IMMIGRATION

Apart from Native Americans all Americans are from families who came to America as **immigrants**. People are generally proud to say that their ancestors came to the US with very little and built a better life for themselves.

THE US – A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS

Europeans began settling in North America in the late 16th century. The first colonists were Spanish, English, and Dutch, but many German, Irish, Scottish, and French people came to the colonies as well. Many of the early colonists came to escape **religious persecution** at home. From 1619 until 1808, nearly 500000 Africans came to North America, brought by force as slaves.

The 19th century saw a huge rise in immigration. Between 1820 and 1880, many more people arrived from Germany, Britain, Ireland and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Large numbers of Chinese also came to California. Between the peak years of 1880 and 1930, when 27 million people entered the country, the main groups were Italians, Austro-Hungarians, Germans, Russians, Canadians, British, Irish and Scandinavians. Many Jews arrived from Germany and Eastern Europe.

Immigration laws passed in the first half of the 20th century limited the number of immigrants according to their country of origin and favoured immigrants from north-west Europe. In 1965 a new law got rid of the **national-origin quotas**. Since then, immigration has increased, with the largest numbers coming from mexico, the Philippines and other parts of Latin America and Asia. The US continues to accept hundreds of thousands of immigrants each year.

THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, many immigrants left home because they were poor and though they would have better opportunities in the US. Most travelled on crowded ships where diseases spread quickly. Many would-be immigrants died on the journey or arrived weak and ill. The majority arrived in New York and Boston, and **Ellis Island** near New York became famous as a **receiving station**. There the immigrants were examined by a doctor before being allowed to enter the US. But life in the US was not easy. Those who stayed in the cities often had to work in **sweatshops** (= factories where conditions were hard) and live in **tenements** (= crowded buildings where an entire family often lived in one room). But slowly they improved their lives and many wrote home to encourage others to come.

Today immigrants continue to move to the US for economic and political reasons and to join family members. Immigrants must obtain a **green card** to establish legal permanent residency, a first step towards citizenship.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRATION

Immigrants have been welcomed during times of economic prosperity but have sometimes been viewed with suspicion during economic hard times. Many people think that immigrants should abandon their original culture and language and join the American **melting pot**, in which people from many cultures form a single new culture.

But Americans continue to be proud of their ethnic backgrounds. From the 1960s the melting pot image was partly replaced by **pluralism**, the idea that a variety of values, traditions and languages was good and that a **multicultural** society made the US stronger. Over time, immigrant families **assimilate**, i.e. change their lifestyle so it becomes more like the **mainstream**. This can be seen in the lifestyles of second- and third- generation.

INUITS

Inuits are a related group of people found in Alaska, and also in Canada and Greenland. They are thought to have come into North America from Siberia many thousands of years ago. In both the US and Britain they used to be called **Eskimos** but the name *Inuit* which means 'the people' is now usually used and is preferred by many of the people themselves. It is the name always used in Canada. The plural form is *Inuits* or *Inuit.* Although they live in small isolated communities, Inuits have a strong cultural identity and share the Inuit language. Other native peoples of Alaska include **Aleuts**, who come from the Aleutian Islands to the west of Alaska, the **Tlingits** and the **Haida**.

Many American and British people still think of Inuits as wearing animal skins and furs, living in **igloos** (= houses made of ice), and eating raw fish which they catch from a **kayak** or through a hole in the ice. The traditional life of

Inuits involved travelling from place to place, fishing and hunting animals, including seals, whales and caribou (= a type of large deer).
As in the case of Native American peoples, the traditional way of life of the Inuit has been changed a great deal by the activities of other Americans. In particular, damage to the environment makes it hard for native Alaskans to find enough of their traditional foods. Many now live in permanent settlements which have schools and other facilities. They still live by hunting and fishing but instead of a **sledge** (*AmE* **sled**) pulled by dogs they may use a **snowmobile** (= a special car that can travel over snow) or a motor boat, and have guns and other modern equipment.

IRON AGE BRITAIN

At the end of the Bronze Age iron began to be used instead of bronze for making tools and weapons. Iron tools were harder and more efficient, and also cheaper. Bronze came to be used only for decorated items such as bowls or brooches.
In Britain the Iron Age began about 500 BC. Some time before this, Celts had begun arriving in the British Isles from Europe and had mixed with the people already living there. Some were farmers and grew wheat and beans, and kept animals. The Celts are best known for their metalwork, and there is archaeological evidence of metal workshops in southern England and near Grimsby on the east coast. There was a trading centre at Hengistbury Head near Bournemouth until the middle of the 1st century BC. Metal items such as weapons and jewelry were made near there and sold in Britain and abroad. Iron bars were used as currency before coins were introduced in the 1st century BC. Pieces of pottery indicate that at the same time food and wine were imported from France.
Hill forts such as that at Maiden Castle in Dorset were the headquarters of local chiefs and centres of administration, craftwork and trade for their tribes, as well as being used for defence. Hill forts covered a large area of land, usually on top of a hill, and were surrounded by ditches and earth ramparts (= banks) with a wooden fence on top. Inside were round thatched houses, workshops and grain stores. Each hill fort also had a shrine or religious building.
The Celtic tribes, now often called the **ancient Britons**, were defeated when the Romans invaded Britain in 43 BC. After peace was established the hill forts were no longer used, though some were later repaired and used for defence against the Anglo-Saxons in the late 5th century. In the Roman period new artistic influences came to southern Britain and many Celtic chiefs adopted Roman ways. Further north and west, the Celts fought to remain outside the Roman province of Britannia. The Iron Age ended in England and Wales during Roman times, but little is known of the Celtic regions further north until their culture reached its highest point of achievement in the 7th and 8th centuries.

JAZZ

Jazz is one of the greatest forms of music originating in the US. The names of its stars are known around the world. Most people have heard of stars like Ella Fitzgerald, 'Count' Basie, 'Duke' Ellington and Louis Armstrong. Wynton Marsalis, who plays in the traditional style, is one of the best-known jazz musicians today.
Jazz was begun in the South by African Americans. Many of its rhythms came from the work songs and spiritual (= religious songs) of black slaves. New Orleans street bands first made jazz popular. Early forms of jazz created at the beginning of the 20th century were ragtime and the blues. Ragtime musicians included the singer 'Jelly Roll' Morton and the composer and piano player Scott Joplin. Famous blues singers included Bessie Smith and later Billie Holiday. Dixieland developed from ragtime and the blues and made a feature of improvisation (= making up the music as it is being played), especially on the trumpet and saxophone. Dixieland stars included Louis Armstrong and Sidney Bechet.
In the 1920s many African Americans moved north, taking jazz with them, and Chicago and New York became centres for the music. This was the beginning of the **big band era**. In the 1930s swing music came into fashion and people danced to jazz. Radio and the new recording industry helped to make it even more popular. The big bands were led by Basie, Ellington, Woody Herman, Glenn Miller, and 'the King of Swing', Benny Goodman. In the 1940s there were new styles such as bebop, developed by 'Dizzy' Gillespie, Charlie 'Bird' Parker and Thelonious Monk. Freer forms like **progressive jazz** and **free jazz** developed in the 1950s with stars including Stan Getz, John Coltrane and Dave Brubeck. **Cool jazz** followed in the 1960s, led by Getz and Miles Davis. More recent styles have included funky

jazz, jazz-rock and hip-hop jazz. Many jazz clubs, like the Cotton Club, have now closed but others, lile Preservation Hall in New Orleans, and Birdland in Manhattan, remain.
In Britain jazz attracts a small but enthusiastic audience. The height of its popularity was in the 1940s and 1950s, when large crowds gathered to hear big bands. British jazz has always been heavily influenced by tUS jazz. In the 1960s pop and rock music replaced jazz as the music of the young generation. There are now few jazz bands, although smaller **combos** (= groups) continue to play a wide range of **trad** (= traditional), bebop, cool and avant-garde jazz. The most famous British jazz musicians have included Johnny Dankworth and Cleo Laine, George Melly, Humphrey Lyttleton and Courtney Pine. The home of jazz in Britain is Ronnie Scott's club in London.

