he is studying some particular topic which is outside the special interest of his own Don.

The academic year in England is divided into three terms. Terminal examinations are held at the end of each term; final examinations are taken at the end of the course of study. If a student fails in an examination, he may be allowed to take the exam again. Only two re-examinations are usually allowed.

As well as the college libraries, there are the two university libraries, both of which are legally entitled to a free copy of every book published in Britain.

Most students live in the buildings of their college. Two undergraduates usually share a room, which has an outlook over the college garden. There is a very small gas-stove on which they can make coffee or tea. They eat their meals in the

College dining-hall. Long tables line the hall and at one end there is a raised platform on which is a special table for the Dons, known as the High Table. It is a great honour to be invited to dine at the High Table.

For a break of discipline a student can be fined a sum of money, for a serious offence he may be expelled. The universities have over a hundred societies and clubs, enough for every interest one could imagine.

Questions:

- 1) When does compulsory education begin?
- 2) What are the three stages of education?
- 3) What do 3 'R's mean?
- 4) What types of secondary schools do you now?
- 5) What was the function of 11+ exam?
- 6) When were Oxford and Cambridge Universities founded?
- 7) What is the peculiarity of 'sandwich' courses?
- 8) Who is called a Don?

2 Holidays and special occasions²

2.1 Introduction

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 anyway that it was thought 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.

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.)

2.2 Annual holidays

2.2.1 Traditional seaside holidays

The British upper class started the fashion for seaside holidays in the late eighteenth century. The middle classes soon followed them and when they were given the opportunity (around the beginning of the twentieth century), so did the working classes. It soon became normal for families to spend a week or two every year at one of the seaside resort towns which sprang up to cater for this new mass market. The most well-known of these are close to the larger towns and cities: e.g. Blackpool, Brighton, Eastbourne, Falmouth, Torquay and others.

² План семинарского занятия и тесты по теме – в приложениях Б,В.

These seaside towns quickly developed certain characteristics that are now regarded as typical of the 'traditional' English holiday resort. They have some hotels where richer people stay, but most families stay at boarding houses. These are small family businesses, offering either 'bed and breakfast' or, more rarely, 'full board' (meaning that all meals are provided). Some streets in seaside resorts are full of nothing but boarding houses. The food in these, and in local restaurants, is cheap and conventional with an emphasis on fish and chips.

Stereotypically, daytime entertainment in sunny weather centres around the beach, where the children make sandcastles, buy ice-creams and sometimes go for donkey rides. Older adults often do not bother to go swimming. They are happy just to sit in their deck chairs and occasionally go for a paddle with their skirts or trouser-legs hitched up. The water is always cold and, despite efforts to clean it up, sometimes very dirty. But for adults who swim, some resorts have wooden huts on or near the beach, known as 'beach cabins', 'beach huts' or 'bathing huts', in which people can change into their swimming costumes. Swimming and sunbathing without any clothing is rare. All resorts have various other kinds of attraction, including more-or-less permanent funfairs.

For the evenings, and when it is raining, there are amusement arcades, bingo halls, dance halls, discos, theatres, bowling alleys and so on, many of these situated on the pier. This unique British architectural structure is a platform extending out into the sea. The large resorts have decorations which light up at night. The 'Blackpool illuminations', for example, are famous.

Another traditional holiday destination, which was very popular in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, is the holiday camp, where visitors stay in chalets in self-contained villages with all food and entertainment organized for them. Butlin's and Pontin's, the companies which own most of these, are well-known names in Britain. The enforced good-humour, strict meal-times and events such as 'knobbly knees' competitions and beauty contests that were characteristic of these camps have now given way to a more relaxed atmosphere.

2.2.2 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. But the greatest cause of the decline of the traditional holiday is foreign tourism. Before the 1960s, only the rich took 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 on 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 hostels has long been popular and so, among an enthusiastic minority, has potholing (the exploration of underground caves). There are 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’ holidays, 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).

2.3 Public holidays

British bank holidays are Public Holidays and have been recognized since 1871. The name Bank Holiday comes from the time when banks were shut and so no trading could take place.

The 1871 Act designated four holidays in England, Wales and Ireland (then wholly part of the UK), and five in Scotland.

There is currently a total of 8 permanent bank and public holidays in England, Wales and Scotland and 10 in Northern Ireland. These include Christmas Day and Good Friday, which in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are ‘common law’ holidays (they are not specified by law as bank holidays but have become customary holidays because of common observance).

Even though banks are still closed on these days many shops today now remain open. Shops, museums and other public attractions, such as historic houses and sports centers, may close on certain public holidays, particularly Christmas Day.

Traditionally many businesses close on Bank Holidays to enable the workers to have a holiday. This time is often spent with the family on mini breaks and outings.

In England and Wales there are six bank holidays and two common law holidays.

Bank holidays:

- New Year’s Day;
- Easter Monday (The day after Easter Sunday);
- May Day (The first Monday in May);

In Britain this day is associated more with ancient folklore than with the workers. In some villages the custom of dancing round the maypole is acted out.

- Spring Holiday at the end of May (The last Monday in May)

There used to be a holiday on ‘Whit Monday’ celebrating the Christian feast of Pentecost. Because this is seven weeks after Easter, the date varied. This fixed holiday has replaced it.

- Late Summer Holiday at the end of August (The last Monday in August);
- Boxing Day (26 December or the Monday nearest).

Explanations for the origin of the name of Boxing Day vary. One is that it was the day on which landowners and householders would present their tenants and servants with gifts (in boxes), another is that it was the day on which the collecting boxes in churches were opened and the contents distributed to the poor.

‘Common Law’ Holidays (Public holidays):

- Good Friday – the Friday before Easter Sunday, on which the Crucifixion of Christ is commemorated in the Christian Church. It is traditionally a day of fasting and penance.
- Christmas Day.

Londoners spend public holidays in different ways. If it happens to be August Bank Holiday, car-owners dash down to the sea-side town of Brighton for a bathe in the sea, or to the Devil Dyke, a famous beauty-spot, to take it easy on the grass, eat sandwiches, and look at the sky. Many families take a basket and put their lunch or tea in it to enjoy their meal in the open air. Others go to the zoo in the country at Whipsnade (a reserve for the breeding and exhibition of wild animals), where they feed the kangaroos and tame monkeys roaming at liberty, and have a ride on a slow, silent elephant.

But the real cockney collect all the money they have saved and set off in the direction of Hampstead Heath, a large natural park in Greater London, whole families of them from grandma to grandchildren. There are many different amusements for children and young people there. They whirl down on merry-go-rounds or swings until they are dizzy, or slide down a wooden spiral on a piece of carpet and merrily

turn head over heels as they reach the bottom, or aim wooden balls at coconut targets and win a live canary. In the park one can see a traditional puppet Punch and Judy show – the cousin of the Russian Petrushka. There are fortune-tellers and rifle-rangers, there are bowling alleys and dart boards. There is something for everybody.

A very important event is the coming of the Pearly Kings and Queens who walk proudly up and down. These are cockneys who have sewed pearl buttons all over their suits and dresses. And their hats also have many pearl buttons on them. Those of them who have the most beautiful costumes are named pearly King and Queen for one year.

2.4 Special occasions (Christmas, New Year, Easter, St. Valentine's Day, Halloween, Shrove Tuesday, Guy Fawkes' Day, Remembrance day)

Christmas is the one occasion in modern Britain when a large number of customs are enthusiastically observed by most ordinary people within the family. 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 Christmas shopping. And it certainly is 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 (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 activity on Christmas Day may include the eating of Christmas dinner, which consists of stuffed roast turkey with roast potatoes and some other vegetable (often Brussel sprouts (vegetables that look like tiny cabbages)). Other foods associated with Christmas are Christmas pudding, an extremely heavy sweet dish made of dried fruits (it is traditional to pour brandy over it and then set it alight) and Christmas cake, an equally heavy fruit cake, with hard white icing on top.

One more activity is 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.

Pantomimes have been part of the British Christmas for 200 years or more, providing entertainment and amusement for both young and old. The most popular pantomime characters are: Robinson Crusoe, Cinderella, Peter Pan, Red Riding-Hood, Puss in the Boots and Mother Goose.

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.

Christmas lasts for twelve days. In fact, most people go back to work and school soon after New Year. Nobody pays much attention to the feast of the epiphany on 6 January (the twelfth day of 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.

Parties on New Year's Eve, on the other hand, are usually for friends. They usually begin at about eight o'clock and go on until the early hours of the morning. There is usually a buffet supper of cold meat, pies, sandwiches, cakes and biscuits and some drinking, mainly beer, wine, gin and whisky. Sometimes the hosts make a big bowl of punch, which consists of wine, spirit, fruit juice and water in varying proportions. At midnight the wireless is turned on, so that everyone can hear the chimes of Big Ben and on the hour a toast is drunk to the New Year. Then the party goes on.

Another popular way of celebrating New Year is to go to a New Year dance. Most hotels and dance halls hold a special dance on New Year's Eve. The hall is decorated and the atmosphere is very gay.

The most famous celebration in London is round the statue of Eros in Piccadilly Circus where crowds of people gather and sing and welcome the New Year. Many people 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).

Hogmanay. Nowhere else in Britain is the arrival of the New Year celebrated so wholeheartedly as in Scotland. Hogmanay is a Scottish name for New Year's Eve,

and the time for merry-making and giving presents. Most important of all, there must be plenty of good things to eat, bottles of wine and the ‘mountain dew’ that is the poetic name for whisky.

As the evening advances, the fire is piled high – for the brighter the fire, the better the luck. When the hands of the clock approach the hour, the head of the house goes to the main door, opens it wide and holds it thus until the last stroke of midnight has died away. Then he shuts it quietly and returns to the family circle. He has let the Old Year out and the New Year in. Now greetings and small gifts are exchanged, glasses are filled. On the stroke of twelve, all join hands and dance around the fire, singing Auld Lang Syne, a song by Robert Burns. The Scotsmen observe the old custom of First Footing. It is considered lucky if a dark-haired man is the first to set foot in the house after midnight on Hogmanay. He must bring a piece of bread to wish food, a lump of coal to wish warmth and a silver coin – a symbol of wealth for the coming year. 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).

Easter is far less important than Christmas to most people in Britain. Although the Christian religion gave the world Easter as we know it today, the celebration owes its name and many of its customs and symbols to a pagan festival called Eostre. Eostre, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of springtime and sunrise, got her name from the word east, where the sun rises. Every spring northern European peoples celebrated the festival of Eostre to honour the awakening of new life in nature. Christians related the rising of the sun to the resurrection of Jesus and their own spiritual rebirth.

Easter comes on a Sunday between March and April. It marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring. Easter is a religious holiday. At Easter people buy new clothes to wear on Easter Sunday. There is a popular belief that wearing three new things on Easter will bring good luck in the year. After church services many people like to take walks down the streets in their new Easter hats and suits. This colourful procession of people dressed in bright new spring clothes is called the ‘Easter

Parade'. At Easter people exchange presents which traditionally take the form of an Easter egg, a symbol of wealth. The ancient custom of dyeing eggs at Easter time is still very popular.

In England children roll eggs down hills on Easter morning, a game which has been connected to the rolling away of the rock from Jesus Christ's tomb when he was resurrected.

The Easter bunny is a rabbit-spirit. The rabbit is the most fertile animal, that's why our ancestors selected it as a symbol of new life. Today children enjoy eating candy bunnies and listening to stories about the Easter bunny, who supposedly brings Easter eggs in a fancy basket.

It involves a four-day 'weekend'. Quite a lot of people go away on holiday at this time.

None of the other days of the year to which traditional customs are attached is a holiday, and not everybody takes part in these customs. In fact, many people in Britain live through occasions such as Shrove Tuesday, April Fools' Day or Hallowe'en without even knowing that they have happened.

St. Valentine's Day. People celebrate St. Valentine's Day on the 14th of February. This modern-day holiday is a celebration of love which gets its name from a Roman priest, Valentine, who secretly performed wedding ceremonies for Christian couples in the 3^d century.

