British Life

by Anne Collins

SUMMARY

British Life focuses on many aspects of contemporary British life, food, work, family. There are articles on Geography, The Royal Family and The City of London; also such subjects as The Changing Family, Faces of Business, The National Lottery and A Nation of Animal Lovers. By highlighting current trends and recent developments, the author attempts to give a real picture of British people and their life. The reader contains numerous illustrations and includes quizzes, picture stories and a recipe.

Map of the UK
A simple map at the start of the book of the United Kingdom has interesting facts about the country.

The British
What is the difference between Great Britain and the United Kingdom? What languages are spoken in Britain? Here are some differences between the nationalities which make up Great Britain and draws attention to key features of the British character.

The Royal Family
This section starts with a quiz – How much do you know about the British royal family? – and continues with an up-to-date family tree and other ‘royal’ facts.

The British at Home
Some statistics on home ownership and family size.

The Changing Family and A Change of Heart
What ‘a family’ today means, and the effect of the increasing divorce rate on British family life. Plus a discussion on marriage and stepfamilies. This is followed by a picture story, A Change of Heart about some of the dilemmas that face divorced couples and their children.

Faces of Business and The Call Centre
A recent change in business is the drop in making things in factories and the increase in providing services, which means giving help or doing jobs for people. There are statistics on average hours spent at work. The picture story, The Call Centre, is written from the view of a student starting work in a modern ‘call centre’.

The City of London
This takes the form of an interview with Charles Rogers, who works in London at the biggest financial centre in Europe.

The British and Food / Scones
A British cook, Paul White gives his ideas on this topic. There are also useful facts and figures on British eating habits and the trends. There is an illustrated practical recipe for the tea-time favourite, scones and there are notes on the British obsession with tea.

Weekend Activities:
The page on this topic picks out three of Britain’s favourite leisure activities: watching television, D-I-Y (Do-It-Yourself) and gardening.

A Nation of Animal Lovers
The British love of animals is reflected by two pages on British pets, TV pet programmes, Battersea Dogs Home and Crufts Dog Show.

The National Lottery
Many countries have had a national lottery for years, whereas the National Lottery is a relatively recent feature of British life. For this reason it continues to attract considerable media attention and is still a common topic of everyday conversation.

The British and Sport
A quiz: ten questions for students to answer.

The British on Holiday
Holiday trends and statistics.

Evenings Out
This section focuses on three popular evening activities: the theatre, the cinema, musicals.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anne Collins is an experienced writer and adapter of films and stories, for many publishers. She has also taught EFL students of different ages in several countries, and lives in Scotland.

BACKGROUND AND THEMES

The subject, British life, provides many opportunities for both creative and factual work in the classroom. How do the students perceive Britain – before and after reading the book? What are the stereotypes held by the students? Does everyone have similar views on British life, if so, where have they come from? Do they change after visits to Britain? What do students think of Britain and British people they have met or read about? How does this country compare with their own country? The number of themes is endless: family, cinema, jobs, lifestyle, pets, food, holidays, entertainment, national dress and languages within a country, etc. Broader subjects on British life can come from history, geography, media – newspapers, TV programmes, politics, royal families, sport, etc.

Facts and statistics on those aspects of British life that particularly interest the students could be collected: on unemployment, money spent on holidays, numbers of people who speak different languages, for example and collated for a wider view of Britain. Facts and figures can be compared with facts on their own country.
ACTIVITIES BEFORE READING THE BOOK
1 Find out what students already know about Britain. Give them a time limit of 1 minute to write down one or two facts about each of these topics:
   - British food / London / The Royal Family / The countries that make up Great Britain / Spare time activities / Holidays / Sport
2 Students work in pairs or groups. They should imagine they have won a week's holiday in Britain. The pair or group plan how they would spend the week.

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING A SECTION
Pages 1–8
1 With their readers closed, ask students to draw a sketch map of the British Isles, marking these countries and cities:
   - England / London; Scotland / Edinburgh; Wales / Cardiff; Northern Ireland / The Republic of Ireland.
2 In pairs, get students to discuss these questions:
   - (a) Why are so many British people from India, Pakistan, Hong Kong and The Caribbean?
   - (b) What is the average number of hours people work in a week in Britain?
   - (c) Do you think the Royal Family is good for Britain?
   - (d) Do you think that people prefer to own their homes instead of renting them?
   - (e) Do you think that there are too many British people who work in service industries?
3 Students work in pairs or groups.
4 When students have tried the quiz and checked the answers, they could discuss these questions:
   - (a) Is life popular watching TV, D-I-Y and gardening in your country?
   - (b) What other popular weekend activities are there?