JURIES

Under the legal system of England and Wales, and also that of Scotland, a person accused of a serious crime who pleads 'not guilty' to the crime will be **tried** by a jury. Juries also hear some civil cases (= disagreements between people about their rights) and decide whether a person is 'liable' (= required by law to do or pay something) or 'not liable'. In the US juries are also used in both criminal and civil cases, though the rules vary from state to state.
In Britain **jurors** (= jury members) are selected at random for each trial from lists of adults who have the right to vote. They must be between the ages of 18 and 70 and have lived in Britain for at least five years. Members of the armed forces, the legal profession and the police force are not allowed to **sit on** juries. Anybody **called for jury service** usually has to attend court for about two weeks, although some cases may go on for much longer. The court pays only their expenses and if they have a job they are paid as normal by their employer. In England and Wales 12 peoples sit on a jury, in Scotland 15. A larger number of people are asked to attend court and the final jury is selected at random from among them. Lawyers representing either side in a case have the right to object to a particular person being on the jury.
After the jury has heard the evidence presented by both sides, it **retires** to the **jury room**, a private room, to discuss the case. When all members of the jury agree they **return their verdict**, go back into court and say whether the accused is **guilty** or **not guilty**. In Scotland they can also return in the case has not been proved and the accused can go free. The verdict is announced by the **foreman** (= the person chosen by the jury as their leader). Sometimes the jury cannot all agree and the judge may accept a **majority verdict**, provided that no more than two members of the jury disagree. If no verdict is reached the trial is abandoned and started again with a different jury. It is not the responsibility of the jury to decide punishment, though in certain civil cases they may decide how much compensation should be paid.
In the US most juries have 12 members, though some have only six. Otherwise the system is very similar to that in England and Wales. When people are called for **jury duty** they must go, but people who cannot leave their jobs or homes can be excused. Before a trial begins lawyers ask questions to see if jurors are impartial, i.e. do not have strong opinions that would prevent them making a decision based on the facts. Lawyers can **challenge for cause**, if they can give the judge a good reason why somebody should not be a juror. They also have a number of **peremptory challenges** which means they can object to somebody without giving a reason. In some trials it can be difficult to find 12 people who are impartial, especially if a case has received a lot of publicity. Lawyers sometimes do research to find out what kind of person is most likely to support their side, and use challenges to keep other people off the jury. In a criminal trial the jury decides whether the accused person is **guilty** or **innocent**, but does not decide on a punishment. In a civil trial they may decide how much money should be paid in compensation. A majority decision is usually acceptable.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Britain has 52 regional police forces, which are responsible for maintaining **law and order** in their own area. London has two police forces, the Metropolitan Police, often referred to as the **Met**, which covers Greater London and has its headquarters at New Scotland Yard, and the smaller City of London Police.

Each regional police force is led by a Chief Constable. Police officers wear dark blue uniforms, and **constables** wear tall hard helmets. The British police force is relatively small, with one police officer to every 400 people. Some members of the public are trained as **special constables** and are available to help the police in an emergency.

Each police force has a **Criminal Investigation Department** (**CID**) ò detectives. CID officers are chosen from the uniformed police. They do not wear uniforms and have the title Detective before their rank, e.g. Detective Inspector Jones. Individual police forces have other special units for areas such as traffic, child protection, etc. and there are also national police organizations such as **Special Branch**, which works to prevent terrorism. In 2004 the government announced the creation of a new national organization, the **Serious Organised Crime Agency** to replace the National Crime Squad and the National Criminal Intelligence Service.

Attitudes towards the police have changed in Britain over the years. The traditional image of the friendly **bobby on the beat**, a policeman going round his local area on foot or on a bicycle armed only with a whistle and a **truncheon** (= long club), is now out of date. The modern police officer, man or woman, is more likely to be **patrolling** in a **police car** and to have less contact with the public. Police officers generally still carry only truncheons as weapons, and though some are trained to use a gun they only carry one in special circumstances. Dishonesty, racial prejudice and excessive use of force by some officers have damaged the public image of the police and in response the police have tried to get rid of dishonest officers and build better relationships with local communities, a practice called **community policing**. More people do now patrol on foot again, instead of cars.

In the US, law enforcement is carried out by different organizations at the various levels of government. In all, there are about 17000 **law enforcement agencies** and they employ more than 800000 full-time officers. At national level, the FBI (**Federal Bureau of Investigation**) has about 11000 **special agents** who investigate crimes across the US. At state level, **state police departments** are responsible for **highway patrols** and their officers are called state troopers. Each county within a state has an elected sheriff and the people who work in the sheriff's office, **deputies**, are responsible for investigating crimes. Cities have their own police departments. They may be very large in cities like New York, but those in small towns have only a few officers. Most colleges and universities have their own small police forces.

The members of the US police force who have most contact with the public are uniformed officers, who patrol in cars and are the first to arrive when a crime is reported. More serious crimes are investigated by detectives, who usually wear **plain clothes** instead of a uniform. In spite of the fact that police officers in the US wear guns, they are seen by many Americans as being honest, helpful people who work hard at a dangerous job. This is the image that has been shown in popular television programmes such as *Columbo* and *Hill Street Blues*. But in recent years it has become clear that many police officers are prejudiced against African Americans and Hispanics and that in some police forces, such as that in Los Angeles, prejudice and even violence on the part of the police have been common.

LIBRARIES

Almost every town in Britain and the US has a **public library**. Many older libraries were built with money given by Andrew Carnegie, a US businessman originally from Scotland.

Public libraries are often open until late evening during the week, part of Saturday, and in the US even on Sunday. **Librarians** manage the libraries and advise people how to find the books or information they need.

Public libraries contain **fiction** (= story books), **non-fiction** (= books containing facts), children's books, and usually magazines, CDs, DVDs and videos and have computers with access to the Internet. Every library has a **catalogue** which shows where books on a particular subject can be found. Many US university libraries use the Library of Congress system for arranging books in order on the shelves. In Britain and in public libraries in the US the Dewey decimal classification system is the most used.

Libraries are often divided into a **reference section** and a **lending section**. Books from the reference section, e.g. dictionaries and directories, as well as newspapers and magazines, can only be used in the library. Books from the lending section can be borrowed free of charge for a period of two or three weeks by people who are members of the library. Anyone living in the local area can join a library and obtain a **library card**. If a book is returned late, after the **due date**, the borrower has to pay a **fine**. Public libraries are also a source of local information and a centre for

community activities. Many have special programmes for children to help them feel comfortable using a library. In school holidays they organize storytelling and other entertainments.

Travelling libraries (= libraries set up inside large vans) take books round country areas for people who cannot easily get to a town. In the US travelling libraries are called **bookmobiles**. Schools, colleges and universities have their own private libraries for the use of students and teachers.

In both Britain and the US public libraries receive money from local and national government but, increasingly, they do not receive enough for their needs. In Britain some smaller libraries have had to close. In the US people believe strongly that information and education should be freely available. Libraries are important in achieving this but, as in Britain, they do not het sufficient money and depend on the help of volunteers who work without pay.

The biggest library in Britain is the British Library in London with over 150 million books, CDs, DVDs, and tape recordings. Other important libraries include the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales, the Cambridge University Library and the Bodleian Library in Oxford. These libraries are called copyright libraries or **legal deposit libraries** and are entitled to receive a free copy of every book that is published in Britain. The largest library in the US is the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

LICENSING LAWS

The sale of alcohol in Britain is controlled by licensing laws. These restrict where, when and by whom alcohol may be sold. The Licensing Act of 2003 made changes to this law. In order to open a pub or wine bar the owner must obtain the approval of the local authority, which must be satisfied that he or she is a suitable person to sell alcohol. If the application is approved the owner obtains a **licence** to sell alcohol and becomes the **licensee**. The name of the licensee is displayed above the front door. The 2003 Act states that many of the restrictions on opening hours will be removed. Worries about the effects of these changes, when drunkenness is already a serious problem in British towns and cities, meant that the introduction of the new laws was delayed.

Many pubs are licensed to sell alcohol for drinking **on or off the premises** (= in the pub or somewhere else). However, most people buy alcohol for drinking at home in a supermarket or an **off-licence** (= a shop that sells mainly alcohol). Shops and supermarkets have to get a licence, called an off-licence, before they can sell alcohol. Nobody under 18 is allowed to buy alcohol, either in a pub or in a shop.

Pubs are only allowed to sell alcohol during official **opening hours**. Until all the changes in the new law come into effect, pubs are allowed to remain open all day from 11.am to 11.pm, though many close in the afternoon, but if they wish to stay open after 11.pm they must obtain a special **late licence**. Pubs open for a shorter time on Sundays.

In the US there are local laws about when and where alcohol can be sold. Some towns are **dry**, i.e. no alcohol can be sold there at all. In general, restaurants and bars need a licence to sell beer and wine. In some states alcohol for drinking at home is sold only in special **liquor stores**; in other places it is sold in any food shop. There are fewer restrictions on when alcohol can be sold than there are in Britain, and bars can stay open very late. The most common restriction is that alcohol may not be sold early on Sunday mornings.

The US has strict laws to try to keep young people from coming into contact with alcohol. The **drinking age** (= the age at which a person can buy alcohol) is 21, and bars and liquor stores often ask customers for proof of age. In many places, people below 21 cannot work in, or even enter, bars or restaurants that serve alcohol. College students, especially, try to drink in bars by pretending to be older than they are. Young people who work in food shops may have to ask an older employee to serve a customer who wants to buy a bottle of wine.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The system of local government is slightly different in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. England is divided into **counties** each with a **country council** which is responsible for certain services. Each county is divided again into **districts**, each with a **district council** responsible for a smaller area. Districts are further divided into **parishes** which were originally villages with churches. In some parts of England, there are instead **unitary authorities** which have just one level of local government responsible for an area or city, sometimes called a

metropolitan district. London has a separate system with an elected **Assembly** and a **mayor**. In Scotland, there are 32 **council areas**. Wales is divided into 22 counties and **county boroughs** and Northern Ireland has 26 districts. All of these are unitary authorities with one level of local government.

Councils consist of **councilors** who are representatives elected by local people for a period of four years. Most councilors belong to a political party and, especially at county level, people often vote for them as representatives of a party, not as individuals. Since the Local Government Act of 2000, councils have been led by a **council leader** and a **cabinet** of councilors, or a **directly elected mayor** and a cabinet. In 2004 there were 12 directly elected mayors in England, including the Mayor of London. Councils meet in a **council chamber** at the local **town hall** or **county hall**.

