

**ỦY BAN NHÂN DÂN THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH  
TRƯỜNG CAO ĐẲNG BÁCH KHOA NAM SÀI GÒN**



**COURSEBOOK**

**SUBJECT/MODULE: BRITISH CULTURE**

**MAJOR IN: ENGLISH**

**PROFICIENCY: ASSOCIATE DEGREE**

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**Ho Chi Minh city, year 2023**

## **STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP**

This coursebook is applied in educational activities within the school itself, so the sources of information can be originally used or partially extracted for the training and reference purposes.

Any other misleading purposes or uses for any unfair business ones are strictly prohibited.

## INTRODUCTION

*This textbook came out as a need of providing an official document of the British Culture Coursebook for the sophomores of English Department to study.*

*This coursebook aims to introduce the United Kingdom country, which consists of four different nations: its geography, the people, the history. Also, it describes some basic features of the British culture including many other topics such as the politics, the monarchy, the government, attitudes, education, economy and everyday life, food and drink, sports and entertainment.*

*Despite our best efforts, the book was mostly compiled via the Internet during the lockdown time due to the deadly Coronavirus pandemic, so hardly would there be a few unintentional mistakes in it. Comments or contributions are always welcomed. Learners are advised to find more information based on the sources from the references of the book.*

*A very special thank is sent to Ms. Ngọc Tuyền for her valuable assistance and commitment to the book. We are also grateful to our beloved faculty colleagues for their encouragement and patience beyond the call of duty.*

*Ho Chi Minh City, ....., 20.....*

*Compilation participants*

*1. M.Ed Duong Thi Thu Hai*

*2. Ms. Doan Thi Ngoc Tuyen*



## GIÁO TRÌNH MÔN HỌC/MÔ ĐUN

**Tên môn học/mô đun:** VĂN HÓA ANH

**Mã môn học/mô đun:** MH8

**Vị trí, tính chất, ý nghĩa và vai trò của môn học/mô đun:**

- Vị trí: Học phần này được học trong học kỳ 3 của chương trình học.

- Tính chất: Là học phần cơ sở bắt buộc

- Ý nghĩa và vai trò của môn học/mô đun:

Học phần này sẽ cung cấp cho sinh viên các kiến thức tổng quan về đất nước, con người, lịch sử, chính trị, phong tục, lễ hội, văn hóa của người Anh cũng như những đặc điểm trong giao tiếp của người Anh.

**Mục tiêu của môn học/mô đun:**

- Về kiến thức:

- Trình bày được bằng tiếng Anh tổng quát về đất nước, con người, lịch sử, chính trị, phong tục, lễ hội; văn hóa ăn, mặc, ở, đi lại của người Anh.
- Trình bày được bằng tiếng Anh những đặc điểm trong văn hóa giao tiếp của người Anh, có so sánh, đối chiếu với nhau và với văn hóa Việt Nam.

- Về kỹ năng:

- Tìm kiếm và cập nhật các thông tin về văn hóa Anh.
- Thực hiện được các slide powerpoint và trình bày được văn bản tiếng Anh.
- Phát triển kỹ năng tranh luận, kỹ năng làm việc nhóm.
- Vận dụng được những kiến thức về văn hóa trong giao tiếp tiếng Anh thực tế

- Về năng lực tự chủ và trách nhiệm:

- Nghiêm túc, chủ động, tích cực trong học tập, tham gia các hoạt động cặp, nhóm và tự học theo yêu cầu và sự hướng dẫn của giáo viên.
- Nhận thức được vai trò quan trọng của sự hiểu biết văn hóa Anh trong việc học tiếng Anh.
- Tôn trọng giá trị của các nền văn hóa khác.
- Tự giác đọc sách và nghiên cứu tìm hiểu thêm về văn hóa Anh-Mỹ.

### Nội dung của môn học/mô đun:

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  12. Swimming

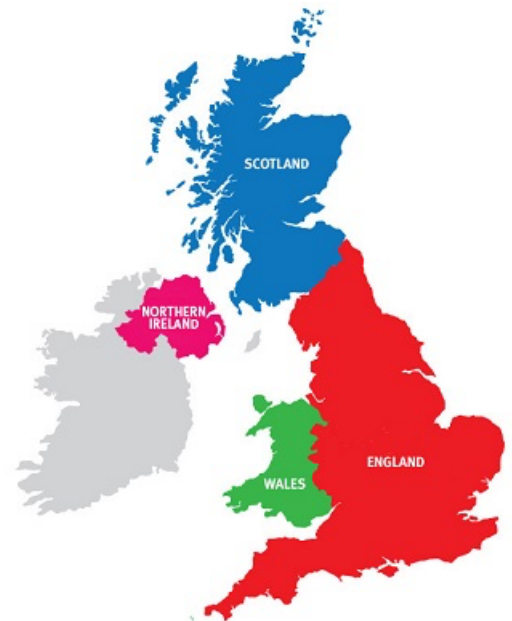
## ***WHAT IS THE UNITED KINGDOM?***

The **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, commonly known as the **United Kingdom (UK)** or **Britain**, is a sovereign country in north-western Europe, off the



