

## Great Britain

### Pre-Reading Activities

#### 1. Do you know the meaning of the word combinations in A? Try to find their Russian equivalents in B.

A. 1) to appoint; 2) approval; 3) advice; 4) cheap; 5) to comprise; 6) deposit; 7) hereditary; 8) in the making; 9) lack; 10) mine; 11) to remain; 12) requirement; 13) vehicle; 14) voter.

B. 1) совет; 2) одобрение, утверждение; 3) наследственный; 4) избиратель; 5) потребность; 6) средства (передвижения); 7) рудник, шахта; 8) залежь; 9) дешевый; 10) оставаться; 11) включать, заключать в себе; 12) в процессе создания; 13) назначать; 14) недостаток, отсутствие.

#### 2. Translate the following sentences:

1. Angels, Saxons, Vikings, and Romans are known to have been the invaders of Britain. 2. We know Great Britain to consist of England, Scotland and Wales. 3. Many tourists find the climate of Great Britain to be mild and humid. 4. We know England to border on Scotland in the north. 5. Most visitors to modern Scotland find Scots to be hospitable and friendly. 6. The Conservative, the Labour and the Liberal Democratic parties prove to be the main political parties in Britain. 7. Since 1945 the Conservative and Labour parties are known to have been in power by turns. 8. The Times is known to be the most famous of all British newspapers. 9. The public of Britain seems to have lost a little of its interest in crime and scandal being published in British newspapers. 10. Some administrative changes in the relations between the parts of the United Kingdom are expected to be made by the central government.

### Reading

#### 3. Read the text. Three sentences have been removed from the text. Choose from the sentences A to C the one which best fits each gap.

A. The rivers seldom freeze in winter, most of them remain ice-free.

B. The highest mountain top, Ben Nevis, is only 1,343m high.

C. The mountains, the Atlantic Ocean and the warm waters of the Gulf Stream influence the climate of Great Britain.

## THE UK

The UK lies on the British Isles. There are 5,500 islands. The two main islands are: Great Britain and Ireland. Northern Ireland occupies one third of the island of Ireland. It borders on the Irish Republic in the south. The British Isles are separated from the European continent by the North Sea, the English Channel and the Strait of Dover. The western coast of Britain is washed by the Atlantic Ocean and the Irish Sea. The total area of the UK is 244,000 sq.km. Britain is relatively small and compact when compared with many European countries, being, for example, half the size of France, of almost 20 per cent smaller than Italy. The population of the UK is over 59 million people. Britain has been many centuries in the making. About 2,000 years ago the British Isles were inhabited by the Celts who originally came from continental Europe. During the next 1,000 years there were many invasions. The Romans came from Italy in A.D. 43 and calling the country "Britannia" gave Britain its name. The Angles and Saxons came from Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands in the 5th century, and England got its name from this invasion (Angle-land). The Vikings arrived from Denmark and Norway throughout the 9th century, and in 1066 the Normans invaded from France. These invasions drove the Celts into what is now Wales and Scotland and they remained, of course, in Ireland. The English are the descendants of all the invaders, but are more Anglo-Saxon than anything else. English is the official language, but it is not the only language which people speak in the country.

Geographically Britain can be divided into two main regions: Highland Britain and Lowland Britain. Highland Britain includes Scotland, the Lake District, the Pennines, almost the whole of Wales. Lowland Britain comprises most of England, central Lowlands of Scotland and some areas in the south of Wales. There are no high mountains in Britain. 1. \_\_\_\_\_. There are many rivers in Britain but they are not very long. Their direction and character are determined by the position of the North Sea. 2. \_\_\_\_\_. Many of the rivers are joined together by canals. This system of rivers and canals provides a good means of cheap inland water transport. The most important rivers are the Severn, the Thames, 82 anywhere in Britain. In general, British temperature rarely rises above 32°C in the winter, though there are differences between those of the north and the south. Great Britain is not very rich in mineral resources; it has some deposits of coal and iron ore, oil and gas. The biggest coal iron mines are in the north-east of England, in Scotland near Glasgow, in Wales near Cardiff and Bristol. Great Britain is a highly developed industrial country. Coal-mining is one of the most developed industries in Great Britain. Of great importance for Britain is ship-building industry. It is concentrated in London, the capital of Great Britain, Glasgow, Newcastle, Liverpool and Belfast. Birmingham and Sheffield are the most ancient centres of British iron and steel industry. Manchester is the centre of cotton industry. Britain produces agricultural tractors, motor-cars, railway vehicles. The products of the British aerospace industry include civil and military aircraft and satellites. Great Britain produces a lot of wool, which is considered to be the best in the world. English agriculture is also developed, but because of lack of cultivated lands it satisfies nearly two-thirds of British food requirements. Great Britain is a constitutional monarchy though Britain has not any written constitution as one act and the monarchy is a mere formality. 83 English kings reign but do not rule. Power in Great Britain is divided among three branches: the