Councils make policies for their area which are carried out by **local government officers**, who have a similar role to civil servants. **Local authorities** (= councils and committees) have responsibilities for education, social services, housing, transport, the fire and police services and other local services. Many people are employed by councils, but many services are also now carried out by private companies who are given contracts by the council. Councils receive some money from central government in the form of **grants**, they also collect **council tax** from each household, a locally set tax based on the value of the house.

In the US, local government has three levels, with the **State government**, **County government** and below that, towns and cities. State government is organized in a similar way to the federal government, with a **state constitution** in most states which explains the powers of the three branches of state government, the executive, the legislative and the judicial. The executive branch is headed by a **governor** and state laws are made by a **legislature**, which usually has two houses, a **Senate** and a **House of Representatives**. The judicial branch usually consists of a state supreme court and several lower courts. States have great influence and organize their own system of courts and set local income tax and sales tax.

States are divided into counties which have a county government located in a town or city called the **county seat**. The structure of county government varies from state to state, but must counties have a **Board of Commissioners**, sometimes called a **Board of Supervisors**, with the Board and other county officials usually being elected. Services provided by a county government depend on the area, whether it is mainly urban or rural. In urban areas, city and county governments may work together to provide services for the area. Counties usually have a **sheriff's department**, a kind of police department, whose officers are called **sheriff's deputies**.

America's cities, towns, villages and other **municipalities** vary greatly from small towns of a few hundred people to cities of millions. For that reason, there is no single system of local government. Most towns and cities have an elected mayor as their head and a council, made up of elected members from different areas of the city, which makes **ordinances** (= local laws). A **municipal government** usually has its own police force and courts, runs local schools, takes care of the roads, and may also provide services like public transport, water and electricity.

LONDON

The capital city of England and the United Kingdom lies on the River Thames, which winds through the city. Its many bridges, including London Bridge, are a famous sight. The most distinctive is Tower Bridge, which was designed to blend in with the nearby Tower of London.

The Tower, which is guarded by the Yeomen Warders, was built in the 11th century. In the medieval period London grew rapidly in size and importance. Westminster Abbey and the Guildhall date from this time, and the Palace of Westminster became the meeting place of Parliament. In 1666 many buildings were destroyed in the Fire of London. This provided an opportunity for architects like Christopher Wren to redesign much of the city. As London's population increased, new streets, squares and parks were added, and many public buildings. London was heavily bombed in World War II, after which a new cycle of rebuilding began.

London is a busy commercial and cultural centre. Many important financial organizations, including the Bank of England and the London Stock Exchange, are located in the area called the City. Part of the old port in east London has been redeveloped as a business centre, called Docklands. In the West End there are theatres, cinemas, museums and shops. Many people who work in London commute by train or bus from the suburbs because buying a house or flat near the centre is very expensive. Different parts of the city are linked by the famous red London buses, black taxi cabs and the London Underground, often called 'the Tube'.

People from all over the world have been attracted to London and it is now a cosmopolitan, multicultural city. People from other parts of Britain sometimes think that it is very noisy and dirty. Many go there only for the 'bright lights' – the theatres round Shaftesbury Avenue or the shops of Oxford Street and Regent's Street. Others take their children to see the sights, such as Buckingham Palace, where the Queen lives, and the clock tower from which Big Ben chimes the hours. Young people are attracted to the bars and comedy clubs of Covent Garden, to live music concerts, and the stalls of Camden market and the cafes and pubs of Notting Hill and similar areas.

LOTTERIES

Britain did not have a national lottery until 1994 when the government finally approved the project despite strong opposition. The **National Lottery** is run by a private company, Camelot, which was given the franchise (= licence) to run it by the **National Lottery Commission**.

The lottery was an immediate success with the public and its 'crossed fingers' logo, a gesture supposed to bring lick, is familiar throughout Britain. Lottery **tickets** are sold at many ships and supermarkets. For £1 people choose a row of six numbers between 1 and 49, or take a **lucky dip** of random numbers. The **draw** ceremony is broadcast every Saturday and Wednesday night. One of three machines containing 49 numbered balls is switched on and, after the balls have been turned, seven are tipped out. The first six are the winning numbers, the seventh is the **bonus ball**. Anyone who has chosen the six winning numbers wins or shares the **jackpot** (= the main prize), worth several million pounds. People with three, four or five matching numbers, or five plus the bonus ball, can also win prizes. If nobody wins the jackpot there is a **rollover** to the next draw. About 65% of adults play every week. Some also buy **Instants**, cards which show, when the surface is scratched off, if the buyer has won a prize.

Most of the money raised by the lottery is shared out among a variety of **good causes** such as the **Heritage Lottery Fund**, the Arts Council and **UK Sport**. The lottery is not popular with everyone, and many charities complain that they have received less money from the public since the lottery began.

The US does not have a national lottery but there are lotteries in most states. US lotteries date back to 1776 when the Continental Congress gave its approval for lottery tickets to be sold to raise money for the American Revolution. America's strong religious groups have always been against long-running lotteries, and lottery games did not become official until the 1970s.

MAGAZINES

In Britain and the US there are thousands of weekly and monthly magazines, many of them aimed at particular group of readers such as teenage girls, new parents, people interested in gardening or professional groups such as doctors. Among the best-seller are the **television guides**, such as *Radio Times* and the *TV Guide* in the US. Nearly as popular in both countries is the *Reader's Digest*, a collection of articles and short stories. Some magazines have a smaller readership but are considered important because they are respected and have a role in forming opinion. In the US there are several widely-read **news magazines** such as *Time, Newsweek* and *US News and World Report* and in Britain *The Economist, The New Statesman* and *The Spectator* are read for their political comment. The British satirical magazine *Private Eye* is very popular. Literary magazines include *The Times Literary Supplement, The London Review of Books* and *Granta* in Britain and *The New York Review of Books* in the US.

There are magazines with a **restricted circulation** (= available only to certain people) such as **in-flight magazines** published by airlines for people to read during a flight, and **store magazines** which customers can buy at a supermarket checkout. Special-interest clubs and societies publish magazines for their members.

General-interest magazines include titles such as *Vanity Fair* and *Harper's Magazine*, magazines about fashion, of which the most famous is *Vogue*, the home, gardens, food and family life. there are also magazines on DIY, cars, sport, travel, films and music. *Rolling Stone, Billboard* and *New Musical Express* are popular music magazines and *Sight and Sound* and *Empire* are specialist film magazines.

In Britain some football clubs produce a club magazine. **Fanzines** are cheap magazines produced by fans (= supporters) of a singer, group or sports club. **Gossip magazines**, also called **the gossips**, have stories about the rich and famous and these include *Hello!, Heat* and *National Enquirer*, which is sold in US supermarkets.

Some magazines are bought mainly for their **listings**, e.g. *Time Out*, which gives details of plays, concerts, etc. in London or New York. *Exchange & Mart* contains only advertisements of items for sale or wanted. More specialist magazines include *New Scientist, Scientific American, Nature* and *The Lancet*.

Traditionally there were more magazines for women than for men but there are now several fashion magazines for men such as *Esquire, GQ* and *Loaded. Vogue* and *Harpers & Queen* are expensive, high-quality fashion magazines for women. Other women's magazines have a more chatty style and contain stories, competitions, articles on fashion, make-up, food and fitness, and an agony (*AmE* advice) column (= replies to readers' letters on personal problems). One of the most popular magazines is *Cosmopolitan*, which also includes film and book reviews and advice on sex and careers. Other women's titles include *Good Housekeeping, She* and *Elle.*

Magazines can be bought in supermarkets and book-shops, at bookstalls and news stands, and in Britain at a newsagent's. some people take out a **subscription** (= make a yearly payment) to a magazine and have it sent by mail because it is cheaper.

Many people do not buy magazines but read **back copies** (= old issues) put out in their doctor's or dentist's waiting room or at the hairdresser's. libraries have a **periodicals** section containing newspapers and a selection of more serious magazines which people can read in the library.

Many magazines are also available on the Internet and some, especially academic journals, are available only on the Internet.

MARKETS

Most people in Britain and the US now buy their fresh food in **supermarkets** rather than traditional markets. But markets are still important to the life of many cities and towns and in recent years **farmers' markets**, where local farmers and others sell **produce** (= fruit, vegetables, etc.) or **home-made** foods directly to the public, have grown in popularity.

In Britain, most markets are held in the open air, in town squares or **market places**. They usually take place only on **market day**, the same day each week, and sometimes on Saturday, and the stalls are put up for each occasion. Towns where markets have traditionally been held are called **market towns**. Many still have a **market cross**, indicating where the market was originally held, or an old **market hall**, a covered area open at the sides. Today, markets sell flowers, fruit and vegetables, fish and meat, clothes and household goods.

Some towns and cities in Britain and the US have a covered or indoor market. These markets are usually open more days of the week than outdoor markets and operate more like shops. Markets that sell cheap second-hand goods, including clothes, jewellery and books are called **flea markets**. In the US, these are usually in buildings and open during normal shopping hours.

The word *market* is sometimes used in American English to refer to any food shop. A **hypermarket** or **superstore** in both Britain and the US is a very large store or supermarket.