St. Valentine's Day is a happy little festival, especially for children and young people. Boys and girls, husbands and wives, friends and neighbours and even the office staff express their affection for each other in merry ways. Weeks before the 14th of February shop-windows are decorated with red paper hearts, red streamers and boxes of chocolates. Heart-shaped cakes are baked, and gifts such as perfume and jewellery are promoted by department stores. Red roses are ordered from florists, dinner reservations are made and presents are bought in preparation for Valentine's Day.

On St. Valentine's Day many people wear something red, since it is considered to be the colour of love. They send their sweethearts and friends small gifts or

greeting cards and ask them: 'Be My Valentine', which means 'Be my friend or love'. A 'valentine' may mean a person who receives the gift or it may be a special greeting card or a little present. The greeting cards are coloured, have drawings, pictures of hearts, or words 'I love you' and 'Guess who'. Traditional Valentine's cards are sentimental in nature and very often contain verses; ex: 'I'll be your sweetheart, if you are mine, all of my life I'll be your Valentine'; or 'Roses are red, violets are blue, you know how much I love you'.

Valentine candy and flowers are packed in red heart-shaped boxes. It is a favourite day for parties. In the evening many couples choose to dine at romantic restaurants while others enjoy spending time together at home. The hosts decorate the hall with coloured paper and hearts.

St. Valentine's Day is a time to let people know how much you love and appreciate them. It is a day that makes everyone feel romantic and happy.

Halloween. November 1st is a religious holiday known as All Saints' Day. The day before the holy day is known as All Hallows' Eve. The word Halloween comes from that form.

October 31st was the eve of the Celtic New Year. On this day, ghosts walked and mingled with the living, or so the Celtic thought. Halloween originated as a celebration connected with evil spirits. Witches flying on broomsticks with black cats, ghosts, goblins and skeletons have all evolved as symbols of Halloween. People thought that on that day the spirits of all those who had died during the last year would be wandering around in the search of living bodies. To save themselves from the spirits people lit bonfires, dressed up in a ghoulish manner and walked around the village making noise to frighten away dead souls.

Much later, when Christianity spread throughout Ireland, and October 31st was no longer the last day of the year, Halloween became a celebration mostly for the children. Nowadays people do not believe in evil spirits. They mark this holiday by costume balls or fancy-dress parties. Children like to visit houses and ask the traditional question 'Trick or treat?' If people in the house give the children a 'treat' (usually money or sweets), then the children will not play a trick on them.

Pumpkins are also a symbol of Halloween. Carving pumpkins for jack-o'-lantern is a Halloween custom also dating back to Ireland. A legend grew up about a man named Jack who was so stingy that he was not allowed into heaven when he died. His spirit was doomed to wander around the countryside, holding a lantern to light his way. The Irish people carved scary faces out of pumpkins and lit a candle inside, representing 'Jack of Lantern' or Jack-o'-lantern. Today jack-o'-lanterns in the windows of a house on Halloween night let costumed children know that there are goodies waiting if they knock and say 'Trick or Treat'.

Shrove Tuesday. This day is also known as Pancake Day. In past centuries, Lent was a time of fasting. Both meat and eggs were forbidden throughout the six weeks. The tradition was to eat up all your meat on the Monday before Lent, and all your eggs on the Tuesday – in pancakes. Now, the fasting has gone and only the eating remains.

Two events are associated with Shrove Tuesday. One of them is the pancake tossing contest (how many pancakes can you throw into the air and catch within a certain time?). The other is the pancake race. Contestants have to run while continuously tossing a pancake. Anyone who drops his or her pancake is disqualified.

Guy Fawkes' Day. There is one other day which, although many people do not mark in any special way, is very difficult to ignore. This is 5th November, the day which celebrates a famous event in British history – the gunpowder plot. It is called Guy Fawkes' Day – or, more commonly, Bonfire Night. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, a group of Catholics planned to blow up the Houses of Parliament while King James I was in there. Before they could achieve this, one of them, Guy Fawkes, was caught in the cellars under Parliament with the gunpowder. He and his fellow-conspirators were all killed.

At the time, the failure of the gunpowder plot was celebrated as a victory for British Protestantism over rebel Catholicism. However, it has now lost its religious and patriotic connotations. In most parts of Britain, Catholic children celebrate it just as enthusiastically as Protestant children – or, for that matter, children brought up in any other religious faith. Some children make a 'guy' out of old clothes stuffed with

newspaper several weeks beforehand. They then place this somewhere on the street and ask passers-by for 'a penny for the guy'. What they are actually asking for is money to buy fireworks with.

On Guy Fawkes' Night itself there are 'bonfire parties' throughout the country, at which the 'guy' is burnt. Some people cook food in the embers of the bonfire, especially chestnuts or potatoes. So many fireworks are set off that, by the end of the evening, the air in all British cities smells strongly of sulphur. Every year, accidents with fireworks injure or even kill several people. In an effort to make things safer, some local authorities arrange public firework displays.

Remembrance Day is observed throughout Britain in commemoration of the million or more British soldiers, sailors and airmen who lost their lives during the two World Wars. Remembrance Day is held annually on the Sunday before November 11, unless November 11 was itself a Sunday.

On that day special services are held in the churches and wreaths are laid at war memorials throughout the country and at London's Cenotaph, a war memorial in Whitehall, commemorating the dead of the two World Wars. A great number of people gather to observe the two-minute silence and to perform the annual Remembrance Day ceremony. The silence begins at the first stroke of Big Ben booming 11 o'clock, and is broken only by the crash of distant artillery. When the two-minute silence is over, Members of the Royal Family or their representatives and political leaders come forward to lay wreaths at the foot of the Cenotaph. Then comes the march past the memorial of ex-servicemen and women, followed by an endless line of ordinary citizens who have come here with their personal wreaths and their sad memories.

On that day artificial poppies, a symbol of mourning, are traditionally sold in the streets everywhere, and people wear them in their button-holes. The money collected in this way is later used to help the men who had been crippled during the war.

Questions:

- 1) What are the most important holidays in Great Britain?
- 2) What do letters B&B stand for?
- 3) What are the typical entertainments at the seaside resort?
- 4) Why are Bank holidays called so? How many of them are there during a year?
- 5) Who are the Pearly Kings and Queens?
- 6) What is the most popular place in London for celebrating New Year?
- 7) What is Hogmanay?
- 8) Symbol of what holiday is jack-o'lantern?
- 9) When is Guy Fawkes' Day celebrated?
- 10) What happens at London's Cenotaph?

3 People of Great Britain³

3.1 British national character

Most commentators on the British character agree over one quality, which they describe as fatuous, self-satisfaction, serene sense of superiority or pride. The fact is that for centuries the English had lived in a privileged situation, when Great Britain ruled the seas and continents. They felt superior to the native people, oppressed and ruthlessly exploited by them. They felt themselves and acted as ‘masters’ in their numerous colonies in Africa, India, Malaya, Australia, etc. This might have left a certain imprint on their character, or to be more precise, on the character of those belonging to the ruling caste. But the common people in England are simple, unassuming and modest by nature.

The British are a sport-conscious nation. The psychological result is the sporting spirit of the people, their will to overcome, the ability to resist, to stand firm ground, to withstand. The motto of the British sportsman is: ‘Win as if you were accustomed to it; lose as if you liked it’, or, in other words, ‘Be a good loser’. And this motto does not refer to sport alone. This is their idea, their conception of meeting and treating the ups and downs of life.

The traditional quality of the Englishman is self-possession, i. e. the ability not to lose his head or panic, but remain quiet and with clear mind in the situation of emergency, at a moment of crisis, personal or national. It is considered to be very un-British to lose one’s head in such a situation.

The British are short-spoken people, they are men of few words. If a continental youth wants to declare his love to a girl, he kneels down, tells her that she is the sweetest, the most charming person in the world, that he will be unable to live one more minute without her. This is normal declaration of love in most continental countries. In England the boy pats his adored girl on her back and says softly: ‘I don't object to you, you know’. If he is quite mad with passion, he may add: ‘I rather fancy you, in fact’.

³План семинарского занятия и тесты по теме – в приложениях Б, В.

The British say: 'Life is short, but there is always time for courtesy'. They know how to be courteous, how to show their respect for women. An Englishman, who considers himself a real gentleman, never forgets to rise when a lady comes up to him. He will never remain seated when a lady is standing.

Britains are very punctual people. An Englishman will be surprised if you come to an appointment fifteen minutes before your time. And he will be annoyed if you were five minutes late. Coming in time is essential when keeping a date, whether private or business.

The British are very conservative, though they may not behave in traditional ways, but they like symbols of tradition and stability. The British can be particularly and stubbornly conservative about anything which is perceived as a token of Britishness. They are rather proud of being different.

It is, for example, very difficult to imagine that they will ever agree to change from driving on the left-hand side of the road to driving on the right. It doesn't matter that nobody can think of any intrinsic advantage in driving on the left. Why should they change just to be like everyone else? Indeed, as far as they are concerned, not being like everyone else is a good reason not to change.

Developments at European Union (EU) level which might cause a change in some everyday aspect of British life are usually greeted with suspicion and hostility. The case of double-decker buses is an example. Whenever an EU committee makes a recommendation about standardizing the size and shape of these, it provokes warnings from British bus builders about 'the end of the double-decker bus as we know it'. The British public is always ready to listen to such predictions of doom.

Systems of measurement are another example. The British government has been trying for years and years to promote the metric system and to get British people to use the same scales that are used nearly everywhere else in the world. British manufacturers are obliged to give the weight of their tins and packets in kilos and grams. But everybody in Britain still shops in pounds and ounces. The weather forecasters on the television use the Celsius scale of temperature. But nearly everybody still thinks in Fahrenheit. British people continue to measure distances,

amounts of liquid and themselves using scales of measurement that are not used anywhere else in Europe.

Distances on road signs in Britain are shown in miles, not kilometers, and people talk about yards, not metres. If you described yourself as being 163 tall and weighing 67 kilos a British person would not be able to imagine what you looked like. You would have to say you were ‘five foot four’ (5 feet and 4 inches tall) and weighed ‘ten stone seven’ or ‘ten and a half stone’ (10 stone and 7 pounds). British people think in pounds and ounces when buying their cheese, in pints when buying their milk and in gallons when buying their petrol. Americans also use this non-metric system of weights and measures.

Imperial	Metric
1 inch	2.54 centimetres
12 inches (1 foot)	30.48 centimetres
3 feet (1 yard)	0.92 metres
1 760 yards (1 mile)	1.6 kilometres
1 ounce	28.35 grams
16 ounces (1 pound)	0.456 kilograms
14 pounds (1 stone)	6.38 kilograms
1 pint	0.18 litres
2 pints (1 quart)	1.16 litres
8 pints (1 gallon)	4.64 litres

3.2 Four national characters

The Englishmen. The English are reputed to be cold and very reserved even in their relations with his fellow Englishmen. They say that a typical Englishman is a tall, slim, fair-haired and blue-eyed gentleman with regular aristocratic features. He is also well-bred, polite, quiet, taciturn, reticent in speech, but possessing a great sense of humour, a special ‘English type’ of humour, often difficult to understand for

foreigners. The English humour is often directed against oneself, in a self-critical way. It is quite common to find good friends playing jokes at each other. They can understand and appreciate a good joke.

The English are known to be very conservative in their political and social views, they are fond of sports and animals.

The English is a nation of stay-at-homes. There is no place like home, they say. And when the man is not working he withdraws from the world to the company of his wife and children and busies himself with the affairs of the home. 'The Englishman's home is his castle', is a saying known all over the world; and it is true that the English people prefer small houses, perhaps with a small garden. The fire is the centre of the English home.

The Scots. The Scotsman is more self-conscious about his nationality than the Englishman. His sense of the family is more extended and tenacious than is common among modern Englishmen. He usually keeps in touch with uncles, aunts and cousins scattered not only over Scotland itself but all over the world. Few Scots ever lose their native accent. Accent and manners are, for Scots abroad, badges of mutual recognition and draw exiled Scots everywhere together.