north-western coast of the European mainland. The United Kingdom includes the island of Great Britain, the north-eastern part of the island of Ireland, and many smaller islands within the British Isles. Northern Ireland shares a land border with the Republic of Ireland. Otherwise, the United Kingdom is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, with the North Sea to the east, the English Channel to the south and the Celtic Sea to the south-west, giving it the 12th-longest coastline in the world. The Irish Sea separates Great Britain and Ireland. The total area of the United Kingdom is 93,628 square miles (242,500 km<sup>2</sup>).

The United Kingdom is a unitary parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy. The monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, has reigned since 1952. The capital and largest city is London, a global city and financial centre with an urban area population of 10.3 million. The United Kingdom consists of four countries: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Other than England, the constituent countries have their own devolved governments, each with varying powers.



The United Kingdom has evolved from a series of annexations, unions and separations of constituent countries over several hundred years. The Treaty of Union between the Kingdom of England (which included Wales, annexed in 1542) and the Kingdom of Scotland in 1707 formed the Kingdom of Great Britain. Its union in 1801 with the Kingdom of Ireland created the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Most of Ireland seceded from the UK in 1922, leaving the present United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which formally adopted that name in 1927. The nearby Isle of Man, Bailiwick of Guernsey and Jersey are not part of the UK, being Crown Dependencies with the British Government responsible for defence and international representation. There are also 14 British Overseas Territories, the last remnants of the British Empire which, at its height in the 1920s, encompassed almost a quarter of the world's landmass and a third of the world's population, and was the largest empire in history. British influence can be observed in the language, culture and the legal and political systems of many of its former colonies.





The United Kingdom has the world's fifth-largest economy by nominal gross domestic product (GDP), and the tenth-largest by purchasing power parity (PPP). It has a high-income economy and a very high human development index rating, ranking 13th in the world. The UK became the world's first industrialised country and was the world's foremost power during the 19th and early 20th

centuries. Today the UK remains one of the world's great powers, with considerable economic, cultural, military, scientific, technological and political influence internationally. It is a recognised nuclear state and is ranked sixth globally in military expenditure. It has been a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council since its first session in 1946.

The United Kingdom is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, the Council of Europe, the G7, the Group of Ten, the G20, the United Nations, NATO, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Interpol, and the World Trade Organization (WTO).



It was a member state of the European Communities (EC) and its successor, the European

Union (EU), from its accession in 1973 until its withdrawal in 2020 following a referendum held in 2016.



This book aims to describe Britain as it is today, and to go beyond popular and stereotyped images to examine the more complex realities of modern Britain and its people. It also attempts to assess the changes taking place in Britain today and to indicate the direction in which the country is travelling as

it enters the twenty-first century.









Tailieu.vn

## Unit 1: COUNTRY & PEOPLE

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

National teams from the British Isles in selected sports:

	Sports	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Olympics		United Kingdom			
Cricket		England		Scotland	Ireland
Rugby union		England	Wales	Scotland	Ireland
Football		England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland

### Geographically speaking

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

### Politically speaking



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










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

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

## The four nations

People often refer to Britain by another name. They call it '**England**'. But this is not strictly correct, and it can make some people angry. England is only one of the four nations of the British Isles (England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland). Their political unification was a gradual process that took several hundred years (see chapter 3). It was completed in 1800 when the Irish Parliament was joined with the Parliament for England, Scotland and Wales in Westminster, so that the whole of the British Isles became a single state – the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. However, in 1922, most of Ireland became a separate state (see chapter 3).

### ➤ *Identifying symbols of the four nations:*

				
Flag	 ENGLAND	 WALES	 SCOTLAND	 NORTHERN IRELAND
Plant	 rose	 leek/daffodil	 thistle	 shamrock
Patron Saint:	St. George	St David	St Andrew	St Patrick
Saint's day:	23 April	1 March	30 November	17 March

At one time the four nations were distinct from each other in almost every aspect of life. In the first place, they were different racially. The people in Ireland, Wales and highland Scotland belonged to the Celtic race; those in England and lowland Scotland were mainly of Germanic origin. This difference was reflected in the languages they spoke. People in the Celtic areas spoke Celtic languages: Irish Gaelic, Scottish Gaelic and Welsh. People in the Germanic areas spoke

Germanic dialects (including the one which has developed into modern English). The nations also tended to have different economic, social and legal systems.