Pages 9–25
1 How far do you agree with these statements about family life?
   - Use a scale of 1–5. 1 = completely agree / 5 = completely disagree
   - (a) The ideal age to get married is 25. ___
   - (b) If couples do not want to have children, is there no point in getting married? ___
   - (c) Even if they don’t love each other, couples should stay together for their children. ___
   - (d) Divorce usually damages children. ___
   - (e) Divorce should be made more difficult. ___
   - (f) Women should stay at home and look after their children instead of going to work. ___
   - (g) Men are mainly to blame for the break-up of marriages. ___
2 (a) At the end of A Change of Heart how do these people feel?
   - Luke
   - (i) very sad / (ii) very angry / (iii) very happy
   - Luke’s mother
   - (i) very sad / (ii) very angry / (iii) very happy
   - Luke’s father
   - (i) very sad / (ii) very angry / (iii) very happy
   - (b) Who do you feel most sympathy for?
3 How do these facts about Britain from Faces of Business compare with the situation in your country?
   - (a) 75% of people work in service industries. ___
   - (b) The working day runs from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. ___
   - (c) British workers get 4 weeks paid holiday a year. ___
   - (d) 16% of men are self-employed. ___

Pages 26–39
1 Food
   - (a) Students each pick out one or two facts from the section on British food that they found interesting or surprising. They then compare the facts they have chosen in pairs or small groups.
   - (b) Which kinds of food and drink mentioned in this section have you eaten? Did you enjoy it / them?
2 Weekend activities
   - (a) What is your reaction to the British attitude to animals?
   - (b) How does this compare to the situation in your country?
   - (c) Does your family own any pets?
3 Animals
   - (a) Do you think that animals are well treated in Britain?
   - (b) How do these people feel?
   - (c) Are animals too cruelly used in the country?
4 Lottery
   - (a) What do you think of the lottery in Britain?
   - (b) How does this compare to the situation in your country?
5 Sport
   - (a) Which sports do you think are the most popular in Britain?
   - (b) How do you spend your spare time?
6 On holiday
   - (a) Does anything you have read surprise you?
   - (b) How important is sport in your country / to you?
7 Evenings out
   - (a) Do you think the British respect the elderly more than in your country?
   - (b) How far do you agree with these statements about family life?

GLOSSARY
It will be useful for your students to know the following new words. They are practised in the ‘Before You Read’ sections of exercises at the back of the book. (Definitions are based on those in the Longman Active Study Dictionary.)

Pages 1–8
average (adj.) the amount you get by adding several quantities together and dividing the result by the number of quantities
character (n.) any of the qualities that make a person different from any other
divorce (n.) the legal end of a marriage
ide (n.) an island, it is used in literary texts
royal (adj.) belonging to a king or queen
tradition (n.) doing something in the way it has been done for a long time

Pages 9–25
couple (n.) two people who are married or who have a romantic relationship
financial (adj.) to do with money
increase (v.) to become larger
insurance (n.) when you pay a company in case you become ill, or have an accident. They then pay the costs
service industry (n.) an industry that provides help or does jobs for people
step-family (n.) a family with members from a previous marriage

Pages 26–39
chat (n. / v.) talking in a friendly and informal way
LAUGHTER (n.) a game where two teams hit a ball with a bat between two wickets
flour (n.) powder from grain, used to make bread and cakes
lottery (n.) competition where people win money if they choose the same numbers as the competition organisers
nursing-home (n.) a small hospital for old and ill people who need looking after
pudding (n.) the last part of a meal, which is sweet
rat (n.) a large mouse
scone (n.) small, round sweet cake, eaten with butter, jam and sometimes cream too
Who are the British?

Are they the a _______ as the English?
And how is the UK b _______ from Britain?

Britain is not an easy c _______ to understand.
To d _______, British life is sometimes very strange.

Why, for example, do people talk about the e _______ so much?
Many things are f _______ in Britain and one of them is g _______ life.

People’s h _______ on marriage and the family are always different from the views of their i _______ and grandparents.

j _______ is also changing fast.

The British

1 Match the names with the correct definitions
(a) Great Britain a name for a Scotsman
(b) The United Kingdom The British national song
(c) The British Isles England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
(d) Gaelic England, Scotland and Wales
(e) God Save the Queen a name for a Welshman
(f) Jock England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland
(g) Taffy language spoken in the north of Scotland

The Royal Family

1 Who is / are or was / were...
(a) the sister of Charles Prince of Wales?
(b) the brother of Prince William?
(c) the mother of Princess Beatrice of York?
(d) the mother of Andrew, Duke of Edinburgh?
(e) the youngest son of Philip, Duke of Edinburgh?
(f) the first husband of Anne, Princess Royal?
(g) the nieces of Charles, Prince of Wales?
(h) the aunt of Prince Henry?

The British at Home

Match the two halves of these sentences.
(a) 67% of British people...
(b) Fewer people in Scotland own their homes...
(c) Most people over the age of 65...
(d) Children usually leave their parents’ home...
(e) When they get old, parents do not usually live...