The Welsh. There is no other part of the British Isles where national spirit is stronger, national pride more intense or national traditions more cherished than in Wales. The Welsh still proudly wear their national dress on festive occasions; the Welsh language is still very much a living force and is taught side by side with English in schools.

The Welsh are highly-gifted in the art of poetry and drama. They speak fluently and confidently. The Welsh are a nation of singers. Wherever they meet, they sing. There is no need to arrange singing, it will happen spontaneously and it will be good.

The Welsh call their country Cymru (Welsh name for Wales), and themselves they call Cymry a word which has the same root as comrade, friend.

The Irish. The first thing you notice when you come to Ireland is the slightly easier tempo at which everything moves. People are not much of a hurry. On a fine afternoon you would think it was a holiday, with everybody strolling along with

plenty of time to look in at the shop-windows or stop and talk with friends. There is a national habit of politeness, a desire to say what will please and avoid saying what will distress. The Irish can often find better conversation in the Irish pub than anywhere else as it is a great place to learn all the local news and gossips.

3.3 Every day life of the British and popular hobbies

One of the most striking features of English life is the self-discipline and courtesy of people of all classes. There is little noisy behaviour, no loud disputing in the streets. Nobody rushes for seats in buses or trains. The remarkable politeness of the English people is known all over the world. They are never tired of saying 'Thank you', 'I am sorry'. If you follow anyone who is entering the building or a room, he will hold the door open for you.

The Englishman prefers his own house to an apartment in a block of flats. Traditionally, it is a two-storey house in the country with a lawn in front of it and a garden behind it. They enjoy privacy. Everyone knows the saying: 'An Englishman's home is his castle' and it's true. The English try, if possible, not to interfere in other people's affairs. And they expect others to let them alone and mind their own business.

The typically English custom is 'lunch at 1 o'clock'. The time from one to two o'clock is a 'sacred' hour in England. Whatever one is doing, no matter how important it is, as soon as the clock strikes one, everybody breaks for lunch. All the shops, offices are closed for an hour. At two o'clock sharp they will open, for punctuality is also one of the English traditions.

Gardening and growing flowers is a very popular hobby on the British Isles. Thanks to the soft temperate climate you can see green grass all year round and there is always something in blossom there. So Englishmen may not only work in the open air but also enjoy the fruits of their labour.

Even if they cannot get into the countryside, many British people still spend a lot of their time with 'nature'. They grow plants. Gardening is one of the most

popular hobbies in the country. Even those unlucky people who do not have a garden can participate. Each local authority owns several areas of land which it rents very cheaply to these people in small parcels. On these 'allotments', people grow mainly vegetables.

Their love to domestic animals is great. As a rule there is a pet in every English home. It can be a dog, a cat, a bird, a guinea-pig, a hedgehog, even a snake or a monkey. A dog or a cat for them is a favourite member of the family, the most devoted friend. Walking with his favourite dog on a rainy day an Englishman often keeps his umbrella not over his own head, but over his dog so that drops of rain couldn't reach his friend.

But the love of animals goes beyond sentimental attachment to domestic pets. Wildlife programmes are by far the most popular kind of television documentary. Millions of families have 'bird-tables' in their gardens. These are raised platforms on which birds can feed, safe from local cats, during the winter months.

Kite-flying is an old hobby in England. Many years ago people in London liked kite-flying. In our days young men and old men, women and children take their kites to the parks and throw them up into the sky. The kites are of many colours. Some of them are square, others have three corners. Some kites are like boxes, some look like balls or flowers. People buy their kites in the shops or make them of paper and fix bright ribbons to them. In some countries kite-flying is a sport. People have kite-flying competitions.

3.4 Customs and traditions

3.4.1 Destroying stereotypes

Britain is known to be a 'land of tradition'. There are a lot of traditions connected with public life, however in their private everyday lives, the British as individuals are probably less inclined to follow tradition than are the people of most other countries. There are very few ancient customs that are followed by the majority

of families on special occasions. The country has fewer local parades or processions with genuine folk roots than most other countries have.

‘English’ breakfast is a large ‘fry-up’ preceded by cereal with milk and followed by toast, butter and marmalade, all washed down with lots of tea. In fact, only about 10% of the people in Britain actually have this sort of breakfast. Two-thirds have cut out the fry-up and just have the cereal, tea and toast. The rest have even less. What the vast majority of British people have in the mornings is therefore much closer to what they call a ‘continental’ (i.e. European) breakfast than it is to a ‘British’ one.

The image of the British as a nation of tea-drinkers is another stereotype which is somewhat out of date. It is true that it is still prepared in a distinctive way (strong and with milk), but more coffee than tea is now bought in the country’s shops. As for the tradition of afternoon tea with biscuits, scones, sandwiches or cake, this is a minority activity, largely confined to retired people and the leisured upper-middle class (although preserved in tea shops in tourist resorts).

The British love queuing. British people do form queues whenever they are waiting for something, but this does not mean that they enjoy it. In 1992, a survey found that the average wait to pay in a British supermarket was three minutes and twenty-three seconds, and that the average wait to be served in a bank was two minutes and thirty-three seconds. You might think that these times sound very reasonable. But The Sunday Times newspaper did not think so. It referred to these figures as a ‘problem’. Some banks now promise to serve their customers ‘within two minutes’. It would therefore seem wrong to conclude that their habit of queuing shows that the British are a patient people. Apparently, the British hate having to wait and have less patience than people in many other countries.

3.4.2 Parliamentary traditions

The state opening of parliament. The opening of Parliament at the beginning of the session is the most colourful as well as the most important ceremony of the

year. Her Majesty the Queen attended by a sovereign escort of the Household Cavalry drives from Buckingham Palace to the Palace of Westminster. The route is lined by regiments of Foot Guards wearing black bearskins which have for so long been a symbol of courage and loyal service.

At the foot of the Royal Staircase which is lined by Household Cavalry, Her Majesty is received by the great officers of the State.

The Procession headed by the four pursuivants wearing their tabards embroidered with the royal arms passes through the Royal Gallery and between lines of Beefeaters and Gentlemen-at-Arms in uniforms of scarlet, black and gold. The Queen magnificently dressed in robes of state, crowned, and wearing many of the finest crown jewels, enters the House of Lords. The assembly rises to its feet. The peers are in their scarlet robes, the peeresses in evening dresses; the archbishops and judges in scarlet; the Diplomatic corps blazing with gold and decorations.

Her Majesty occupies the throne and says: 'My Lords, pray be seated'. At the Queen's request the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod proceeds to the House of Commons to command the presence of its members at the Bar of the House of Lords.

When the Commons are assembled at the Bar, the Lord Chancellor kneels before the Queen and hands her a copy of the royal speech, which has been prepared by the Cabinet. The speech is a summary of the policy which the Government intends to follow and the measures which it proposes to adopt. At the conclusion of the Queen's speech the Commons return to their Chamber. The Queen is escorted to her coach and returns to Buckingham Palace.

The speaker's procession. The sitting of the House of Commons each day is opened by the Procession of the Speaker. It begins with the shout of the policeman 'Speaker!' and the Members and visitors lining each side of the Lobby fall silent, the Members at attention, the policeman with his helmet doffed. Wearing the wig and gown, the Speaker is accompanied by the Chaplain, his Secretary, and the Sergeant-at-Arms, carrying the Mace.

The usher in his knee-breeches beat the rhythm with his slow march. The Serjeant-at-Arms behind him, proud and slightly inclined under the weight of the five

foot silver-gilt mace, moves in a resolute harmony. (The Serjeant-at-Arms is responsible for seeing that strangers do not misconduct themselves in the House, and for arresting members as directed by the Speaker). At last the Speaker moves towards the crowd circled behind the police in the Central Lobby, symbolizing the majesty of Parliament. Next moment a new shout from the policeman on duty comes, 'Hats off, strangers!' Every head is bared, including those of the policemen.

On arrival at the Chamber, the Mace is set on the table, prayers are read by the Chaplain, and provided a quorum of forty members is present, the Speaker takes the Chair, the Chaplains withdraw and the business of the day is taken.

3.4.3 Royal ceremonies

Changing the guards. One of the most impressive and popular displays of royal pageantry is Changing the Guard which takes place at Buckingham Palace every day, including Sunday, at 11.30. The troops who take part are selected from the five regiments of Foot Guards. Their numbers and colours are dependent on whether the Queen is in residence or not. These form the famous Brigade of Guards, and they consist of the Grenadiers, the Coldstream Guards and the Welsh, Irish and Scottish Guards.

Changing the Guard at Buckingham Palace is the ceremony of great interest. Two horse guards wearing scarlet uniforms with tall black fur caps, called the busby, on black horses are guarding the entrance to the Palace. By tradition the duty of mounting the Queen's Guard is undertaken by a Regiment of Foot Guard. The ceremony is attended by a Regiment band.

The history of the Foot Guards goes back to 1656, when Charles II of England, during his exile in Holland, recruited a small body-guard, which was merged in the regiment of guards enrolled at the Restoration in 1660. Later the Guards of the regiment acquired their title of Grenadier Guards and their bearskin headdress – later adopted by the rest of the Guards brigade – by virtue of their defeat of Napoleon's grenadier guards at Waterloo. The Brigade of Guards serves as a personal bodyguard

to the Sovereign. When the Queen is in residence at Buckingham Palace, there is a guard of four sentries. Only two are on duty when she is away from London.

The colourful spectacle of Mounting the Guard, at the Horse Guards, in Whitehall, also attracts London sightseers. The guard is provided by a detachment of the Household Cavalry and involves units of the Royal Horse Guards and the Life Guards.

Trooping the colour. During the month of June a day is set aside as the Queen's official birthday. This is usually the second Saturday in June. On this day the magnificent spectacle of Trooping the Colour takes place on Horse Guards' Parade in Whitehall. The Parade begins at 11.15 a.m. unless rain intervenes, when the ceremony is usually postponed until conditions are suitable.

This is pageantry of rare splendour, with the Queen riding side-saddle on a highly trained horse. The colours of one of the five regiments of Foot Guards are trooped before the Sovereign. As she rides on to Horse Guards' parade, the massed array of the Brigade of Guards, dressed in ceremonial uniforms, wait for her inspection.

For twenty minutes the whole parade stands rigidly to attention while being inspected by the Queen. Then comes the Trooping ceremony itself, to be followed by the famous March Past of the Guards to the music of massed bands, at which the Queen takes the Salute. The ceremony ends with the Queen returning to Buckingham Palace at the head of her Guards.

The ceremony of the keys. The Ceremony of the Keys at the Tower is another very interesting tradition. Every night at 9.53 p.m. the Chief Warder of the Tower of London lights a candle lantern and makes his way towards the Bloody Tower. In the Archway his Escort joins him and they move off to lock the West Gate and the Towers. Then they all return to the Bloody Tower and there they are halted by the challenge of the sentry. 'Halt!' he commands. 'Who goes there?' The Chief Warder answers. 'The keys'. The sentry demands, 'Whose keys?' 'Queen's Elizabeth's keys,' replies the Chief Warder. 'Advance, Queen Elisabeth's Keys. All is well', commands the sentry. The party then face the main Guard of the Tower who orders to 'Present

Arms'. The Chief Warder doffs his Tudor-style bonnet and cries, 'God preserve Queen Elizabeth'. 'Amen', answers the Guard and Escort. Then the Chief Warder proceeds to the Queen's House, where the keys are given into the custody of the Resident Governor and Major.

The Ceremony of the Keys dates back 700 years and has taken place every night during that period, even during the blitz of London in the last war.

The custodians of the Tower, the Yeomen Warders, known as 'Beefeaters', wear a state dress uniform consisting of funny flat hats, trousers bound at the knee, and the royal monogram on their breast. These traditional medieval clothes make the old castle look still more fantastic and theatrical. Nowadays these Yeomen Warders act as guides taking tourists around the Tower and telling them numerous histories and legends associated with this place. Usually they are veterans of the Second World War.

A number of ravens have their home at the Tower. There is a superstition that when the ravens fly away, the Tower will fall down and that will be the sign of the downfall of the British Empire. Because of this superstition the wings of the ravens are regularly clipped.