Today these differences have become blurred. But they have not completely disappeared. Although there is only one government for the whole of Britain, and people have the same passport regardless of where in Britain they live, some aspects of government are organized separately (and sometimes differently) in the four parts of the United Kingdom. Moreover, Welsh, Scottish and Irish people feel their identity very strongly.

### ➤ *Other signs of national identity*

The followings are also associated by British people with one or more of the four nations.

#### ✧ **Names**

The prefix 'Mac' or 'Mc' in surnames (such as McCall, MacCarthy, MacDonald) is always either Scottish or Irish. The prefix 'O' (as in O'Brien, O'Hara) is distinctly Irish. A very large number of surnames (for example, Davis, Evans, Jones, Lloyd, Morgan, Price, Rees, Williams) suggest Welsh origin (although many of these are found throughout England). The most common surname in both England and Scotland is actually 'Smith'.

First names can also be indicative. The Scottish form of 'John' is 'Ian' and its Irish form is 'Sean' (although all three names are common throughout Britain). There are also nicknames for Scottish, Irish and Welsh men. For example, an English, Welsh or Irish person might refer to and address a Scottish friend as 'Jock', whatever his first name is. Irishmen are called 'Paddy' or 'Mick' and Welshmen are known as 'Dai' or 'Taffy'. If the person is not a friend the nickname can sound rather insulting

#### ✧ **Clothes**

The kilt, a skirt with a tartan pattern worn by men, is a very well-known symbol of Scottishness (though it is hardly ever worn in everyday life).



#### ✧ **Musical instruments**



The harp is an emblem of both Wales and Ireland. The bagpipes are regarded as distinctively Scottish (though a smaller type is also used in traditional Irish music).



## ✧ Characteristics

There are certain stereotypes of national character which are well-known in Britain. For instance, the Irish are supposed to be great talkers, the Scots have a reputation for being careful with money, and the Welsh are renowned for their singing ability. These characteristics are, of course, only caricatures and are not reliable descriptions of individual people from these countries. Nevertheless, they indicate some slight differences in the value attached to certain kinds of behaviour in the countries concerned.

**Briton** is a word used in official contexts and in formal writing to describe a citizen of the United Kingdom. 'Ancient Britons' is the name given to the race of people who lived in England before and during the Roman occupation (AD 43–410). These are the ancestors of the present-day Welsh people.

**Caledonia, Cambria and Hibernia** were the Roman names for Scotland, Wales and Ireland respectively. The words are commonly used today in scholarly classifications (for example, the type of English used in Ireland is sometimes called “Hiberno-English”) and for the names of organizations (for example, the airline “British Caledonian”).

**Erin** is a poetic name for Ireland. “The Emerald Isle” is another way of referring to Ireland, evoking the greenery of its countryside.

### **The dominance of England**

There is, perhaps, an excuse for people who use the word “England” when they mean ‘Britain’. It cannot be denied that the dominant culture of Britain today is specifically English. The system of politics that is used in all four nations today is of English origin, and English is the main language of all four nations. Many aspects of everyday life are organized according to English custom and practice. But the political unification of Britain was not achieved by mutual agreement. On the contrary. It happened because England was able to exert her economic and military power over the other three nations (see chapter 2).

Today English domination can be detected in the way in which various aspects of British public life are described. For example, the supply of money in Britain is controlled by the Bank of England (there is no such thing as a 'Bank of Britain'). The present queen of the country is universally known as ‘Elizabeth the Second, even though Scotland and Northern Ireland have never had an ‘Elizabeth the First’! (Elizabeth I of England and Wales ruled from 1553 to 1603.) The term 'Anglo' is also commonly used. (The Angles were a Germanic tribe who settled in

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

### **National loyalties**

When you are talking to people from Britain, it is safest to use 'Britain' when talking about where they live and 'British' as the adjective to describe their nationality. This way you will be less likely to offend anyone. It is, of course, not wrong to talk about 'people in England' if that is what you mean - people who live within the geographical boundaries of England. After all, most British people live there. But it should always be remembered that England does not make up the whole of the UK.