MEALS

Americans and British people generally eat three meals a day though the names vary according to people's lifestyles and where they live.

The first meal of the day is **breakfast**. The traditional **full English breakfast** served in many British hotels may include fruit juice, cereal, bacon and eggs, often with sausages and tomatoes, toast and marmalade, and tea or coffee. Few people have time to prepare a cooked breakfast at home and most have only cereal and/or toast with tea or coffee. Others buy coffee and a pastry on their way to work.

The traditional **American breakfast** includes eggs, some kind of meat and toast. Eggs may be fried, 'over easy', 'over hard' or 'sunny side up', or boiled, poached or in an omelette (= beaten together and fried). The meat may be bacon or sausage. People who do not have time for a large meal have toast or cereal and coffee. It is common for Americans to eat breakfast in a restaurant. On Saturday and Sunday many people eat **brunch** late in the morning. This consists of

both breakfast and lunch dishes, including pancakes and waffles (= types of cooked batter) that are eaten with butter and maple syrup.

Lunch, which is eaten any time after midday, is the main meal of the day for some British people, though people out at work may have only sandwiches. Some people also refer to the midday meal as **dinner**. Most workers are allowed about an hour off work for it, called the **lunch hour**, and many also go shopping. Many schools offer a cooked lunch (**school lunch** or **school dinner**), though some students take a **packed lunch** of sandwiches, fruit, etc. **Sunday lunch** is special and is, for many families, the biggest meal of the week, consisting traditionally of roast meat and vegetables and a sweet course. In the US lunch is usually a quick meal, eaten around midday. Many workers have a half-hour break for lunch, and buy a sandwich from near their place of work. business people may sometimes eat a larger lunch and use the time to discuss business.

The main meal of the day for most people is the evening meal, called **supper**, **tea**, or **dinner**. It is usually a cooked meal with meat or fish or a salad, followed by a sweet course. in Britain younger children may have tea when they get home from school. *Tea*, meaning a main meal for adults, is the word used in some parts of Britain especially when the evening meal is eaten early. *Dinner* sounds more formal than *supper*, and guests generally receive invitations to 'dinner' rather than to 'supper'. In the US the evening meal is called *dinner* and is usually eaten around 6 or 6.30 p.m. In many families, both in Britain and in the US, family members eat at different times and rarely sit down at the table together.

Many people also eat **snacks** between meals. Most have tea or coffee at mid-morning, often called **coffee time** or the **coffee break**. In Britain in the past this was sometimes also called **elevenses**. In the afternoon many British people have a **tea break**. Some hotels serve **afternoon tea** which consists of tea or coffee and a choice of sandwiches and cakes. When on holiday/vacation people sometimes have a cream tea of scones, jam and cream. In addition many people eat chocolate bars, biscuits (*AmE* cookies) or crisps (*AmE* chips). Some British people have a snack, sometimes called supper, consisting of a milk drink and a biscuit before they go to bed. In the US children often have milk and cookies after school.

MEDALS

The highest **decoration** (= award) that can be awarded to a British person is the Victoria Cross (**VC**), which is given to members of the armed forces 'for conspicuous bravery in the face of the enemy'. It is a bronze cross decorated with a lion and the words 'For Valour', which is hung from a crimson ribbon. The Victoria Cross was introduced by Queen Victoria in 1856, during the Crimean War. It is reserved for acts of the greatest courage and is often awarded **posthumously** (= to a person who died as a result of their brave action).

The highest decoration for members of the public is the George Cross (**GC**), which is also awarded for bravery in great danger. It is a silver cross decorated with St George and the Dragon and the words 'For Gallantry', and is hung from a dark blue ribbon. It was introduced by George VI in 1940.

Other highly valued decorations include the Distinguished Service Cross, the Military Cross and the George Medal. There are also medals for acts of bravery by police officers and by members of the fire-fighting, lifeboat and coastguard services.

The US also has many medals for military and civilian achievements. The Medal of Honor (**MH**), often called the Congressional Medal of Honor, is the highest military award and is given for 'the risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty'. It is a star that hangs from a blue ribbon which is decorated with 13 white stars. It was created in 1862 during the Civil War, and by 2004 more than 3450 had been awarded. Another well-known military medal is the Purple Heart (**PH**), which is awarded to Americans wounded in wars. George Washington introduced it in 1782 as the Badge of Military Merit, and the medal today has a ribbon above a purple heart with Washington's image on it. Other important military awards include the Distinguished Service Cross and the Bronze Star.

The highest US civilian award is the Presidential Medal of Freedom, established in 1945 as the Medal of Freedom. It was originally for military service, but President Kennedy changed this and also its name. the **Congressional Gold Medal** is also for civilians. The first was awarded in 1776 to George Washington; in 1003 one was awarded to the

British Prime Minister, Tony Blair. The **Carnegie Medal**, another honour for civilians, is given to people who have saved, or tried to save, somebody's life. On the medal is a sentence from the Bible: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'

MIDDLE ENGLISH

From the 12th century Middle English replaced Norman French as the most widely spoken language in England but, until the 12th century, French and Latin were used in government and law, and by writers of literature. Middle English developed from Old English, the language used in England before the Norman Conquest and spoken by the common people throughout the Norman period.

By the time English reappeared as a literary language it had gone through various changes. The grammar was simpler, with fewer inflections, and the vocabulary had gained many French and Latin words. Some Old English words had disappeared, while others remained beside those of French or Latin origin, e.g. *freedom* and *liberty*. Compared with Old English, many more words of Middle English can be understood by speakers of modern English. However, the range of styles and spellings in surviving literature suggest that there was no single way of writing Middle English. The ancient letters, called *runes*, found in Old English soon ceased to be used, with only the thorn (*p*) surviving into the 15th century. There wuere also changes to pronunciation, especially the pronunciation of vowels. Long, stressed vowels were formerly pronounced similarly to those in other European languages, for example the 'I' in *fine* was originally pronounced /i:/ but in late Middle English it became / aI /. This change came to be known as the **great vowel shift** and was a significant feature in the development of modern English.

The most important author who wrote in Middle English was Geoffrey Chaucer. His most famous work, partly in verse and partly in prose, is *The Canterbury Tales* (c. 1378) in which he introduces a varied group of people on a pilgrimage to Canterbury. The following passage introduces the Miller:

The Miller was a stout carl, for the nones,
Ful big he was of braun, and eek of bones;
That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,
At wrestling he wolde have alwey the ram.
He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,
Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre,
Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.

(The miller was a stout ruffian, believe me, very muscular and big-boned. That was well-tested because he towered over all present and in wrestling he would always win the ram. He was a short-necked, broad, thickset fellow and there was no door he couldn't take off its hinge or break with his head at a run.)

Other famous Middle English works include William Langland's *Piers Plowman*, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a poem by an unknown author about the adventures of one of King Arthur's knights.

The first English printing press was set up in London by William Caxton in 1476. One of the earliest books he printed was *The Canterbury Tales*. Caxton printed over 100 books, many of them by English authors and so helped spread the literature of the period among a greater number of people.

MONEY

The US **dollar** is made up of 100 cents. The Department of the Treasury prints **bills** (= paper money) in various **denominations** (= values): $1, $2, $5, $10, $20, $50 and $100. US bulls are all the same size, whatever their value, and measure about 2x6 inches/6.5x15.5 centimetres. All are green and are sometimes called **greenbacks**. On the front, each has a picture of a famous American. The **dollar bill**, for instance, shows George Washington, the first US president. An informal name for dollars is **bucks**, because in the early period of US history people traded the skins of bucks (= deer) and prices would sometimes be given as a number of buckskins. Buck refers to the dollar itself, and not to the bill. So although you can say 'He earns 500 bucks a week', you have to say 'If I give you four quarters could you give me a dollar bill?'

The Treasury also makes US coins: **pennies** which are worth .01 of a dollar, **nickels** (.05), **dimes** (.10) and **quarters** (.25). there are also **half-dollars** (.50) and **silver dollars** but these are not often seen. Pennies have a dark brown colour; all the other coins have a silver appearance.

When you write an amount in figures the **dollar sign** ($) goes to the left of the amount and a decimal point (.) is placed between the dollars and the **cents** (= hundredths of a dollar). If the amount is less than one dollar, the **cent sign** (**¢**) is put after the numbers. So you write $5; $5.62 and 62**¢**.

Britain's currency is the **pound sterling**, written as **£** before a figure. A pound consists of 100 **pence**, written as **p** with figures. Pound coins are round and gold-coloured. They have the Queen's head on one side and one of four designs, English, Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish, on the other. The £2 coin is silver-coloured with a gold edge. Coins of lower value are the silver-coloured 50p, 20p, 10p and 5p **pieces**, and the copper-coloured 2p and 1p pieces. All are round, except for the 50p and 20p pieces which have seven curved sides. Coins are made at the Royal mint. Paper **notes** (not bills), which have the Queen's head on one side and a famous person, e.g. Charles Dickens, on the other, are worth £5, £10, £20 or £50.

A pound is informally called a **quid**, a £5 note is a **fiver**, a £10 note is a **tenner**. Scottish **banknotes** have their own designs. They can be used anywhere in Britain, though shops can legally refuse to accept them. To prevent people **forging** (= making their own) paper money, designs are complicated and difficult to copy. To check that a note is genuine, a shop assistant may hold it up to the light to see if it has a narrow silver thread running through it.