Questions:

- 1) What is the motto of the English sportsmen?
- 2) What is used to measure distance in Britain?
- 3) What proverbs can prove that the English is a nation of stay-at-homes?
- 4) Which nation is known as the nation of singers?
- 5) What are the most popular British hobbies?
- 6) What does the typical English breakfast consist of?
- 7) Where does the ceremony of Changing the guards take place?
- 8) When is the Queen's official birthday?
- 9) When and where can one hear the following dialogue: – 'Halt! Who goes there?' – 'The keys'. – 'Whose keys?' – 'Queen's Elizabeth's keys.'?

4 Famous people of Great Britain⁴

4.1 Famous historical figures of G.B.

The famous historical figures of Great Britain are King Alfred the Great, Sir Thomas More, Francis Drake, Oliver Cromwell, Admiral Nelson, Winston Churchill, Tony Blair and others.

King Alfred the Great (871 – 899) ruled in the 9th century when the British Isles were attacked by new barbarians who came from Norway, Sweden and Denmark. They drove off the cattle, burnt the houses, plundered monasteries and killed the people. The Anglo-Saxons had a problem of defending the country against the dangerous enemies. King Alfred united the small Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and Wessex became the centre of resistance against the invaders. Alfred the Great managed to raise an army and to stop the offensive of Vikings. He made new rules for the army, in which every free man had to serve and to come provided with the proper weapon.

During the reign of Alfred the Great the first British Navy was built. Besides, many places were fortified, earthen walls were built around them. As a result of all these measures, the Anglo-Saxons won several victories over the Danes.

King Alfred was an educated man, he read a good deal and he realized how backward the Anglo-Saxons were compared with the people of France and Italy. The king invited Scholars from the Continent and soon schools were set up where the sons of the nobles learned to read and write. Alfred himself sometimes taught there.

Sir Thomas More, an outstanding public figure of the 16th century was a brilliant lawyer, a royal favourite and Chancellor of England during the reign of Henry VIII. He wrote an international bestseller ‘Utopia’ which represented an ideal society.

⁴ План семинарского занятия и тесты по теме – в приложениях Б, В.

Francis Drake (1540 – 1596) is one of the most famous of English sailors and pirates. Drake was the first Englishman who sailed round the world. (It was the second voyage round-the-world after Magellan). The voyage lasted nearly three years.

In 1588 the Spanish Armada came up to the coast of England to invade the country. The English ships were much smaller but well handled. Eight fire-ships with Francis Drake at the head went into the middle of the enemy fleet and attacked the Spanish ships. One Spanish ship after another caught fire, Drake boarded and carried off 12 ships. This was a great victory of the English over the Spanish Armada. Of the one hundred and thirty two Spanish ships only about fifty returned, and they were in bad condition.

This made England much stronger than Spain and helped the English to conquer other countries later. Englishmen have set up a monument to Francis Drake in Plymouth.

Oliver Cromwell (1599 – 1658) is one of the famous political figures in the history of Great Britain.

Oliver Cromwell had a strong feeling of social justice and did much for the poor people of his native town. When he was 28 the people of Huntingdon elected him to represent them in Parliament.

The King of England, Charles I, was not popular with the people. He wanted to rule over England without Parliament and even tried to arrest some members of Parliament but couldn't do it. Members of the Parliament decided to build up an army to fight against the king. Oliver Cromwell formed and headed the Parliamentary army. In the battle near the town of York the Parliamentary army won the victory and the king's army was defeated.

Parliamentary government came to power and proclaimed Commonwealth and equality of rights for people. Scotland and Ireland did not recognize the republic. And then Cromwell attacked Ireland and Scotland. The Irish and Scottish armies could not stand against the well-trained and well-armed armies of the Commonwealth. Soon Cromwell was master of the whole country.

In 1653 Cromwell became Lord Protector of the Commonwealth and ruled over the country by the advice of the Council and a written Constitution. But during the last years of his life he became a dictator who ruled over the country without the council of the people. The English Commonwealth, the first republic in Europe, did not justify the hopes of the people.

Horatio Nelson (1758 – 1805) is the famous British Military Leader, the hero of the Battle of Trafalgar. He earned this honor by defeating Napoleon's fleet in the 1805 Battle of Trafalgar. Just before the battle of Trafalgar Nelson sent a famous signal to his fleet: 'England expects every man will do his duty'. Nelson's own last words were 'Thank God I have done my duty'. He was buried as a hero in St. Paul's Cathedral.

To commemorate Nelson's victory at the battle of Trafalgar, the British named the central square in London – Trafalgar Square. The monument in the centre of the square, known as Nelson's Column. The height of the monument is 184 feet.

Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill (1874 – 1965) played a prominent part in politics. He started his political career in the Conservative Party, During his life Churchill occupied several important posts in the British Government. He held office of Minister of Home Affairs, Minister of Finance, Minister of Defense. When World War II started Winston Churchill became Prime Minister in 1940. His war speeches were famous, he wanted 'victory at all costs'. He was Prime Minister again between 1951 and 1955. When Churchill retired, he was 81.

4.2 Famous British scientists and inventors

Isaac Newton (1642 – 1727) studied at the University of Cambridge, where he became one of the best students, and where later he lectured on mathematics for more than 30 years.

Newton's curiosity and diligence resulted in his greatest discovery of the most fundamental law of the Universe – the law of gravity. Newton's contribution to many sciences is so great that he may be considered the founder of modern mathematics,

physics and spectroscopy. It was Newton who said that light is a combination of different rays of different colours, known to us as the spectrum, and that white light is a mixture of all these.

Newton lived a long life and was buried in Westminster Abbey. There is a monument to Newton in Trinity College at Cambridge with the inscription: 'Newton, Who Surpassed all Men of Science'.

Adam Smith (1723 – 1790) is the great political economist and philosopher. He published his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. This work was about those standards of ethical conduct that hold society together, with emphasis on the general harmony of human motives and activities under a beneficent Providence.

He also published 'An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations', which examined in detail the consequences of economic freedom.

James Watt (1736 – 1819) was the greatest British inventor. James Watt made a great discovery: he made a rotative engine that could do much more than merely pump water out of mines. It could run machines.

Watt made several other inventions. The most important of them was a copying machine. He invented this machine to help him with the correspondence and other written work. Watt's copying machine was used all over the country for about 100 years. Then the typewriter took its place.

James Watt lived to the age of 83. After his death a monument was built to his memory in Westminster Abbey.

Michael Faraday (1791 – 1867) made a lot of experiences, and produced several new kinds of optical glasses that greatly improved the telescope. His discovery of benzene, which he separated from oil gas, found world-wide application. He discovered the law of electrolysis, etc. Faraday founded the theory of electric and magnetic fields and made great contribution into the development of electro-magnetic theory of light.

All his life Faraday was poor. He believed that a scientist could not serve science for money. Although Faraday enjoyed world-wide popularity, he remained a modest man and wanted neither high titles nor prizes for his numerous discoveries.

James Clerk Maxwell (1831 – 1879) is a great physicist and mathematician.

Maxwell organized the scientific laboratory for the study of electricity or magnetism in Cambridge, which made Cambridge world known in the field of experimental physics.

During these years he wrote his classic *Matter and Motion*, a small book on a great subject, and some articles on various subjects (Atoms, Attraction, Faraday and others). The results of Maxwell's comprehensive theory of electricity and light are wireless telegraphy and the modern doctrine of relativity.

Ernest Rutherford (1871 – 1937) is famous for his theory of the splitting of atoms, which opened a new and enormous source of energy to man.

George Stephenson was the first man who put a steam engine on wheels. The English call him the 'Father of Railways'.

4.3 Famous British writers and poets

William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) is the greatest and most famous of English writers, and probably the greatest playwright who has ever lived. He was born in the town of Stratford-on-Avon, in 1564. His father, John Shakespeare, was a merchant, his mother was a farmer's daughter. In his childhood William liked to see the performances of travelling groups of actors. Sometimes he wrote little plays and staged them with his friends. William received an excellent classical education. He lived in Stratford until he was about 21 and went to London. There he became an actor and a member of one of the chief acting companies. The theatre where he worked was called 'The Globe': It became the first professional theatre. William's experience as an actor helped him greatly in the writing of his plays. His knowledge of the stage and his poetical genius made his plays the most wonderful plays ever written.

Shakespeare achieved great recognition during his lifetime. Shakespeare wrote 37 plays of three types: comedies ('The Merry Wives of Windsor', 'All is well that Ends Well', 'Twelfth Night', 'Much Ado about Nothing'), tragedies 'Hamlet', 'King

Lear', 'Othello', 'Macbeth') and historical dramas. Besides plays, Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets.

Robert Burns (1759 – 1796) is the great national poet of Scotland. He began to write at the age of 15. Burns wrote many poems in English, but his best verses are written in the dialect of his own country Ayrshire. In this Scottish dialect he wrote all kinds of poems – beautiful and tender songs in which he showed sympathy for the poor, angry verses in which he showed his dislike for the rich.

Burns traveled much throughout Scotland collecting folktales and ballads. When he was offered money for this work, he refused to take any, though he was always short of money. His work was inspired by pure patriotism and love for his people and their poetry.

Robert Burns died when he was only 37 years of age. His early death was due to the fact that all his life he lived in poverty, all his life the lack of money made him work physically beyond his strength.

Now Robert Burns is considered the national poet of Scotland, and January 25 – the date of his birth – is always celebrated by Scotsmen.

George Bernard Shaw (1856 – 1950), the great English playwright, was the founder of the social realistic drama in English literature. Bernard Shaw was born in Dublin in a poor middleclass family. His father had retired from the Department of Justice and the family lived on a small pension.

The boy took lessons of reading and writing from a governess and his uncle gave him lessons in Latin. In 1867 Bernard was sent to a college where, as he said later, he had learned nothing.

Shaw's mother had a nice voice and the family decided to move to London where his mother worked as a teacher of singing. London was the literary centre of the country and the young man wanted to try himself in writing. He wrote articles and poems, essays and novels. But very little of it was published. His novels had little success and Bernard Shaw turned to dramatic writing.

Shaw was the reformer of the theatre and the road which led him to success was a difficult one. It was only in 1904, Shaw was about 50, that one of his plays was

first performed in the London West End. In fact, B. Shaw was famous abroad long before he was famous in England.

The first performance of his play 'Widower's Houses' (in 1892) was quite a sensation. Then followed 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' and 'The Philanderer'. Bernard Shaw called these works 'Plays Unpleasant'. Unpleasant they were to the bourgeois public because in them he attacked the society of injustice and hypocrisy. The most popular of his plays are 'Pygmalion' (1903), 'The Apple Cart' (1929), 'Too True to Be Good' (1913).

4.4 Famous British painters

William Hogarth (1697 – 1764) was one of the greatest English artists, pictorial satirist and a man of remarkably individual character and thought. He was the first artist who created English national school of painting.

Unlike his contemporaries he portrayed not only representatives of the upper class but also common people. The famous set of 16 satirical pictures called 'Marriage a la Mode' contains the most important and beautifully painted of the Hogarth comedies. In the London National Gallery one can see his 'Self-portrait'. In his paintings Hogarth attacks debauchery, sloth and drunkenness.

Joshua Reynolds (1723 – 1793), the prominent figure in the English school of painting, was born in Devonshire. He received a very good education from his father, who was a clergyman and the master of the free grammar school. At the age of seventeen Joshua, who had already shown a fondness for drawing, became an apprentice in London to Thomas Hudson, a popular portrait painter. In some years Reynolds went to Italy to continue his study.

In London, Reynolds became at once the fashionable portrait painter of the day. He used the most powerful means of expression known to him, bringing his canvases to life through his own impressions of the individual. Joshua Reynolds painted portraits, group pictures and historical themes. His sitters included the socially prominent people of the time and when the Royal Academy was founded in

1768, he naturally became its first president. His best works are: Admiral Hithfield, The Portrait of Nelly O'Brien, Girl at a Window, Venus and Cupid and many others.