legislative branch, the executive branch and the judicial branch. The legislative branch is represented by Parliament, which consists of two chambers or houses: the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Parliament in Britain has existed since 1265. Having been organized in the reign of King Edward I, it is the oldest parliament in the world. Members of the House of Commons are elected for 5 years. The peers of the House of Lords are not elected by voters. Their seats in the House are, as a rule, hereditary. Parliament's main function is to make laws. The executive branch is headed by the Prime minister, who is appointed by the king (queen). The Prime Minister is usually the leader of the Party that has a majority in the House of Commons. The Prime minister appoints the ministers to compose the government. After that the newly appointed ministers are presented to the monarch for the formal approval. The most important ministers of the government form the Cabinet. Members of the Cabinet make joint decisions or advise the Prime minister. The judicial branch interprets the laws. The highest judicial body is represented by the Supreme Court of Judicature. There are three main political parties in Great Britain: the Labour, the Conservative, and the Liberal Democratic. Britain heads the so-called British Commonwealth of Nations, whose members, among others, are Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The Queen is the official head of the Commonwealth of Nations.

### Post-Reading Activities

**4. Read the text again and answer the questions.** 1. What is the official name of Britain? 2. What parts does the United Kingdom consist of? 3. What oceans and seas is the United Kingdom washed by? 4. What is the total area of the UK? 5. What is the population of the country? 6. What people were the British Isles inhabited by about 2,000 years ago? 7. When did the Romans settle in Britain? 8. When did the Anglo-Saxons come? 9. When did the Normans invade Britain? 10. Are there many rivers in Britain? Which of them are the most important ones? 11. What is the climate of Great Britain? 12. Is Great Britain rich in mineral resources? 13. What are the main industries of Great Britain? 14. What can you say about the institute of monarchy in Britain? 15. What body is the legislative power represented by? 16. Since what time has the British Parliament existed? 17. Who is the executive branch headed by? 18. What is the highest judicial body of the country? 19. What are the main political parties in Britain? 20. Who is the official head of the Commonwealth of Nations?

**5. Complete the sentences with the words or word combinations.** 1. The UK is very small ... with many other countries of the world. 2. The Celts began ... Britain around 700 B.C. They crossed the English Channel from the territory of the present-day France. 3. Queen Victoria came to the throne as a young woman in 1837 and ... until the death in 1901. 4. The British ... existed for hundred years before Parliament. 5. Northern Ireland has ... winters and cool rainy summers. 6. The UK ... by the English, the Scottish, the Welsh and the Northern Irish. 7. In practice Great Britain ... by the elected government with a Prime minister at the head. 8. The party 85 which wins the ... of seats at general elections forms the Cabinet. 9. Queen Elizabeth II herself is a ... of the Saxon monarchs and William the Conqueror. 10. Everything that the Queen (King) does is done on the advice of her (his) ministers who make ... 1) joint decisions, 2) is ruled, 3) is inhabited, 4) mild, 5) compared, 6) monarchy, 7) majority, 8) to invade, 9) reigned, 10) descendant

### 6. Fill in the gaps with the information found in the Internet.

1. The Stock Exchange, the Bank of England and the Lloyds of London are located in \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ used to be a fruit and vegetable market. Now one can enjoy live street shows there.
3. More than a dozen theatres are located in \_\_\_\_\_ Avenue. 4. \_\_\_\_\_ has a reputation of the bohemian area of London.
5. South of Shaftesbury Avenue is \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The first English Parliament was established in \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The present-day Houses of Parliament consist of \_\_\_\_\_ chambers: the House of \_\_\_\_\_ and the House of - \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The Lords' chamber is used by the \_\_\_\_\_ to deliver a speech at the State Opening of Parliament.
9. The official residence of the Prime Minister is usually \_\_\_\_\_ Street. 15.
10. In No.10 there is a \_\_\_\_\_ Room, where government policy is decided and a \_\_\_\_\_ Room, where official guests are entertained.
11. Queen \_\_\_\_\_ was the first monarch to live in Buckingham Palace.
12. Queen Elizabeth II and her husband divide their time between Buckingham Palace, \_\_\_\_\_ Castle and Balmoral Castle in \_\_\_\_\_.
13. About \_\_\_\_\_ people work in Buckingham Palace and about \_\_\_\_\_ of them live there.