The **decimal system** now in use in Britain replaced the old **pounds**, **shilling** and **pence**, or LSD system in 1971. Formerly British money was in pounds, shillings and pence. There were 12 pence or **pennies** in a **shilling**, and 20 shillings in a pound. The old coins included the **farthing** (= a quarter of a penny) and the **half-crown** (= two shillings and sixpence). There were notes for 10 shillings, £1 and £5.

Gold **guinea** coins were used in the 18th century and were worth 21 shillings. Until 1971 prices were often set in guineas instead of pounds for luxury items, such as antiques and jewellery, for the fees of doctors, lawyers, etc., and at auctions, though the guinea coin had long since gone **out of circulation**. Some race-horses are still auctioned in guineas.

On 1 January 1999 the euro system was introduced in 11 countries of the European Union. Britain chose not to be part of this first group and not date was fixed for Britain to start using the euro. However, many British businesses have euro bank accounts so as to be able to pay for goods and be paid in euros and many shops in Britain accept payment in euros.

MORTGAGES

Houses are expensive to buy and few people have enough money of their own. Most people have to **take out a mortgage**, a type of loan. In Britain people usually get a mortgage from a **bank** or a building society; in the US they get one from a bank or a savings and loan association. People usually **put down a deposit** (= pay a percentage of the price of the property) and borrow the rest, although some lenders will lend up to 100% of the amount needed. Mortgages are paid back in monthly payments over a period ranging from 15 to 30 years. The person borrowing the money has to pay **interest** on the loan, so that the final amount paid is considerably more than the amount of the loan itself. The **security** for the loan is the house itself. If a borrower fails to **keep up payments**, the house may be **repossessed** by the lender and sold so that they can get their money back.

There are different types of mortgages. With a **fixed-rate mortgage**, the amount of interest remains at a particular level and the monthly payments do not change. This type of mortgage is more popular in the US than in Britain, where **variable-rate mortgages** (*AmE* usually **adjustable-rate mortgages**) are more common. With a variable-rate mortgage, the rate of interest can increase or decrease depending on the state of the economy. Another type of mortgage in Britain is the **endowment mortgage**: borrowers pay interest on the loan to the bank or building society and a fixed sum towards an endowment policy, a type of insurance policy which should pay a sum of money that will be used to repay the loan. Many people with endowment mortgages have suffered because the growth of the policy was not enough to repay the loan and they are no longer sold.

For many people, paying back a mortgage is their greatest financial burden. People talk of being 'mortgaged up to the hilt', meaning that their mortgage payments leave them with little money for anything else. It is possible to take out a **second mortgage** on a house. Another practice, called **remortgaging** (*AmE* **refinancing**) involves changing an

existing mortgage to a different type offered by the lender or replacing it with a mortgage from another lender, usually in order to obtain a lower rate of interest.

House prices sometimes rise very fast and then fall again. Some people who buy a house when prices are high can become victims of **negative equity**. *Equity* means the part of the value of a house that the buyer owns, an *negative equity* means a situation in which the value of a house falls below the amount borrowed as a mortgage. This makes it impossible to sell the house without being left with debt.

MUSEUMS

Many people have a hobby that involves collecting things, e.g. stamps, postcards or antiques. In the 18th and 19th centuries wealthy people travelled and collected plants, animal skins, historical objects and works of art. They kept their collection at home until it got too big or until they died, and then it was given to a museum. The 80000 objects collected by Sir Hans Sloane, for example, formed the core collection of the British Museum which opened in 1759.

The parts of a museum open to the public are called **galleries** or **rooms**. Often, only a small proportion of a museum's collection is on display. Most of it is stored away or used for research. A person in charge of a department of a museum is called a **keeper**. Museum staff involved in the care and conservation of items are sometimes called **curators**.

Many museums are lively places and they attract a lot of visitors. As well as looking at **exhibits**, visitors can play with computer simulations and imagine themselves living at a different time in history or walking through a rainforest. At the Jorvik Centre in York, the city's Viking settlement is recreated, and people experience the sights, sounds and smells of the old town. Historical accuracy is important but so also is entertainment. Museums must compete for people's leisure time and money with other amusements. Most museums also welcome school groups and arrange special activities for children.

In Britain, the largest museums are the British Museum, the Science Museum, the Natural History Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Museums outside London also cover every subject and period. Homes of famous people sometimes become museums, such as the house where Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon.

The first public museum in the US was the Charlestown Museum in South Carolina, founded in 1773. The largest is the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, a group of 14 museums. The most popular of these is the National Air and Space Museum. Some US museums are art museums. Many describe a period of history. In Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, for example, a museum explains the Civil War and gives details of the battle of Gettysburg. Halls of Fame are museums that honour people who have been outstanding in a certain field, e.g. baseball or rock music.

National museums receive money from the government but not enough to cover their costs. Museums usually have a shop selling books, postcards and gifts, and often a café. Their profits help to fund the museum. Some museums have the support of a commercial sponsor. In small museums only a few people have paid jobs, and the rest are volunteers, called **docents** in the US, who lead tours and answer visitors' questions.

NAMES

Apart from their surname or last name, most British and American children are given two personal names by their parents, a **first name** and a **middle name**. These names are sometimes called **Christian** names or **given** name. Some people have only one given name, a few have three or none. Friends and members of a family who are of similar age usually call one another by their first names. In some families young people now also call their aunts and uncles are even their parents by their first names. Outside the family, the expression *be on first name terms* suggests that the people concerned have a friendly, informal relationship.

When writing their name Americans commonly give their first name and their **middle initial**, e.g. *George M Cohan*. Both given names are used in full only on formal occasions, e.g. when people get married. In Britain many people **sign their name** on forms etc. using the initials of both their given names and their surname, e.g. *J E Brooks*, but may write *Joanna Brooks* at the end of a letter. The **full name** (= all given names and surname) is usually only required on official forms.

Parents usually decide on given names for their children before they are born. In some families the oldest boy is given the same name as his father. In the US the word **junior** or **senior**, or a number, is added after the name and surname to

make it clear which person is being referred to. For example, the son of *William Jones Sr* (Senior) would be called *William Jones Jr* (Junior), and his son would be called *William Jones III* ('William Jones the third').
Many popular names come from the Bible, e.g. *Jacob, Joshua, Matthew, Mary, Rebecca* and *Sarah*, though this does not imply that the people who choose them are religious. Other people give their children the name of somebody they admire, such as a famous sports personality, or a film or pop star. In Britain the name *William* and *Harry* became common again after the sons of Prince Charles were given these names. In the US *Chelsea* was not a common name for a girl until President Bill Clinton's daughter Chelsea came to public attention.
Names such as *David, Michael, Paul* and *Robert* for boys and *Catherine, Elizabeth* and *Jane* for girls remain popular for many years. Others, e.g. *Darrell, Darren, Wayne, Chloe, Jade* and *Zara*, are fashionable for only a short period. Names such as *Albert, Herbert, Wilfrid, Doris, Gladys* and *Joyce* are now out of fashion and are found mainly among older people. Some older names come back into fashion and there are now many young women called *Amy, Emma, Harriet, Laura* and *Sophie.* The birth announcements columns in newspapers give an indication of the names which are currently popular. In Britain these have included *Jack, Joshua* and *Thomas* for boys and *Emily, Ellie* and *Chloe* for girls and in the US *Jacob, Michael* and *Joshua* for boys and *Emily, Emma* and *Madison* for girls.
People from Wales, Scotland or Ireland, or those who have a cultural background from outside Britain, may choose from an additional set of names. In the US Jews, African Americans or people of Latin American origin may also choose different names.

NATIONAL ANTHEMS

Britain's official national anthem is *God Save the Queen* (or *God Save the King* if the ruler is a man). It is not known who wrote the words, but it seems that the song, said to be the oldest national anthem in the world, was written many years before it was chosen as an official national song in the 18th century. It was first performed in public in 1745, during the Jacobite Rebellion, to a musical arrangement by Thomas Arne (1710-78). The first verse is played or sung on formal occasions, especially if the Queen or another member of the royal family is present:
God save our gracious Queen,
Long live our noble Queen,
God save the Queen.
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the Queen.
Everybody stands while it is being played, as a mark of respect.
Many British people think *God Save the Queen* is too slow and solemn, and would prefer a more lively national song such as *Land of Hope and Glory* or *Rule, Britainia!* Both express pride in Britain's achievements but were perhaps more appropriate in the days when Britain had an empire.
Wales has its own national anthem, *Hen Wlad fy Nhadau* (*Land of My Fathers*). It celebrates the survival of Welsh traditions, language and scenery and is often sung at concerts and at major sports events in which Wales is taking part.
Scotland does not have an official national anthem, though *Scotland the Brave* is often sung at public gatherings. *The Flower of Scotland* is played and sung as an anthem before international Rugby games in which the Scottish team is playing.
The national anthem of the US is *The Star-Spangled Banner,* referring to the US flag. The words were written in 1814 and set to the music of a popular song. It became the national anthem in 1931. Every American knows the story of how *The Star-Spangled Banner* was written during a war between the US and Britain. Its author, Frances Scott Key, was a prisoner on a British ship off the coast of Baltimore. From these he could watch the battle for control of Fort McHenry. The song tells how he watched as the sun went down. He could no longer see the fighting, but since bombs were still exploding he knew that the British had not won. When the morning came he could see the American flag still flying over the fort.