Thomas Gainsborough (1727 – 1788) is one of the greatest masters of the English school of portraiture and landscape.

Among the finest works are portraits of Lady Ligonier, Mrs. Sheridan and Mrs. Tickell and the others. His total number of paintings is more than 300, including 200 portraits.

John Constable (1776 – 1837) was the first English landscape painter. He was born in Suffolk where his father owned water-mills and windmills. His father didn't think art was a real profession, and John as a boy worked almost secretly. His love of painting was so strong that a friend persuaded his father to send John to London to study.

The beauty of his native countryside, its luxuriant meadows, its woods and rivers became the subject matter of his painting. He wished not merely to paint 'portraits of places' but to give a true and full impression of nature, to paint light, dews, breezes, bloom and freshness.

Constable's picture The Hay Wain, which was exhibited at the Louvre in 1824, had an immediate and lasting effect on French art. In his Flatford Mill on the river Stour, Constable depicted a typically English scene, bringing painting out of door.

Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775 – 1851) was the most imaginative artist England has ever produced. A magnificent water-colorist, he was attracted by unusual and fantastic subjects – craggy cliffs, old abbeys, ruined castles, thunderstorms and sea.

Among his works there is 'the Shipwreck', 'The Burning of Houses of Parliament', 'The Snowstorm', 'Rain, Steam and Speed'. He painted 500 oils and about 20.000 watercolours. And he refused to sell his works but left them to the nation.

Questions:

- 1) During the reign of what King was the first British Navy built?
- 2) What is Francis Drake famous for/
- 3) Who win the Battle of Trafalgar?
- 4) What famous British physicists do you know?
- 5) Who is known as 'Father of Railways'?
- 6) Which famous poet was born in the town of Stratford-on-Avon?
- 7) Who is considered the national poet of Scotland?
- 8) Who was the first English landscape painter?

5 Housing, Food and Drinks⁵

5.1 Housing

5.1.1 Houses not flats

The saying ‘An Englishman’s home is his castle’ is well-known. It illustrates the desire for privacy and the importance attached to ownership which seem to be at the heart of the British attitude to housing.

Almost everybody in Britain dreams of living in a detached house; that is, a house which is a separate building. A large, detached house not only ensures privacy. It is also a status symbol. A detached house, surrounded by garden, gives the required suggestion of rural life which is dear to the hearts of many British people.

Most people try to avoid living in blocks of flats (what the Americans call ‘apartment blocks’). Flats, they feel, provide the least amount of privacy. With a few exceptions, mostly in certain locations in central London, flats are the cheapest kind of home. The people who live in them are those who cannot afford to live anywhere else.

The dislike of living in flats is very strong. In the 1950s millions of poorer people lived in old, cold, uncomfortable nineteenth century houses, often with only an outside toilet and no bathroom. During the next twenty years many of them were given smart new ‘high rise’ blocks of flats to live in which, with central heating and bathrooms, were much more comfortable and were surrounded by grassy open spaces. But people hated their new homes. They said they felt cut off from the world all those floors up. They missed the neighbourliness. They couldn’t keep a watchful eye on their children playing down there in those lovely green spaces. The new high-rise blocks quickly deteriorated. The lifts broke down. The lights in the corridors didn’t work. Windows got broken and were not repaired. There was graffiti all over the walls.

⁵ План семинарского занятия и тесты по теме – в приложениях Б, В.

In theory (and except for the difficulty with supervising children), there is no objective reason why these high-rise blocks (also known as ‘tower blocks’) could not have been a success. In other countries millions of people live reasonably happily in flats. But in Britain they were a failure because they do not suit British attitudes. The failure has been generally recognized for several years now. No more high-rises are being built. At the present time, only 4% of the population live in one. Only 20% of the country’s households live in flats of any kind.

The reasons of hating flats:

a) Private property and public property

The image of a home as a castle implies a clear separation between private property and the public property. This is very clear in the case of a detached house. Flats, on the other hand, involve uncertainties. You share the corridor outside your front door, but who with? The other residents on the same floor, or all the residents in the building? What about the foyer downstairs? Is this only for the use of the people who live in the block, or for the public in general? These uncertainties perhaps explain why the ‘communal’ living expected of flat-dwellers has been unsuccessful in most of Britain.

Law and custom seem to support a clear separation between what is public and what is private. For example, people have no general right to reserve the road directly outside their house for their own cars. The castle puts limits on the property of its owner as well as keeping out others. It also limits responsibility. It is comparatively rare, for example, for people to attempt to keep the bit of pavement outside their house clean and tidy. That is not their job. It is outside their property.

To emphasize this clear division, people prefer to live in houses a little bit set back from the road. This way, they can have a front garden or yard as a kind of buffer zone between them and the world. These areas are not normally very big. But they allow residents to have low fences, walls or hedges around them. Usually, these barriers do not physically prevent even a two-year old child from entering, but they have psychological force. They announce to the world exactly where the private

property begins. Even in the depths of the countryside, where there may be no road immediately outside, the same phenomenon can be seen.

b) Individuality and conformity

Flats are not unpopular just because they do not give enough privacy. It is also because they do not allow enough scope for the expression of individuality. Though all the houses in one district are usually built to the same design by organizations and seem similar to each other, every single house is different. The residents will have made sure of that! In an attempt to achieve extra individuality, some people even give their house a name.

People like to choose the colour of their own front door and window frames, and also to choose what they are going to do with a little bit of outside territory, however small that may be.

The opportunity which it affords for individual self-expression is another advantage of the front garden. In any one street, some are paved, some are full of flowerbeds with paths in between, others are just patches of grass, others are a mixture of these. Some are demarcated by walls, others by fences, others by privet hedges and some have no barrier at all.

5.1.2 The types of English home

a) The most desirable home: **a detached house**

Notice:

- the ‘traditional’ building materials of brick (the walls) and slate (the roof);
- the irregular, ‘non-classical’, shape, with all those little corners, making the house feel ‘cosy’;
- the suggestion of a large front garden with a tree and bushes, evoking not only the countryside but also giving greater privacy;
- that the garage (on the left) is hidden discretely away, so that it is not too obvious and doesn’t spoil the rural feeling;

– that the front door is not even in the picture (the privacy criterion at work again).

b) Second best: **a semi-detached**

Unless they are located in the remotest parts of the country, detached houses are too expensive for most people. So this is what a very large proportion of people live in: one building with two separate households. Each house is the mirror of the other, inside and out. These houses can be found, street after street, in the suburbs of cities and the outskirts of towns all over Britain. Notice the separate front garden for each house. At the sides, there is access to the back, where there will also be two gardens. The most common building material is brick. The typical semi-detached has two floors and three bedrooms.

c) Less desirable: **a terraced house**

This kind of house usually has no way through to the back except through the house itself. Each house in the row is joined to the next one. (Houses at the end of the row are a bit more desirable – they are the most like a semi-detached). They usually have two floors, with two bedrooms upstairs. Some have gardens back and front, others only at the back and others no garden at all. Before the 1960s, Britain had millions of terraced houses, most with no inside toilet or bathroom. Many of these were then knocked down, but in some areas those that have survived have become quite desirable – after repairs and building work have been carried out.

d) The least desirable: **a flat**

Not having a separate entrance to the outside world does not suit British tastes. Although it is densely populated, Britain has the second lowest proportion of flat-dwellers in the EU (the lowest of all is in Ireland).

e) An exception: **the town house**

These houses, which can be found in the inner areas of most cities, are an exception to the general pattern. There is great variety regarding both design and use. They often have three or more floors, perhaps including a basement or semi-basement. Although they are usually terraced, those that are well-preserved and in a ‘good’ area may be thought highly desirable. Many have been broken up into flats or

rooms for rent. Most of the comparatively small number of people who rent from private owners live in flats of this kind. Sometimes, these are 'self-contained' flats (they have washing and cooking facilities and it is not necessary to walk through anybody else's flat to get to your own); sometimes, they are 'bedsits' (i.e. bed-sitting rooms; residents have one room to themselves and share washing and cooking facilities with other residents).

5.1.3 Interiors:

a) the importance of cosiness

The important thing is to feel cosy – that is, to create an atmosphere which seems warm even if it isn't really warm. This desire usually has priority over aesthetic concerns, which is why the British also have a reputation for bad taste. Most people would rather buy several items of cheap, mass-produced furniture, with chairs and sofas covered in synthetic material, than one more beautiful and more physically comfortable item. The same is true with regard to ornaments – if you want to be cosy, you have to fill the room up.

To many, tradition is part of cosiness, and this can be suggested by being surrounded by old items of furniture. And if you cannot have furniture which is old, you can always have other things that suggest age. The open fire is an example. In Britain, it is regarded by many as very desirable to have a 'real fire' (as it is often called). It is the perfect traditional symbol of warmth because it is what most people used in the past to keep warm. So strong is the attraction of a 'real fire' that many houses have an imitation open fire, complete with plastic coal which glows red when it is switched on.

Most older houses, even very small ones, have not one but two general living rooms (reception rooms). It allows the front room to be kept for comparatively formal visits, while family members and close friends can spend their time, safely hidden from public view, in the back room. Most modern smaller houses are built with just one living room (and in some older houses the two reception rooms have been

converted into one). However, privacy must be preserved so these houses normally have a 'hall' onto which the front door opens. It is rare for it to open straight onto the living room. Some houses also have a tiny 'porch', with its own door, through which people pass before getting to the hall. The same concern can be seen where there is both a front door and a back door. Even if both can be reached from the street, the back door is for family and close friends only.

b) Rooms: uses and names

It is difficult to generalize about how British people use the various rooms in their houses. In a house with two floors, the rooms upstairs are the ones used as bedrooms. The toilet (often separate) and bathroom are also usually upstairs. The living room(s) and kitchen are downstairs. The latter is usually small, but those who can afford the space often like to have a 'farmhouse kitchen', big enough for the family to eat in.

Class divisions are sometimes involved in the names used for rooms. With living rooms, for example, the terms 'sitting room' and 'drawing room' are regarded as upper-middle class, while 'lounge' is regarded as lower class. 'Front room' and 'back room' are also sometimes looked down on.

5.1.4 Owning and renting

Most British people do not belong to a particular place. And they are not content to rent their accommodation. However houses prices are high. There is mortgage system in G.B. that solves this problem. About 70% of all the houses in the country are occupied by owners and almost all of these houses were bought with the mortgage. Half of these people have borrowed 80% of their price and now are paying this money month by month. Normally the borrower is to return the money within a period of 20 – 25 years.

5.1.5 Homelessness

Not all people in Great Britain have their homes. Those who have lost their homes and have no place to live are called homeless. In many cases, the homeless are those with personal problems which make it difficult for them to settle down.

Most homeless families (who lost their mortgage houses because they could not pay the money back to the banks) are provided with temporary accommodation in boarding houses (small privately run guest houses or 'bed and breakfasts') by their local council. It is the duty of local authorities to house homeless families. Some families, and many single people, find even more temporary shelter in hostels for the homeless which are run by charitable organizations. Thousands of single people simply live on the streets, where they 'sleep rough'.

In some cases, homeless people are those who simply don't want to 'settle down' and who wouldn't call themselves homeless. There are, for example, several thousand 'travelers' in the country, both traditional gypsies who have led a nomadic life for generations. Their homes are the vehicles in which they move from place to place, and they are often persecuted by unsympathetic authorities.

5.2 Food and drinks

Britain and good food are two things which are not commonly associated. Visitors to Britain have widely varying opinions about all sorts of aspects of the country, but most of them seem to agree that the food is terrible. Why? One reason could simply be that British tastes are different from everybody else's.

Another explanation may be that most visitors to Britain do not get the opportunity to sample home cooking. They either eat the food cooked in an institution, such as a university canteen, or they 'eat out' a lot, usually in rather cheap restaurants and cafes. These places are definitely not where to find good British food. Typical British cooking involves a lot of roasting and according to British people

food should be eaten hot. The British have not got into the habit of preparing sauces with grilled food in order to make it tastier.