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

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

There is, in fact, a complicated division of loyalties among many people in Britain, and especially in England. A black person whose family are from the Caribbean will passionately support the West Indies when they play cricket against England. But the same person is quite happy to support England just as passionately in a sport such as football, which the West Indies do not play. A person whose family are from Ireland but who has always lived in England would want Ireland to beat England at football but would want England to beat (for example) Italy just as much. This crossover of loyalties can work the other way as well. English people do not regard the

Scottish, the Welsh or the Irish as 'foreigners' (or, at least, not as the same kind of foreigners as other foreigners!). An English commentator of a sporting event in which a Scottish, Irish or Welsh team is playing against a team from outside the British Isles tends to identify with that team as if it were English.

A wonderful example of double identity was heard on the BBC during the Eurovision Song Contest in 1992. The commentator for the BBC was Terry Wogan. Mr Wogan is an Irishman who had become Britain's most popular television talk-show host during the 1980s. Towards the end of the programme, with the voting for the songs nearly complete, it became clear that the contest (in which European countries compete to present the best new popular song) was going to be won by either Ireland or the United Kingdom. Within a five-minute period, Mr Wogan could be heard using the pronouns 'we' and 'us' several times; sometimes he meant the UK and sometimes he meant Ireland!

➤ ***Populations in mid-2020***

England	67.1 million
Scotland	5.5 million
Wales	3.2 million
Northern Ireland	1.9 million
<hr/>	
UK total	77.7 million

These figures are estimates provided by the Government Actuary's Department of the UK, based on the 2020 Census. It is expected that the total population of Britain will continue to rise by very small amounts until around the year 2025.

➤ ***The Union Jack***



**The Union Jack** is the national flag of the UK. It is a combination of the cross of St George, the cross of St Andrew and the cross of St Patrick (Identifying symbols of the four nations).

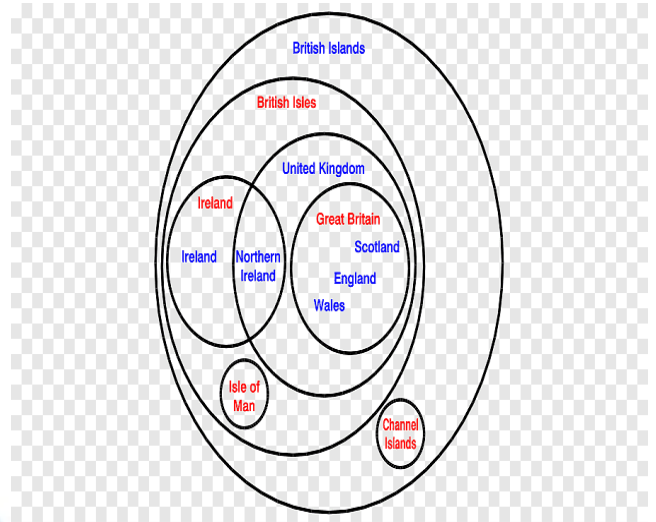




## Unit 2: GEOGRAPHY

It has been claimed that the British love of compromise is the result of the country's physical geography. This may or may not be true, but it is certainly true that the land and climate in Britain have a notable lack of extremes. Britain has mountains, but none of them are very high; it also has flat land, but you cannot travel far without encountering hills; it has no really big rivers; it doesn't

usually get very cold in the winter or very hot in the summer; it has no active volcanoes, and an earth tremor which does no more than rattle teacups in a few houses is reported in the national news media.



### ☛ Climate

The climate of Britain is more or less the same as that of the north-western part of the European mainland. The popular belief that it rains all the time in Britain is simply not true. The image of a wet, foggy land was created two thousand years ago by the invading Romans and has been perpetuated in modern times by Hollywood. In fact, London gets no more rain in a year than most other major European cities, and less than some (see *How wet is Britain?*).

The amount of rain that falls on a town in Britain depends on where it is. Generally speaking, the further west you go, the more rain you get. The mild winters mean that snow is a regular feature of the higher areas only. Occasionally, a whole winter goes by in lower-lying parts without any snow at all. The winters are in general a bit colder in the east of the country than they are in the west, while in summer, the south is slightly warmer and sunnier than the north.

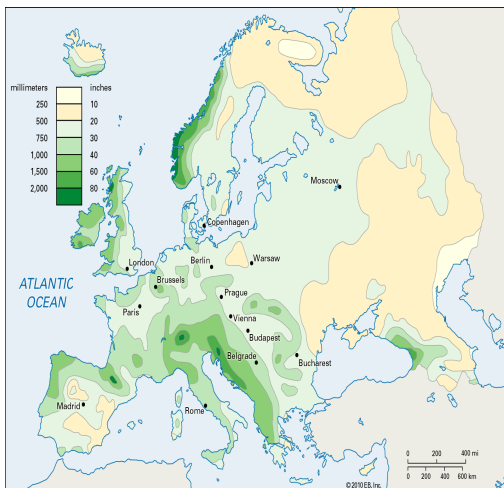
Why has Britain's climate got such a bad reputation? Perhaps for the same reason that British people always seem to be talking about the weather. This is its changeability. There is a saying that Britain doesn't have a climate, it only has weather. It may not rain very

much altogether, but you can never be sure of a dry day; there can be cool (even cold) days in July and some quite warm days in January.