The Star-Spangled Banner is played at official ceremonies and sung at official ceremonies and sung at public events. On these occasions everyone present is expected to stand up and sing. Although there are three verses only the first is normally used:

‘’Oh, say, can you see by the dawn’s early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight’s last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, thro’s the perilous fight,
O’er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets’ red glare, the bombs bursting in art,
Gave proof thro’ the night that our flag was till there.
Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O’er the land of the free and home of the brave?”.

NATIONAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS

The idea of **national parks** began in the US, which now has 55 of them, covering 124000 square miles/338000 square kilometers. The great majority are in western states. The **National Park Service** is responsible for protecting the natural state of the parks for the benefit of the public. America’s parks are so popular that they are being harmed by the number of visitors and their cars. To try to stop this, the National Park Service encourages the development of public transport in the park.

The oldest national park in the world is Yellowstone National Park, established in 1872. The largest US park is Wrangell St Elias in Alaska with 12000 square miles/34000 square kilometers. It has few visitors because it is very remote. The most popular park is the Great Smoky Mountains. Many parks are well known for some special feature, such as the Grand Canyon, the Everglades and the Petrified Forest.

There are many other sites run by the National Park Service. One of the most visited areas is the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia and North Carolina which had 21 million visitors in 2002. (Parkways are roads with parkland either side.). **national recreation areas** such as the Golden Gate in California also receive many visitors. Most have water sports and other activities. **National preserves** are similar to national parks but are not as well protected. Companies can even search for oil and gas on them. Ten of the 17 national preserves are in Alaska, including the oldest, Denali, established in 1917.

The US Bureau of Land Management is in charge of many of the **wilderness areas** created by Congress. Visitors can camp in wilderness areas if they follow the ‘leave no trace’ policy. Native Americans are allowed to use them for religious ceremonies.

National parks are also important as recreation areas in Britain. The land is not in national ownership but is mostly owned by farmers and other private landowners. The first two to be established were the Lake District and the Peak District in 1951 and there are now 15 national parks, which attract many thousands of visitors each year. The New Forest and the South Downs are the most recent additions to the list. The aim is to keep the National Parks as far as possible in their natural state, while balancing the different needs of agriculture, industry, housing and tourism. Many of the people who live in national parks depend on tourists for their living and are used to crowded roads in summer. A more serious problem is that some visitors who go regularly to a national park buy cottages in the area as second homes. This means there is less property for local people to buy and many are forced to move.

Each park is managed by a National Park Authority. The government provides 75% of the money to run the parks. National Park Authorities control development within each park, look after public footpaths and run information and study centres. Some of the land in national parks is owned by the National Trust but a lot is privately owned.

Some other areas, such as the Gower Peninsula and the Malverns, are officially protected as **areas of outstanding natural beauty** (**AONBs**). They tend to be less developed than national parks but still attract many visitors. There are 41 AONBs in England and Wales, and another nine in Northern Ireland. Scotland has 40 national scenic areas, including the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond.

NATIONAL SERVICE

Conscription (= compulsory service in the armed forces) was introduced in Britain in World War I and again in 1939. It continued long after the end of World War II under the name **national service**. During wartime, all men between the ages of 18 and 41 were likely to be **called up** to join the armed forced, unless they were medically unfit or were working in a **reserved occupation**. Many women were called up to serve in industry or work on farms as 'land girls'. **Conscientious objectors** (= people who did not want to join the armed forced for moral or religious reasons) were at first the target of pubic insults, but later established a role for themselves in caring for the wounded.

After 1948 men between the ages of 19 and 25 were expected to serve 21 months (later increased to two years) in the services, and were often based outside Britain. This was very unpopular with most young men, and national service was ended in 1960. Since then, Britain has depended on **volunteers** to join the services and runs recruiting offices in many towns. Some young people join an **Officers' Training Corps** while at school or university, or become members of the Territorial Army. From time to time politicians and others call for national service to be introduced again, believing that military life is a good way to encourage discipline among young people.

In the US national service is called **selective service** or conscription, but its popular name is **the draft**. It was first introduced during the Civil War by both the North and the Confederate States, and was very unpopular. One reason for this was that anyone could avoid service if he paid money ($300 in the North), or hired somebody to replace him. This led to **draft riots** by poor people in New York City, and almost 1000 African Americans and others were killed.

The US next used conscription during World War I. some called it 'another name for slavery', but 10 million men put their names on the draft list. America's first conscription in peacetime began in 1940 when Europe was at war. A man could receive an **exemption** if he was in the '4-F' group for physical or mental reasons, or had an important job. There were also some conscientious objectors who had to take jobs provided by the government.

The draft was stopped in 1946 but begun again a year later, and men aged 18-25 had to serve 21 months. This supplied soldiers for the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Many young men were unwilling to fight in Vietnam and some tried to stay in college and university where they could have a '2-S deferment' from the war. **Draft dodgers** sometimes burned their **draft cards** or went abroad. Conscription was finally ended in 1973, and two years later President Ford offered to forgive draft dodgers, but only 22000 of the 125000 accepted. In 1977 President Carter officially forgave all of them, provided that they had not committed acts of violence. Although the draft has ended, all men must put their names on the draft list when they become 18 in case there is a national emergency.

NATIONAL TRAILS

The British National Trails form a network of over 2500 miles/4000 kilometres of long-distance paths for walkers and cyclists across England and Wales. There are 15 of them managed by the Countryside Agency in England and the Countryside Council for Wales.

Keen walkers can spend their holiday/vacation walking a National Trail. Leaflets and books describe the trail and the facilities available nearby. People doing long-distance walks camp out overnight or stay in bed-and-breakfast accommodation in nearby villages.

The first National Trail, the Pennine Way, which goes from Edale in Derbyshire to the Scottish border, was established in 1965 and was immediately popular. Other routes include the Pembrokeshire Coast Path, Offa's Dyke Path, the South-west Coast Path, and the West Highland Way. The use of the paths by many thousands of walkers, and now also people riding mountain bikes, has led to concern about vegetation being damaged or destroyed, and wide cars (= areas of bare rock or soil) being left on hillsides.

In the US there are 19 National Trails. Because they are very long, few people walk their entire length.

The US National Park Service is in charge of the trails and works with local organizations to keep them in good condition. There 8 **national scenic trails** of which the Appalachian Trail is the best known and most popular. It was completed in 1937 and became an official trail in 1969. It begins at Mount Katahdin in Maine and ends at Springer Mountain in Georgia, running more than 2000 miles/3218 kolometres and through 12 states over the tops of the Appalachian Mountains. Other National Trails include the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail running from the Canadian border over the Rocky Mountains south to the Mexican border, and the Natchez Trace from Mississippi

through Alabama to Tennessee. The Trace is in fact a road for cars and bicycles, but people can walk on some of the old Native American paths from which it was developed.
There are 11 **national historic trails**, including the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail from Illinois to Utah which connects places associated with the American Revolution. The Trail of Tears runs 2000 miles/32000 kilometres on land and over water following the route used by Cherokee Native Americans when they were forced to move west.

NATIVE AMERICAN
A member of one of the groups of people who were living in North America before Europeans reached the continent. For a long time white people called them **Indians** because when Christopher Columbus first arrived in America, he thought he had reached India. Today, many people do not like this name and prefer to use the term Native American or **American Indian**. Before Europeans arrived in North America there were many **tribes** who lived by hunting animals and gathering plants, and who moved from one place to another according to the season. When Europeans first settled after 1607, Native Americans were quite positive about them and were happy to have the many new things they brought. However, the settlers also introduced new diseases that Native Americans had no resistance to, and they wanted to take their land. To Native Americans the idea of owning land was unknown, but the settlers assumed that they would take control of North America and used all means to do this. Gradually the Native Americans were forced to move to new areas very different from ones they were used to. Before the Europeans arrived there were over 300 Native American languages, some of which have now died out and many of those remaining are only spoken by a few older people. Other languages, like Cherokee, are more likely spoken. According to the **Bureau of Indian Affairs**, there are now about 550 tribes including well-known groups like the Navajo and the Sioux. In 2000 there were about 1.9 million Native Americans living in the US, some of them on **reservations**, areas of land that the government has allowed them to keep as their own. Away from the reservations many Native Americans find that their culture is very different from that of white people and have difficulty adapting.