5.2.1 Where British people eat

Normally British people do not care much about what they eat and they are not interested in quality. Most people eat in fast foods and drink instant coffee. Few people go to restaurants. Only rich people are considered to be restaurant-goers. They go to restaurant not to have a meal, but to show off. Merely being in an expensive restaurant sometimes seems to be more important to people than the food eaten in it.

In a country where few public notices appear in any language other than English, all the dishes in menus have non-English names, most commonly French (reflecting the high regard for French cuisine). It also makes the food sound more exotic and therefore more exciting. Many customers have little idea of what actually goes in to the dish they have chosen.

British people consider going to a restaurant a time to be adventurous. That is why few restaurants in Britain are actually British. When people go out for a meal in the evening, they want to be served something they don't usually eat. Every town in the country has at least one Indian restaurant and probably a Chinese one too. Larger towns and cities have restaurants representing cuisine from all over the world.

Eating places which serve British food are used only for everyday purposes. Apart from pubs, there are two types, both of which are comparatively cheap. One is used during the day, most typically by manual workers, and is therefore sometimes described as a 'workman's café' (pronounced 'caff'). But it is also used by anybody else who wants a filling meal, likes the informal atmosphere and is not over-worried about cleanliness. It offers mostly fried food of the 'English breakfast' type and for this reason it is also sometimes jokingly called a 'greasy spoon'. Many of them are 'transport cafes' at the sides of main roads. The other type is the fish-and-chip shop, used in the evening for 'take-away' meals. Again, the fish is (deep) fried. Fast food outlets are now more common in Britain than they are in most other countries.

5.2.2 What British people eat

A 'fry-up' is a phrase used informally for several items fried together. The most common items are eggs, bacon, sausages, tomatoes, mushrooms, and even bread. It is not always accompanied by 'chips' (the normal British word for French fried potatoes). The British eat rather a lot of fried food.

Although it is sometimes poetically referred to as 'the staff of life', bread is not an accompaniment to every meal. It is not even normally on the table at either lunch or the evening meal. It is most commonly eaten, with butter and almost anything else, for a snack, either as a sandwich or as toast (a British household regards toasting facilities as a basic necessity). On the other hand, the British use a lot of flour for making pastry dishes, both savoury and sweet, normally called 'pies', and for making cakes.

Eggs are a basic part of most people's diet. They are either fried, soft-boiled and eaten out of an 'egg cup', hard-boiled (so that they can be eaten with the fingers or put into sandwiches) or poached (steamed).

Cold meats are not very popular. To many British people, preserved meats are typically 'Continental'.

It is common in most households for a family meal to finish with a prepared sweet dish. This is called either 'pudding', 'sweet' or 'dessert' (class distinctions are involved here). There is a great variety of well-known dishes for this purpose, many of which are served hot (often a pie of some sort).

The British are the world's biggest consumers of sugar – more than five kilograms per person per year. It is present in almost every tinned food item and they also love 'sweets' (which means both all kinds of chocolate and also what the Americans call 'candy').

5.2.3 Drinks (what British people drink and where)

As well as large amounts of hot drinks such as tea, coffee and cocoa, British people – especially children – drink squash (a sweetened fruit concentrate that has to be diluted with water) and brand-name ‘soft’ (nonalcoholic) drinks. They also expect to be able to drink water straight from the tap.

Since 1960s, wine has increased enormously in popularity. Beer is still the most popular alcoholic drink. The most popular pub beer is ‘bitter’, which is draught (i.e. from the barrel), has no gas in it and is conventionally drunk at room temperature. A sweeter, darker version of bitter is ‘mild’. These beers have a comparatively low alcoholic content. This is one reason why people are able to drink so much of them! In most pubs, several kinds of bottled beer, usually known as ‘ales’, are also available.

Beer which has gas in it and is closer to continental varieties is known as ‘lager’.

In some pubs, cider is available on draught, and in some parts of Britain, most typically in the English west country, it is this, and not beer, which is the most common pub drink.

Shandy is half beer and half fizzy lemonade. It has the reputation of being very good for quenching the thirst.

Pubs. The British pub (short for ‘public house’) is unique. The pub is the only indoor place where the average person can comfortably meet others, even strangers, and get into prolonged conversation with them. In cafes and fast food restaurants, people are expected to drink their coffee and get out. The atmosphere in other eating places is often rather formal. But pubs, like fast food restaurants, are classless. A pub with forty customers in it is nearly always much noisier than a cafe or restaurant with the same number of people.

Pubs used to serve almost nothing but beer and spirits. These days, you can get wine, coffee and some hot food at most of them as well. At one time, it was unusual

for women to go to pubs. These days, only a few pubs exist where it is surprising for a woman to walk in.

Nevertheless, pubs have retained their special character. One of their notable aspects is that there is no waiter service. If you want something, you have to go and ask for it at the bar. You can get up and walk around whenever you want – it is like being in your own house. This ‘home from home’ atmosphere is enhanced by the relationship between customers and those who work in pubs. Unlike in any other eating or drinking place in Britain, the staff are expected to know the regular customers personally, to know what their usual drink is and to chat with them when they are not serving someone. It is also helped by the availability of pub games (most typically darts) and, frequently, a television.

How to shut the pub. Although pubs can now stay open longer than they were allowed to previously, they still have to close at their advertised closing time. Therefore, the traditions of ‘closing time’ have remained in place. Several phrases are connected with this process which are well-known to everybody in the country.

A few minutes before the official closing time, the landlord or barman shouts ‘last orders, please’, which means that anybody who wants to buy another drink should do so at once.

When closing time arrives, the barman shouts ‘Time, ladies and gentlemen, please’, and, as with his first shout, possibly accompanies this with the ringing of a bell.

However, customers do not have to leave immediately. They still have ‘drinking-up time’. This is a concept which is recognized in law and is assumed to last about ten minutes.

Questions:

- 1) Where do the most British people dream to live?
- 2) Why don't people want to live in a flat?
- 3) How long does it usually take to return the money for the mortgage?

- 4) What is usually a 'take-away' meal?
- 5) What is the most popular place to have a drink?
- 6) When and where can one hear 'Time, ladies and gentlemen, please'?

6 Commonwealth of Nations⁶

6.1 History

The Commonwealth of Nations is a voluntary international grouping of sovereign and dependent territories. Member states accept the British monarch as the symbolic head of the Commonwealth but retain full control of their own domestic and foreign affairs. Commonwealth Day is celebrated on the second Monday in March every year.

The Commonwealth (formerly known as the British Commonwealth of Nations) evolved from the British Empire. It was formally established in 1931 by the Statute of Westminster, which proclaimed the Commonwealth a free association of self governing states united by allegiance to the crown. Founding members included Great Britain, Irish Free State, Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The Statute of Westminster was followed by the London Declaration of 1949 which saw states accept the British crown as the symbol of their association rather than recognise the crown as head of state.

All countries within the Commonwealth of Nations (except Mozambique) have historical links with the United Kingdom. The structure and activities of the Commonwealth of Nations are based on a shared history, traditional procedures and language rather than a written charter. Some countries within the Commonwealth experienced large waves of British migration such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa and have strong historical, cultural and family links with Britain. These countries have been heavily influenced by British governmental, judicial and educational systems. Other countries such as India and Kenya were governed by an expatriate British administration who remained separate and isolated from the mainstream indigenous population.

The Commonwealth has since grown into a multi-racial and diverse association as countries within the British Empire gained independence. Many of these countries

⁶ План семинарского занятия – в приложении Б.

moved from being colonies of Britain to become dominions or fully independent. From the 1950s many former British colonies in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and the Pacific gained independence and either joined or left the Commonwealth.

6.2 Membership

Today there are 53 independent nation states and 20 dependencies that belong to the Commonwealth. Members share a range of customs and traditions that result from their association with Britain. 30% of the world's population (1.7 billion people) are members of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is headed by the Secretary-General who is responsible for the administration and organisation of the Commonwealth. The Secretary General is elected by the Commonwealth Heads of Government. Membership of the Commonwealth does not involve legal or constitutional obligations nor does the Commonwealth act as a 'bloc' (a combination of countries, parties, or groups sharing a common purpose). It recognizes that international affairs and priorities between members are diverse and at times conflicting. The official language of the Commonwealth of Nations is English.

Today the Commonwealth is made up of 16 countries who recognise the British Crown as head of state (including Australia, Canada and New Zealand) and the remainder are republics or monarchies. The Commonwealth is committed to the principles of democracy and human rights, and attempts to persuade members to adopt policies by conscience rather than through force.

6.3 Symbol and Flag

The Commonwealth symbol was originally designed by the Gemini News Service, London in 1972 and approved by the first Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr Arnold Smith C.H.

In 1989 a second logo was introduced to appear on official Commonwealth Secretariat publications, and in 1999 a special commemorative logo was produced to mark the 50th Anniversary of the modern Commonwealth.

In 2000 the current Secretary-General Rt. Hon Don McKinnon, approved a new design that is now in use in place of the original designs. This design unites the image of the globe used in the original logo and the spears that make up the letter ‘C’ from the 1989 design.

The radiating spears do not represent the number of countries in the Commonwealth but symbolize the many facets of Commonwealth cooperation around the world. The symbol is used on all official documentation and, sometimes in association with other specially developed logos, for the documents and logos of all Commonwealth Meetings. There is no fixed size or colour for the symbol but because of its frequent appearance on Commonwealth documentation, the black on white and gold on blue versions are commonly used.

The Commonwealth Flag consists of the Commonwealth symbol in gold on a blue background centred on a rectangle. The flag developed from the car pennants produced for the first time at the Ottawa Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 1973.

It is flown at Marlborough House, London, the headquarters of the Commonwealth Secretariat, throughout the year and for a limited period at other places where Commonwealth Meetings are held or when other Commonwealth events/ visits are taking place for example Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings.



6.4 The largest countries

Canada is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. Elizabeth II of Great Britain reigns as Queen of Canada, but Canada is an independent, self-governing country.

Modern Canada originated as a Country of immigrants. The first Europeans appeared on Canadian soil between the 15th and 16th centuries. They came to the shores of North America in search of a new way to the rich markets of the Orient. Among the first explorers were the French and the English navigators John Cabot, Jack Carrier and Samuel de Champlain. Then many settlements of fishermen began to appear on the coasts of Canada. French colonies were set up along the Saint Lawrence River. In 1583 Newfoundland was proclaimed a British possession.

North America became the arena of bitter rivalry between England and France. In 1763, after the Seven Years' War, the whole of Canada fell into the hands of Britain. As the years passed, an endless stream of immigrants entered Canada from Britain and the English-speaking settlers became the majority.

Nowadays, Canada occupies the territory of about 10 million square kilometres and is the second largest country in the energy potential. Canada is one of the most highly developed countries in the world.

As a federation, Canada is made up of ten provinces and two territories. The Parliament is the national legislature of Canada. It comprises the Queen, the House of Commons (elected) with 295 members, and the Senate (appointed) with 104 members.

Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain is also the Queen of Canada. She is the official head of state but the Governor-General acts as her representative. The Governor-General is appointed by the Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister. While the Prime Minister is not the Head of State, he holds most of the executive power.

Australia. The country got its name from the time when people called this land 'terra australis incognita' or 'the unknown southern land'.

The Dutch were the first to visit Australia. In 1606 a Dutch mariner Willem Janson landed on the northern coast of the continent and named it New Holland. In 1770 James Cook, the British naval captain, navigator and explorer discovered the east coast of Australia. He claimed this region for Britain, naming it New South Wales.

The beginning of the British colonization of Australia was directly connected with England's loss of her thirteen North American colonies during the War of Independence. British ruling circles wanted to compensate the loss by seizing new territories. In 1788 the first English colony was formed in what later became the city of Sydney. The first settlers were convicts. Among them there were dangerous criminals and people deported for political crimes: participants in uprising in Ireland, peasants' riots in England and Scotland, Chartists. These people became independent farmers. There appeared big capitalists, who owned hundreds and thousands of sheep, they hired workers and exported excellent wool to England. The colonization of Australia was accompanied by the cruel extermination of the native population. The discovery of gold in 1851 led to the rapid economic development of the country.