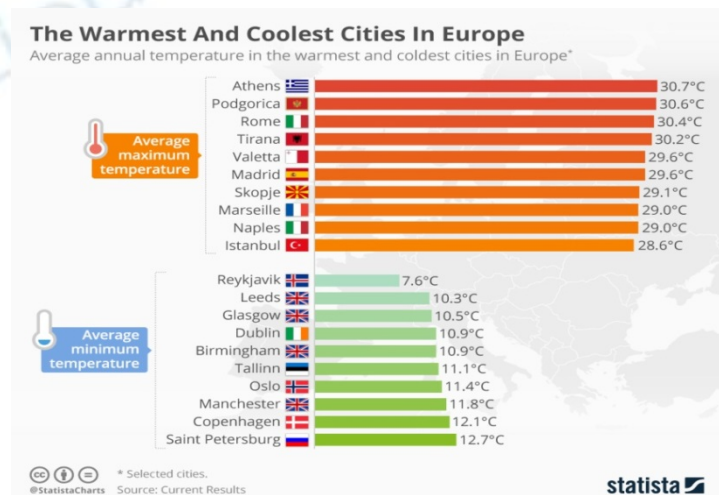
The lack of extremes is the reason why, on the few occasions when it gets genuinely hot or freezing cold, the country seems to be total unprepared for it. A bit of snow and a few days of frost and the trains stop working and the roads are blocked; if the thermometer goes above 80°F (27°C) (How hot or cold is Britain?), people behave as if they were in the Sahara and the temperature makes front-page head-lines. These things happen so rarely that it is not worth organizing life to be ready for them.

### ➤ *How wet is Britain?*

#### Annual total rainfall in the UK



#### Annual temperature range



Most people in Britain are happier using Fahrenheit scale of measurement (F). To them, a temperature “in the upper twenties” means that is freezing and and one “in the low seventies” will not kill you - It is just pleasantly warm.

### ➤ *The vanishing coastline*

Britain is an island under constant attack from the surrounding sea. Every year, little



The Holbeck hotel falling into the sea

bits of the east coast vanish into the North Sea. Sometimes the land slips away slowly. But at other times it slips away very suddenly. In 1993 a dramatic example of this process occurred near the town of Scarborough in Yorkshire.

The Holbeck Hotel, built on a clifftop overlooking the sea, had been the best hotel in town for 110 years. But on the morning of 4 June, guests awoke to find cracks in the walls and the doors stuck. When they looked out of the window, instead of seeing fifteen metres of hotel garden, they saw nothing except the sea. There was no time to collect their belongings. They had to leave the hotel immediately. During the day various rooms of the hotel started leaning at odd angles and then slipped down the cliff. The Holbeck Hotel's role in the tourism industry was over. However, by 'dying' so dramatically, it provided one last great sight for tourists. Hundreds of them watched the action throughout the day.

Much of the land is used for human habitation. This is not just because Britain is densely populated (see *The British Isles: where people live*). Partly because of their desire for privacy and their love of the country-side, the English and the Welsh don't like living in blocks of flats in city centres and the proportion of people who do so is lower than in other European countries. As a result, cities in England and Wales have, wherever possible, been built outwards rather than upwards (although this is not so much the case in Scottish cities). For example, Greater London has about three times the population of greater Athens but it occupies ten times the area of land. However, because most people (about 75%) live in towns or cities rather than in villages or in the countryside, this habit of building outwards does not mean that you see buildings wherever you go in Britain. There are areas of completely open countryside everywhere and some of the mountainous areas remain virtually untouched.

### • The environment and pollution

It was in Britain that the word 'smog' was first used (to describe a mixture of smoke and fog). As the world's first industrialized country, its cities were the first to suffer this atmospheric condition. In the nineteenth century London's 'pea soupers' (thick smogs) became famous through descriptions of them in the works of Charles Dickens and in the Sherlock Holmes stories. The situation in London reached its worst point in 1952. At the end of that year a particularly bad smog, which lasted for several days, was estimated to have caused between 4,000 and 8,000 deaths.

Water pollution was also a problem. In the nineteenth century it was once suggested that the Houses of Parliament should be wrapped in enormous wet sheets to protect those inside from the awful smell of the River Thames. Until the 1960s, the first thing that