NATURE RESERVES
Nature **conservation areas** are areas of the countryside which have special protection under law because they have interesting or unusual wild plants or animals in them.
In Britain there are about 400 **national nature reserves** and 9000 **local nature reserves** and **marine nature reserves**. Many contain species that are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. In addition, some relatively small pieces of land get special protection as **sites of special scientific interest** (**SSSIs**) because rare or **endangered** plants or animals are to be found there, or because they have special geological (= rock) features. There are over 6000 SSSIs in Britain, many of which are not open to the public. In theory, SSSIs are safe from the threat of commercial development, but this is not always the case in fact. Despite protests, several SSSIs have been lost in recent years to make way for new roads.
Nature conservation areas in Britain are managed by English Nature, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Countryside Council for Wales and the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland, with the help of local naturalists' trusts and natural history societies.
The US also has many **nature preserves**. People can visit them for enjoyment or to do scientific research, but must stay on paths and cannot disturb or remove anything. They are not allowed to drive vehicles, camp, hunt or start fires. Indiana has 176 nature preserves, more than 23000 acres (9300 hectares) in total. A popular type of nature preserve is the **wildlife refuge**, such as Lake Woodruff Natural Wildlife Refuge in Florida, where John James Audubon once watched and drew birds.
There are also many national forests, rivers and seashores, and scenic trails. Many **national monuments** are also natural areas. They include the Great Sand Dunes in Colorado, Lava Beds in California and Organ Pipe Cactus in Arizona. The US National Park Services is in charge of all of these and cares for the plants, animals and scenery so that they can be enjoyed by the public.

NEW YORK

There is a great sense of excitement in New York and it has a reputation for being 'the city that never sleeps'. The 'Big Apple', as it is sometimes called, feels alive, fast and at the centre of everything, with cars hooting, yellow taxis weaving through the traffic, brightly lit theatres, and restaurants busy late into the night. The city offers enormous contrasts. Some of the most expensive homes in the world are in New York City, but on the pavements outside are poor people without a home. It is possible to pay hundreds of dollars for a meal in a restaurant, or eat good, filling food for a couple of dollars from a street vendor.

Many Americans have never been to New York, but everyone knows something about the city. They are familiar with the tall Manhattan skyline, Times Square with its brightly lit advertisements, Madison Square Gardens, where many sports events take place, Wall Street, its financial heart, the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, where many of their ancestors first arrived in the US and Ground Zero, where the development of the site is seen as symbol of New Yorkers' courage and ability to overcome tragedy.

New York was founded in 1624 by the Dutch, who called it New Amsterdam. Its Dutch origins can be seen in the names of old New York families like Stuyvesant and Vanderbilt, and in place names such as Brooklyn (originally Breukelen) and Harlem. In 1664 the English gained control and changed the name to New York. In 189 several towns were combined to make Greater New York City, which became the second largest city in the world, after London, though at the time part of it consisted of farms. Soon after, many new buildings were constructed, and in 1904 the New York subway was opened.

Many immigrants to the US stayed in New York, giving the city the variety of cultures it has today. During the 1920s, when alcohol was banned, New York had many speakeasies (= bars serving alcohol), which were illegal but very popular. This was also the time of the Harlem Renaissance, when Harlem became a centre for African American arts and culture. In the latter half of the 20th century wealthy people began moving out to the suburbs. Today there are about 8 million people in New York City and 19 million in the state.

New Yorkers speak in a very direct way which can seem rude to people from other parts of the US. Some have little patience with visitors who are not used to the fast pace of the city. But for many visitors, meeting real, rude New Yorkers is part of the attraction of going to the city.

NEWSPAPERS

Many British families buy a **national** or **local** newspaper every day. Some have it delivered to their home buy a **paper boy** or **paper girl**; others buy it from a **newsagent** (= a shop that sells newspapers, magazines, sweets, etc.) or a **bookstall**. Some people read a newspaper **online**. National **dailies** are published each morning except Sunday. Competition between them is fierce. Local daily papers, which are written for people in a particular city or region, are sometimes published in the morning but more often in the early evening.

The US has only one national newspapers, *USA Today*. The rest are local. A few newspapers from large cities, such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, are read all over the country. The *International Herald Tribune* is published outside the US and is read by Americans abroad. Many Americans **subscribe** to a newspaper which is delivered to their house. This costs less than buying it in a shop. Papers can also be bought in bookshops and supermarkets and most newspapers have online versions.

In Britain the newspaper industry is often called Fleet Street, the name of the street in central London where many newspapers used to have their offices. Britain has two kinds of national newspaper: the **quality papers** and the tabloids. The qualities were also called the broadsheets because they were printed on large pages, but are now often in tabloid size which is half the size of a broadsheet. They report national and international news and are serious in tone. They have **editorials** which comment on important issues and reflect the political views of the paper's **editor**. They also contain financial and sports news, **features** (= articles), **obituaries** (= life histories of famous people who have just died), **listings** of television and radio programmes, theatre and cinema shows, a crossword, comic strips, advertisements and the weather forecast.

The main quality dailies are *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*, which support the political right, *The Guardian*, which is on the political left, *The Independent* and *The Financial Times*. People choose a paper that reflects their own

political opinion. Sunday papers include *The Sunday Times, The Observer* and *The independent on Sunday*. The Sunday and Saturday editions of papers have more pages than the dailies, **supplements** (= extra sections) on, for example, motoring and the arts, and a colour magazine.

The tabloids report news in less depth. They concentrate on **human-interest stories** (= stories about people), and often discuss the personal lives of famous people. People who disapprove of the tabloids call them **the gutter press**. The most popular are *The Sun, The Mirror, The Express* and *The Daily Mail*. *The News of the World*, a Sunday tabloid, sells more copies than any other newspaper in Britain.

There are also local papers, many of which are **weeklies** (= published once a week). They contain news of local events and sport, carry advertisements for local business, and give details of houses, cars and other items for sale. Some are paid for by the advertisements they contain and are delivered free to people's homes. Some cities also have a daily paper published in the evening, for example, *the Evening Standard* in London.

A daily newspaper from a medium-sized US city has between 50 and 75 pages, divided into different sections. The most important stories are printed on the front page, which usually has the beginnings of four or five articles, and colour photographs. The articles continue inside. The rest of the first section contains news stories, an **opinion page** with editorials, and **letters to the editor**, written by people who read the paper. Another section contains local news. The sport section is near the end of the paper, with the features section. This contains comics and also **advice column**, such as Dear Abby. There are advertisements throughout the paper.

Tabloids contain articles about famous people but do not report the news. They are displayed in supermarkets, and many people read them while they are waiting to pay.

On Sundays newspapers are thicker. There are usually fewer news stories but more articles analyzing the news of the past week and many more features, including a colour section of comics.

Newspapers get material from several sources. **Staff reporters** write about national or local news. Major newspapers also have their own **foreign correspondents** throughout the world. Others get foreign news from **press agencies** or **wire services**, such as Associated Press or Reuters. Some papers have their own **features writes**. In the US features are usually **syndicated**, which means that one newspaper in each area can buy the right to print them. The editor decides what stories to include each day but the **publisher** or owner has control over general policy. Newspaper owners are very powerful and are sometimes called **press barons**. The most famous of these is Rupert Murdoch.

NICKNAMES

Nicknames are informal, sometimes humorous names that are based on a person's real name or on an obvious characteristic or habit. Nicknames were in use before surnames became widespread in the 13th century and were a means of identifying a person. Some nicknames, such as 'Russell' meaning 'red-haired' and 'Brown' referring to brown hair or skin, later developed into surnames.

Nicknames reduce the level of formality in a relationship and may suggest a close friendship. Many people are given a nickname while they are still children and may keep it throughout their life, whether they like the name or not. Nicknames may also be given to politicians and other public figures, especially by the press, such as the name 'Dubya' often used for George W Bush. This makes famous people seem more ordinary, and also leads to shorter, eye-catching headlines.

There are several kinds of nickname in common use. The most popular are **short forms**, shortened versions of a person's first name. some common short forms include: Bob or Rob for Robert, Ted or Ed for Edward, Dick or Rick for Richard, Meg or Maggie for Margaret, Beth, Liz or Lizzie for Elizabeth, and Kathy, Kate or Katie for Katherine.

Nicknames may also be derived from surnames. Nicknames for famous people that have been much used by the British media include 'Fergie' for Alex Ferguson and 'Becks' for David Beckham. 'Madge' is used for the singer Madonna.

Other nicknames, like the original ones, reflect a personal characteristic. 'Ginger' is often used for people with red hair. 'Shorty', or even teasingly 'Lofty', is used for short people. Names like 'Fatty', 'Tubby' or 'Skinny' that refer to a person's weight are rude and generally used only as insults. Nicknames based on skin colour are offensive and should not be used. 'Brains' is used for somebody who is very intelligent, and 'Tiger' for someone who is brave or

aggressive. The Duke of Wellington is sometimes called 'The Iron Duke' and Margaret Thatcher was known as 'The Iron Lady' because of her strength and determination. These more descriptive nicknames are less common in the US.
Nicknames based on a person's race or country can still be heard but are often highly offensive. In England, for instance, men from Scotland used to be addressed as 'Jock' or 'Mac', people from Ireland were 'Paddy' or 'Mick', and people from Wales 'Dai' or 'Taffy'. Members of immigrant groups in both Britain and the US have had to suffer rude names from the native or mainstream population. Nicknames for people in foreign countries are also usually offensive, e.g. 'Yanks' or 'Yankees' for Americans, 'Frogs' for French, and 'Krauts' for Germans.
The British have nicknames for many other things: a 'Roller' is a Roll-Royce car and 'Marks and Sparks' is Marks and Spencers. 'The Hammers' and 'Spurs' are both football teams, West Ham United and Tottenham Hotspur. In the US all states have nicknames: California is 'The Golden State', Texas is 'The Lone Star State', and Wyoming is 'The Equality State'.