Though Australia now is an independent state, according to the Constitution the Head of the state is the monarch of G.B., represented by the Governor-General. His duties include assenting to bills, opening, proroguing and dissolving Parliament and commissioning the Prime Minister to form a government. The Australian Union, a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, is a self-governing federation of six states – New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania – and two territories: the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory.

Australia has been called 'the land of differences' and 'the continent of contrasts'. There are many ways in which it is different from other countries. The first thing is its strange native animals.

Australia's best-known animals are the kangaroo, koala, wild dogs dingo and many others. The strangest of all Australian animals are the water-loving platypus and the toothless ant-eater echidna. The platypus is a small animal that lays eggs and

has a beak like a duck's, but gives milk to its young. It is a tree-loving, comical-looking animal, which carries its baby on its back, lives on the leaves of eucalyptus trees and usually sleeps during the day.

Australia is also the home of kangaroos. There are 55 kinds of kangaroo, who eat grass, leaves and plants and live for 10 – 15 years. The biggest are the great grey kangaroos, they are more than two metres tall and can run at 56 kilometres per hour. A baby kangaroo, born blind and deaf, lives in a pouch on the mother's stomach for the first eight months of its life.

There are some 'unpopular' animals, the dingo, or wild dog, is among them. You can meet dingoes in many parts of Australia, but most of them now live in mountains or hills. In some places they were a very great danger to sheep, and many of them have been killed for that reason. You can find dangerous spiders with sharp teeth and poison, jellyfish that have a very painful sting, and fat, noisy and ugly cane toads.

The native birds of Australia are very interesting. The emu, a large flightless bird, for example, which with the kangaroo is represented on the Australian coat-of-arms, is the next tallest bird in the world after the ostrich. The characteristic laugh of kookaburra is the signal of some radio programs in Australia.

Australian flora contains many exotic trees, such as the eucalyptus, of which there are over 500 kinds; the Australian acacia or mimosa, which is the national emblem of Australia; the queer bottle-brush trees, which conserve moisture in their trunks, and the strange black-boy or grass tree.

New Zealand. A thousand years ago the Maori of Polynesian origin settled the North and the South Islands. The British Captain James Cook visited the islands four times between 1769 and 1777, circumnavigated the coast, traded with Maori, described the islands in detail and claimed the land for the British crown. After Captain James Cook's exploration of New Zealand the British colonization of the country began.

Maori fought hard with incredible bravery against the invaders. Long and bloody wars lasted about 30 years (1843 – 1872). But Maoris were defeated by

superior British forces. Thousands of Maoris died at the hands of Redcoats, as the British soldiers were called. Many Maoris conducted guerilla warfare and troubled the settlers for many years.

Today New Zealand is a self-governing state and a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The Governor-General represents the Queen of England.

New Zealand is a mountainous country. The mountains covering three-fourth of its territory run from south-west to north-east throughout two large islands. Here one can see many wonderful phenomena of nature: high fountains of geysers, mud baths, hot and cold mineral springs. The central part of North Island is a high volcanic plateau. One of the wonderful sights of this plateau is a short river in which the water is icy on the right of the river-bed and boils on the left of it. There are many lakes in these parts of the island. New Zealand's rivers are short.

Across a narrow strip of sea is Stewart Island, New Zealand's third island, a picturesque little place. It is a holiday resort, as well as the source of the fine oysters, a New Zealand national dish.

Some 75 percent of the flora and fauna of New Zealand are found nowhere else in the world. These are, for example, hay-scented fern of some metres high, and kiwi, a bird with very short wings, that cannot fly. The kiwi is the national emblem of New Zealand.

Over three million people live in New Zealand. About 50 per cent of them live in the four main cities of Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.

The capital of New Zealand is Wellington, situated in the North Island. Wellington is an attractive city. The streets crossing the city are long and narrow with plenty of bridges, viaducts, stairs and even tunnels.

Questions:

- 1) What is The Commonwealth of Nations?
- 2) When is Commonwealth Day celebrated?
- 3) Where is the headquarters of the Commonwealth situated?
- 4) How many countries belong to the Commonwealth at the moment?
- 5) What is the Commonwealth Flag consists of?
- 6) Which is the largest country of the Commonwealth?
- 7) Who discovered Australia?
- 8) What are Australia's best-known animals?
- 9) Is New Zealand a self-governing state or a dependency today?

7 The United States of America⁷

7.1 The main facts about the USA

The United States of America (the USA) is a federal republic, a union of 50 states. It occupies the territory of 9,373,000 sq. km. Its population is more than 270 mln. The capital of the USA is Washington, D. C. (District of Columbia). The USA has a nickname – Melting Pot, that stands for multicultural nation, sometimes people call America – the Land of Dreams, because of its luxurious lifestyle.

The motto of the USA is ‘In God we trust’.

The American flag is Stars and Stripes, Stars are for the 50 states of the United States; Stripes are for the 13 colonies (the first 13 states) which declared independence from Great Britain on July 4, 1776. White colour symbolizes purity of ideas, red – bravery and blue – freedom and independence. The national song is ‘America the beautiful’, the national symbol is ‘Statue of Liberty’.

The National holiday is the Day of Independence – July 4.

The United States proper (excluding Hawaii and Alaska) stretches across North America from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Pacific Ocean in the west, from Canada in the north to Mexico, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Gulf of California in the south. The USA is an extremely large country in North America. In size, the United States is the fourth after Russia, Canada, and China. It possesses many islands in the Pacific Ocean and Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands in the Atlantic. It has military bases scattered all over the globe.

The United States is a spacious country of varying terrains and climates. To get from New York to San Francisco one must travel almost 5,000 kilometers across regions of geographical extremes. Between the coasts there are forested mountains, fertile plains, arid deserts, canyon lands, and wide plateaus. Much of the land is uninhabited.

Languages. English is the official and predominant language. Spanish is the preferred language of sizable minorities in New York City (chiefly Puerto Rican migrants), Florida (immigrants from Cuba), and along the Mexican border. Other minority languages include Italian, German, Polish, Yiddish, Russian, American Indian tongues, Chinese and Japanese.

⁷ План семинарского занятия – в приложении Б.

The largest cities are Washington, D. C; New York; Los Angeles; Chicago; Philadelphia; San Francisco; Detroit; Boston; Houston, Miami and others.

Government. The country is a federal republic ruled by the President who is elected for four years. Legislative body comprises Congress, consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate consists of 100 members – two from each state – chosen by popular vote for a six-year term; a third of its membership is renewed every two years. The House of Representatives has about 450 members elected by popular vote every two years. Each state has a popularly elected governor and legislature.

There are two political parties in the USA: the Democratic Party (its symbol is donkey) and the Republican Party (its symbol is elephant).

History. North America may have been discovered in about 1,000 A. D. by Vikings under Leif Erickson, but Europeans did not know of its existence until Columbus sailed there in 1492. The first permanent English settlement in America was Jamestown, Virginia (1607). Effective colonization in New England began in 1620 when the Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth, Massachusetts.

In 1775 the thirteen colonies rebelled against the British government and the United States of America was proclaimed (1776). In the Civil War (1860 – 1865) between the North, where the Negro slavery had been abolished and the slave-holding South, the North won the war and slavery was made unconstitutional. After the Civil War industry grew rapidly, by 1894 the USA became the world's leading nation of manufactured goods.

It made tremendous profits by selling arms to the Allied Powers in World War I and when victory was near it entered the war. The USA entered World War II after the Japanese air attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941. The atom bombs were exploded over Japan in 1945.

7.2 Regions of the USA

The country is divided into seven main regions – the Northeast, the South, the West, the Midwest, Rocky Mountains, Great Lakes, Alaska and Hawaii.

The Northeast comprises the New England and Mid-Atlantic states. Over 350 years ago the first settlers arrived from Europe. The first settlers landed on the East Coast. They began clearing the forests and ploughing the soil.

The Northeast is where American manufacturing began. The first factories were in New England. They produced cotton cloth.

Power and raw materials are the basic ingredients of industry, which are available in the Northeastern States. Fishing has been important in the Northeast. Many towns on the New England coast began as a fishing community. Boston, Portland, New Bedford, and Gloucester all were early fishing centers. The Northeast is usually thought of as an industrial workshop of the United States.

Compared with other regions, the Northeast is more urban, more industrial, and more culturally sophisticated. New Englanders often describe themselves as thrifty, reserved, and dedicated to hard work. New England's colleges and universities are known all over the country for their high academic standards. Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are among them.

The South was originally settled by English Protestants who came there to farm. Some farmers, capitalizing on tobacco and cotton crops, became quite prosperous. Many of them established large plantations. African slaves, shipped by the Spanish, Portuguese, and English, supplied labor for these plantations. These slaves were bought and sold as property. After the Civil War (1861 – 65) slavery was abolished.

Most of the South is a land of long, hot summers. Winters are short and cool. There is abundant rainfall. In the past cotton, tobacco, and corn were the main crops of southern farming. Peanuts and soy beans are also important southern crops.

The South is rich in natural resources: sulphur, salt, phosphate, bauxite, iron ore.

At least one-third of the natural gas reserves and one-fourth of the oil reserves in the United States are in the South.

The South differs from other regions in a number of ways. Southerners are more conservative, more religious, and more violent than the rest of the country.

They are the most 'native' of any region. Southerners have strong ties to hometown and family. Americans of other regions are quick to recognize a Southerner by his/her dialect as Southern speech tends to be much slower and more musical. The Southern dialect characteristically uses more diphthongs: a one-syllable word such as yes is spoken in the South as two syllables, ya-es. In addition, Southerners say 'you all' instead of 'you' as the second person plural. The South is also known for its music. In the time of slavery, black Americans created a new folk music, the Negro spiritual. Later forms of black music which began in the South are blues and jazz. White Southerners created bluegrass mountain music.

Only in few parts of the West there is enough quantity of water for farming. There are vast areas of desert. But there are places where enough rain falls to allow plants to grow. There huge livestock ranches are found. Sheep ranches also use the dry lands. Sheep can eat leaves, weeds, and woody plants which cattle will not eat. The three states of the West Coast – California, Oregon, and Washington – have important farm lands.

California is now the country's second most important cotton-producing state. Only Texas grows more cotton. And California's farmers grow half of the country's fruit and vegetables.

The center of West Coast manufacturing is the Los Angeles area. Los Angeles was a farm community. Then oil was discovered, oil brought manufacturing to this region. Aircraft manufacturing became the chief industry. Automobile assembly plants, tire manufacturing are also here.

In 1909 the first movie studio opened in Los Angeles. Today, the Los Angeles suburb, Hollywood, has become movie and television center.

Another West Coast manufacturing center is the San Francisco Bay area. Food processing and oil refining have been important in this area. And now electronics is an important industry.

Westerners are in their long-standing hostility toward Washington and Eastern federal bureaucrats. Westerners feel isolated by government policies which fail to address the vital concerns of their region (the main is water scarcity).

Westerners like to think of themselves as independent, self-sufficient, and close to the land, but they feel they cannot control their own destiny while Washington controls their land.

The Midwest, by contrast, has long been regarded as typically American. The fertile farmland and abundant resources have allowed agriculture and industry to thrive and to strengthen. That is why the Midwesterners believe that people can make something of themselves if they seize opportunities. The middle class rules. Midwesterners are seen as commercially-minded, self-sufficient, unsophisticated, and pragmatic.

Midwest is known as a region of small towns and huge tracts of farmland where more than half the nation's wheat and oats are raised. Dominating the region's commerce and industry is Chicago.

The eastern part of the Midwest is corn country. This region is often called the Corn Belt. Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri are leading Corn Belt states. Farming is the Midwest leading industry. Corn is the pioneer American crop.

The northern part of the Midwest is a hay and dairy region. Wisconsin is the leading dairy state. Most of Wisconsin milk is made into cheese and butter. Nearly all of the cheese made in the United States comes from Wisconsin. The drier western parts of the Midwest from the Dakota's southward to Oklahoma are wheat lands. Meat packing and flour milling are big Midwestern business.