The Changing Family

1 Work in pairs or groups

Read the long letter on page 10, then discuss your ideas.
(a) Do you agree or disagree with the letter writer?
(b) Which of the readers’ views 1-5 (page 10-11) do you agree with?

Faces of Business

Put the words in the right order.
(a) are / businesses / fastest / growing / in / industries / service / The / the / UK
(b) employ / industries / million / more / people / Service / than / twenty
(c) 5 p.m. / 9 a.m. / a / British / days / five / from / Most / people / to / week / work
(d) 365 / a / a / companies / customers / days / give / Many / ‘round the clock’ / service / their / year.
(e) Britain / Europe / has / in / longest / the / week / working
(f) a / Employers / four / give / have / holiday / paid / their / to / weeks / workers / year.
(g) because / do / family / jobs / Many / part-time / spend / their / they / time / to / want / with / women

The Call Centre

Who says or thinks these things, who are they talking to and what are they talking about?
(a) I’m going to show you how to make calls.
(b) Don’t call me again!
(c) You don’t look very happy.
(d) Is this going to take much longer?
(e) Sixty in one day!
(f) I really need the money.

The British and Food

Are these sentences Right or Wrong? Write R or W, then check in the book.

(a) British eating habits have hardly changed at all during the past 20 years. ______
(b) British people eat more red meat than they used to. ______
(c) They eat more fruit than they used to in the past. ______
(d) British people don’t like cakes and chocolates. ______
(e) A few British towns have Indian and Chinese restaurants. ______

(f) On average British people drink more than 100 litres of beer a year. ______
2 Complete this recipe for scones by putting in the correct verb from the list, then put the sentences into the correct order.

(a) ____ for 7–10 minutes.
(b) ____ into a large flat shape on a table.
(c) ____ into round pieces.
(d) ____ milk on top of each piece.
(e) ____ the flour and salt into a bowl.
(f) ____ the milk.
(g) ____ the mixture out of the bowl.
(h) ____ with a knife.

Weekend Activities
Which word on page 31 means:
(a) (to) find out
(b) animals and plants in natural conditions
(c) animals that live with people
(d) work to keep the place you live in clean and tidy
(e) pleased, satisfied
(f) person who owns a home
(g) giving work to
(h) someone who makes a house

A Nation of Animal Lovers
1 Find the animals
Example act = cat
(a) red bug raig _______
(b) god _______
(c) termash _______
(d) bitbar _______
(e) shif _______
(f) pinegupi _______

2 Here are some answers. What were the questions?
(a) 100,000
(b) 24.2
(c) nearly 14,000
(d) 1.5 million
(e) 1891
(f) 1991

The National Lottery
Match the two halves of these sentences.
(a) The British lottery is on television...
(b) The British lottery...
(c) Lottery tickets cost...
(d) More than 70% of British homes...
(e) You have a better chance of winning if you play...
(f) Over a quarter of the money taken by the lottery...
A ...take part in the lottery every week.
B ...is spent on things to help Britain.
C ...£1 each.
D ...was started in 1994.
E ...on Wednesday and Saturday evenings.
F ...the new game ‘Thunderball’.

Activities after reading the book
Work with one or more other students.
1 What do you remember?
What did you find interesting in this book? Write down three things that you remember. Compare your list with those of other students.

2 Your country
If you wrote a book about life in your country, how would it be different from this book?
(a) What would you write instead of these chapters?
• The Royal Family
• The City of London
• A Nation of Animal Lovers
• The National Lottery
(b) Which recipe would you include in the chapter on food?
(c) What picture would you put on the cover of your book?

Britain Quiz
1 Which city is the capital of Wales?
2 What is the old language called that is spoken in the north of Scotland and Northern Ireland?
3 What is the name of the Queen’s home in Scotland?
4 What percentage of British people own their own homes?
5 At what time do most people start and finish work in Britain?
6 What is the other name for the Bank of England?
7 What are the four ingredients of scones?
8 What does DIY stand for?
9 Which are more popular as pets in British homes: dogs or cats?
10 What sport is played at Lords (London)?
11 Which is the most popular country for British holiday-makers?
12 Who wrote the musicals Evita, Cats and Phantom of the Opera?
Free online English lessons for adult students of English as a second language and young learners about British customs, traditions, history and culture. Practise your English while learning about life in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Includes study materials to practise for the Life in The UK Citizenship Test. Modern teenagers in Great Britain enjoy great democratic freedom. However, research on teenage behavioural patterns shows that they typically feel very depressed about their physical appearance, health, and social status. For example, girls are in a constant fear of putting on weight. Therefore, they resort to various weight reducing methods. Some of these methods are very susceptible to their health, and may even be the cause of psychologically effected diseases such as anorexia.