Detroit is the center of automobile industry. Over half the motor vehicles and equipment made in the United States comes from the Midwest. And over two-fifths come from Michigan alone.

Part of the boundary between the United States of America and Canada is formed by four of the five Great Lakes. The largest of them is Lake Superior. The other lakes are Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario.

The Lakes take a very important place in the economic life of both the United States of America and of Canada. The main lake port is Buffalo. The Lakes can be used only between the months of April and December, as they freeze in winter. The

importance of the Lakes is not only commercial: along their shores are vast stretches of forest, meadowland, and grassland, as well as towns, camps, and small country towns.

In 1959 Alaska became the 49th state of the USA. Alaska is a land of icebergs and polar bears. From early May until early August, the midnight sun never sets on this flat, treeless region, but it cannot melt the icy soil more than two-thirds of a meter down.

Alaska is America's largest state, but very few people live there. The capital of Alaska is Juneau.

The currents of the Pacific warm Alaska, and the Arctic chills it. Arctic Alaska has been the home of the Eskimos for countless centuries. It is believed that the Eskimos moved there from Mongolia or Siberia. A short route for their passage would have been the Bering Strait.

The Eskimos and the American Indians of southeastern Alaska are the state's earliest known inhabitants. Russian fur traders established settlements, but by the time that Russia offered to sell Alaska to the United States, most of the traders had departed.

The gold was discovered in the Canadian Yukon. Thousands of Americans rushed into Alaska, on their way to Canada. Some never left Alaska, and some returned there from the Canadian gold fields.

After fishing, Alaska's chief industry is lumber and paper production. There are also large deposits of coal, copper, gold, and other important minerals.

In the fifth or sixth century, daring Polynesian voyagers sailed to Hawaii across thousands of miles of the Pacific in their double canoes. They are believed to have been the island's first inhabitants. British Captain James Cook accidentally rediscovered Hawaii in 1778, and traders and priests and ministers soon followed. Hawaii became its fiftieth state in 1959.

The twenty islands of Hawaii lie upon the Pacific from southeast to northwest. They belong to the hot climate, but the climate is rather less hot because of the ocean

currents that pass their shores, and because the winds that blow across the land from the northeast.

The largest island, Hawaii, lies at the southeast end of the chain and is almost twice as large as all of islands combined. Five volcanoes gave the island form. Of the two active volcanoes, Mauna Loa is the world's largest. Hot climate plants, sandy desert, waterfalls and caves make the Hawaiian National park a tourist attraction, which is situated near the volcano. The best known of all the islands is the third largest, Oahu, a diamond-shaped plot of earth, is the center of Hawaiian life. Honolulu is the capital of Hawaii. Pineapple is grown on five islands.

Rocky Mountains is the system of parallel mountain ranges that stretches down the western side of North America from Alaska to New Mexico.

Within the Rocky Mountains there are many national parks where trees, plants, animals and birds are protected. The largest of these is the Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, with its great Geysers, its herds of bison, deer and antelope. Then there is the Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado, and the Glacier National Park in Montana.

Among all the wonders and curiosities of the Rockies, two perhaps deserve to mention. One is the grizzly bear; the second is the great redwood tree, with its amazingly tall, straight trunk, branchless for hundreds of feet from the ground.

Questions:

- 1) How many states does the USA consist of?
- 2) What is its nickname?
- 3) What is the name of the American flag?
- 4) Why is July 4 a special day for Americans?
- 5) What type of the state is The USA?
- 6) What are the two political parties in the USA?
- 7) Where are the five Great Lakes situated?
- 8) What is called the Rockies?

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Приложение А

(обязательное)

Страны-участники Commonwealth

INDEPENDENT STATES	
<p>Africa Botswana, Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe Indian Ocean Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles</p> <p>Asia Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Sri Lanka Caribbean/Central America Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago</p> <p>Pacific Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Western Samoa</p>	<p>Europe United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Isle of Man, Channel Islands), Cyprus, Malta North America Canada</p> <p>UK Dependent Territories Anguilla, Bermuda, British Antarctic Territory, British Indian Ocean Territory, British Virgin Is, Cayman Is, Falkland Is & Dependencies, Gibraltar, Montserrat, Pitcairn Is, St Helena & Dependencies, Turks & Caicos Is NZ Associated/Dependent Territories Niue, Cook Is, Tokelau</p>

Приложение Б

(обязательное)

Планы семинарских занятий

Seminar 1 Education in Great Britain

- 1 Characteristics of education in Great Britain
- 2 Compulsory education
- 3 Types of schools
- 4 Higher education in Great Britain
- 5 Types of universities
- 6 World-known educational centers: Oxford and Cambridge. Student life

Seminar 2 Holidays and special occasions

- 1 Annual holidays (traditional seaside holidays, modern holidays, public holidays)
- 2 Special occasions (Christmas, New Year, Easter, St. Valentine's Day, Halloween, Shrove Tuesday, Guy Fawkes' Day, Remembrance day)
- 3 Make a calendar of special occasions (in chronological order) and find information about holidays and special occasions

Seminar 3. People of Great Britain

- 1 British national character
- 2 Four national characters
- 3 Every day life of the British and popular hobbies
- 4 Customs and traditions

5 Parliamentary and royal traditions and ceremonies (The state opening of parliament, The speaker's procession, Changing the guards, Trooping the colour, The ceremony of the keys)

Seminar 4. Famous people of Great Britain

Make a report about a British celebrity from one of the following spheres:

1) cinema; 2) art; 3) sport; 4) politics; 5) literature; 6) music; 7) science.

Seminar 5. Housing, Food and Drinks

1 Housing.

2 Food and drinks

Seminar 6. Commonwealth of Nations

1 History

2 Membership

3 Symbol and Flag

4 The largest countries

Seminar 7. The United States of America

1 The main facts about the USA

2 Regions of the USA

3 Make a report about one of the states.

Приложение В

(обязательное)

Тесты

Education in Great Britain

- 1 Which school is not public?
 - a) Eton
 - b) Rugby
 - c) Winchester
 - d) Cambridge
- 2 Which type of school is not secondary?
 - a) Comprehensive
 - b) Grammar
 - c) Modern
 - d) Infant
- 3 What is the Oldest University in Great Britain
 - a) London
 - b) Oxford
 - c) Brighton
 - d) Cambridge
- 4 When does compulsory education begin in Britain?
 - a) At the age of 5
 - b) At the age of 7
 - c) At the age of 3
 - d) At the age of 10
- 5 What does the word Oxbridge mean?
 - a) Ox Bridge
 - b) Old Bridge

- c) Oxford + Cambridge
 - d) One Bridge
- 6 How long must a student study to get the degree of Master?
- a) 3
 - b) 4
 - c) 5
 - d) 10
- 7 When does secondary education begin?
- a) At the age of 7
 - b) At the age of 3
 - c) At the age of 10
 - d) At the age of 11
- 8 When do children get General Certificate of Education?
- a) At the age of 11
 - b) At the age of 16
 - c) At the age of 18
 - d) At the age of 20
- 9 How does the Open University differ from ordinary universities?
- a) People study independently and only pass exams
 - b) They study by correspondence
 - c) They get the Master degree in some 3-4 years
 - d) Education is free of charge
- 10 How can people be admitted to the Open University?
- a) Through competitive system
 - b) They take entrance exams
 - c) On the basis of «first come, first served»
 - d) They are invited
- 11 Who helps the students of the Open University in their studies?
- a) Lecturers
 - b) Tutors

- c) Dons
 - d) Nobody
- 12 How many years do students study at the Open University?
- a) 3-4
 - b) 5-6
 - c) 6-8
 - d) 1-3

Holidays and special occasions

1 The custom of making bonfires and burning effigies takes place on

- a) St. Valentine's Day
- b) April Fool's Day
- c) Guy Fawkes' Day
- d) New Year's Eve

2 Where do British children hope to find presents from Santa Claus?

- a) under the fir-tree
- b) in the stocking
- c) in the chimney
- d) on the table

3 When is Remembrance Day held?

- a) on Sunday before November 11
- b) November 11
- c) May 9
- d) April 1

4 When do children go «trick or treating»?

- a) July 4th
- b) April 1st
- c) November 5th
- d) October 31st

5 What is a bank holiday?

- a) When all people go to the bank
- b) When all people go to the bank of the river
- c) When all people including banks don't work
- d) When all people except banks don't work

6 How many bank holidays are there in a year?

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 4

7 Guy Fawkes planned to blow up ...

- a) The parliament
- b) Buckingham Palace
- c) Westminster Abbey
- d) 10, Downing Street

8 St Valentine's Day is celebrated on...

- a) April 1
- b) December 31
- c) September 1
- d) February 14

9 The wholehearted and merry holiday in Scotland is

- a) Halloween
- b) Remembrance day
- c) Hogmanay
- d) St Valentine's Day

10 New Year's Holiday is the traditional time for making New Year ...

- a) Reservations
- b) Resolutions
- c) Restorations
- d) Repairing

11 On St Valentine's Day people express their... for each other.

- a) Affection
- b) Affectation
- c) Agitation
- d) Affirmation

12 What flower is a symbol of mourning?

- a) Daffodil
- b) Rose
- c) Poppy
- d) Thistle

National character, famous people

1 What is most important feature of English life?

- a) Sociability
- b) self-discipline
- c) generosity
- d) kindness

2 ...are the nation of singers.

- a) the Englishmen
- b) the Welsh
- c) the Scots
- d) the Irish

3 What are the most popular English hobbies?

- a) dancing, singing
- b) collecting, gardening
- c) sport, car-driving
- d) sleeping

4 What do the English expect from other people?

- a) To make them a company whenever they are
- b) To have a good time together

- c) Not to interfere in their life
- d) To give them a lot of advice

5 It is very un-English to lose one's head in a situation of

- a) Employment
- b) Embarrassment
- c) Emergency
- d) Energy

6 The English are very... in their political and social views.

- a) Characteristic
- b) Conscious
- c) Conservative
- d) Severe

7 What is London's Cenotaph?

- a) A monument
- b) A museum
- c) A war memorial
- d) A shop

8 Where is the main Christmas tree situated?

- a) Oxford street
- b) Trafalgar Square
- c) Fleet street
- d) Baker's street

9 R. Burns is a national poet of ...

- a) Scotland
- b) Wales
- c) England
- d) Ireland

10 Where was Shakespeare born?

- a) London
- b) Manchester

- c) Stratford-on-Avon
- d) Cardiff

11 Shakespeare's theatre is called ...

- a) The Globe
- b) Hamlet
- c) Stratford-upon-Avon
- d) Shakespeare

Housing, Food, Drinks

1 Where is whiskey produced?

- a) England
- b) Northern Ireland
- c) Wales
- d) Scotland

2 Which of the following is a well-known British food?

- a) Frogs legs
- b) Chicken
- c) Pasta
- d) Fish and chips

3 What drink is poetically named 'mountain dew'?

- a) Water
- b) Tea
- c) Whiskey
- d) Champagne

4 What is the most famous English drink?

- a) Coffee
- b) Tea
- c) Cocoa
- d) Water

5 The quantity of liquids is measured in...

- a) Liters
- b) Pounds
- c) Gallons
- d) Meters

6 When do people traditionally cook turkey?

- a) For birthdays
- b) on Christmas
- c) at weekends
- d) every day

7 Tea is a meal eaten...

- a) between breakfast and lunch
- b) between supper and breakfast
- c) before breakfast
- d) between lunch and supper

8 Pumpkin is used as a symbol of ...

- a) St. Valentine's Day
- b) April Fool's Day
- c) Halloween
- d) New Year's Eve

9 What is the biggest meal of the day in England?

- a) Breakfast
- b) Lunch
- c) Dinner
- d) Tea

10 Where can one hear the words 'Time, gentlemen, please'?

- a) in the museum
- b) in the street
- c) in the pub
- d) in Buckingham Palace

11 What can people play in a pub?

- a) Football
- b) Darts
- c) Chess
- d) golf

12 The majority of the British would like to live

- a) in a flat
- b) in a private house
- c) in London
- d) on the continent