NIGHTLIFE

What people do in the evening depends very much on where they live as well as on their tastes. In Britain Friday and Saturday evenings in most city centres are busy, with crowds of mainly young people moving between cinemas, pubs, clubs and wine bars. In the country people often go to the local pub but if they want more choice of entertainment they have to travel to a town. Similarly in the US, people living in New York City have very different possibilities for a good night out compared with those living in small towns.
Pubs in Britain attract a wide range of age groups. Older people tend to choose quieter pubs where conversation is easier than in the pubs popular among younger people, where loud music is played. The main activity is drinking, usually beer or lager. People have to be over 18 to drink alcohol. Some pubs also have live music. **Pub crawls**, in which several pubs are visited in one evening, are popular with younger people. Many pubs close at 11 p.m. and after this people may look for something to eat or go to a **club**.
Wine bars and **cocktail bars** are usually smarter than pubs and more expensive. In the US **bars** range from those popular with students, where the beer is cheap, to those in hotels where customers must dress smartly. **Bartenders** make hundreds of different drinks by combining various kinds of alcohol. The British custom of buying a round, when each person in a group takes a turn to buy a drink for everyone else, it not always the rule in the US. Sometimes each person pays for his or her own drinks, or a group might **run a tab** (= the bartender writes down what they have) and then everyone pays part of the bill when they leave. Some bars provide free snacks, especially during **happy hour** (= a time around 5 p.m. when drinks cost less). In the US people must be over 21 to drink alcohol. There are special alcohol-free bars for teenagers.
A popular activity among young people is to **go clubbing**, i.e. go to clubs where they can drink and dance. There is a charge for admission and drinks are usually more expensive than in pubs. Cities like New York and London are famous for their clubs. The music is usually modern dance music but some play soul, jazz or pop.
People living in or near a city or town can go to the **cinema** (*AmE* **movie theater**) or **theatre** or to a concert. The biggest concert venues in Britain include the Albert Hall in London and the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. In the US people occasionally go to **dinner theater**: they sit at tables in a theatre for a meal and stay there afterwards to watch a play. Other places to go include comedy clubs, where comedians perform live, and sports events.
Gambling is illegal in some parts of the US but in Las Vegas and Atlantic City there are many casinos where people can gamble. Some communities run **bingo** games for low stakes (= bets). In Britain there are casinos and bingo is also popular.
Going out for dinner in a restaurant is a very popular activity. Many people also enjoy entertaining at home. They may have a **dinner party** for a few friends or a **party** with drinks and snacks to which many people are invited.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland, with its population of about 1.6 million, is a **province** of the United Kingdom. It is made up of six counties and the capital is Belfast. Once famous for its textile and shipbuilding industries, it is now a popular tourist destination, with its beautiful scenery. Unfortunately, Northern Ireland is still best known for the years of conflict called 'The Troubles', in which more than 3000 people have died.

THE TROUBLES

Since the late 1960's, **paramilitary groups** (= illegal groups organized like armies) have been fighting each other, the police and the British army. **Republicans** (or **Nationalists**) are mainly Roman Catholic. They do not accept the term 'Northern Ireland', preferring 'the North of Ireland' or 'the Six Counties', and want to be part of the Republic of Ireland. The biggest Republican paramilitary group is the **IRA**. **Loyalists** (or **Unionists**) come from a Protestant background, and want Northern Ireland (which they often call 'Ulster') to remain part of the United Kingdom. Many Loyalists are members of the **Orange Order**. The biggest Loyalist paramilitary groups are the **UVF** and the **UDA**.

HISTORY

The relationship between Ireland and Great Britain has been marked by violent conflict for 800 years. During the 17th century, Protestants from England and Scotland took control of **Ulster** (= the northern nine counties of Ireland) by setting up farms on land that had belonged to Irish Roman Catholics. By the late 19th century, Protestants made up approximately two-thirds of the population. They felt strong ties to Britain, and when Ireland won its independence in 1921, six counties voted to remain part of the United Kingdom and be governed by the Parliament of Northern Ireland at **Stormont Castle**.

The way Northern Ireland was governed favoured the Protestants majority, and in the late 1960's Catholics campaigned against inequalities in areas such as employment, housing and voting rights. **Civil rights protests** led to violent confrontations between Republicans and Loyalists. The **RUC** (the mostly Protestant police force) intervened which led the Prime Minister to call in the British Army to protect Catholics but the troops soon became the target of IRA attacks.

In 1971 the British government introduced **internment** (= imprisonment without trial) which led to more violence. In 1972, the year of **Bloody Sunday**, **direct rule** from London was introduced and the Stormont parliament abandoned. Paramilitaries became involved in organized crime, and the police and the army were accused of cooperating with Loyalists.

CEASEFIRES

In 1997, after many attempt to stop the violence, the paramilitaries announced ceasefires. In 1998, after negotiations with the Irish and British governments, the political leaders signed the **Good Friday Agreement**. This created a **Northern Ireland Assembly** based at Stormont.

A Nationalist-Unionist coalition government took power in 1999, but has been suspended several times. According to the Agreement, the IRA had to give up all its weapons but by late 2002 it still had not done so. Many Loyalists believe the IRA will not give up its weapons and will restart its campaign of violence if it does not achieve its goal, the end of British rule in Ireland. Republicans feel that the political system and the police force are still biased against Catholics. They also suspect that Loyalists do not want to share government with them.

Despite the ceasefires, paramilitaries remain active and are involved in organized crime. In other ways, however, the quality of life in Northern Ireland has improved. Companies have begun to invest. New shops, restaurants and bars have opened, and Belfast has become much more cosmopolitan, mainly as a result of the growth in tourism. The province has the youngest population in the UK and the **sectarian divide** is less strong amongst the young.

NURSERY RHYMES

Nursery rhymes are short verses and songs for children. Some are more than 200 years old. An early collection of rhymes, *Mother Goose's Melody*, was published in England in about 1780 and in America five years later. Mother Goose is herself a traditional figure and teller of tales who was later included in pantomime. Her name is still associated with books of nursery rhymes, especially in America.

Parents sing nursery rhymes to their children while they are still babies, and children soon learn the words themselves. The rhymes are popular because they are short, easy to say, and tell simple, often funny stories. For instance, *The Queen of Hearts* is about a queen who makes some tarts for the king, but somebody steals them and the king punishes the thief.

Some nursery rhymes may refer to people or events in history. *The Grand Old Duke of York*, for instance, is supposed to be about the Duke of Cumberland, a famous army commander, while *Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary* may describe Mary Queen of Scots. *Ring a Ring o' Roses* may refer to the Great Plague: the roses are red spots on the skin and the last line, 'We all fall down', refers to people dying. Other rhymes are about country life and farm animals, such as sheep or mice. They include *Baa, Baa, Black Sheep, Little Miss Muffet, Sing a Song of Sixpence* and *Three Blind Mice*.

Rhymes such as *Hush-a-buy, Baby* are popular **lullabies**, songs that are sung to send children to sleep. Others are old **riddles**: Humpty Dumpty, for example, is an oval-shaped figure who breaks after failing off a wall and cannot be mended – the explanation is that Humpty Dumpty is an egg. Some rhymes have simple actions that go with them. Parents say the rhyme *This little pig went to market* while pulling their children's toes. *Pat-a-Cake, Pat-a-cake, Baker's Man, Oranges and Lemons* and *Ring-a-Ring o' Roses* are all associated with simple games. Children use *Eeny Meeny Miney Mo* to choose somebody for a role in a game or to count the seconds to the start of a game.

Most nursery rhymes told in the US come from Britain, though *Mary Had a Little Lamb* was written by an American, Sara Hale. Since rhymes are usually spoken or sung there are often small differences in the words. For example, Americans say *Ring Around the Rosie* and *Pattie Cake, Pattie Cake, Baker's Man*. Nursery rhymes often describe things that are unknown t most American children such as St Ives or *Banbury Cross*. Some rhymes use old or unusual language. For instance, Little Miss Muffet eats 'curds and whey', and few people know that this is a kind of cheese. But none of these things really matter and nursery rhymes continue to be popular with young children everywhere.

OLD ENGLISH (C.450 AD – C.1150 AD)

English was originally a West Germanic language brought to England by the **Anglo-Saxons** in the 5th century. The word *English* comes from *englisc* or *ænglisc* (= the language of the Angles) which was spoken by the Germanic invaders of England.

Many of the most basic words in modern English come from Old English e.g.: *child, man, wife, house, good, strong, eat, drink, sleep* and *live*. The grammar was more complicated than modern English as it had a large number of different endings for verbs, nouns and adjectives. It was written using the same alphabet as modern English but included some extra letters such as *æ* (ash), and *þ* (thorn).

At the end of the 8th century, Viking invasions of England began. The language of the invaders was very similar to Anglo-Saxon but they introduced a large number of new words such as *egg, skin, sky, get, give,* and *take*.

The most famous work of literature in Old English is *Beowulf*, probably composed around 800 AD. **Alfred the Great** (871-899 AD), who wanted to encourage learning, ordered that many books be written in English, including the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

MIDDLE ENGLISH (C.1150-1500)

In this period the grammar of English became far simpler. Many words came into the language from French, particularly during the 14th century. The **Normans** invaded England in 1066 and took control of the country. For the next 200 years, the upper classes mainly spoke French while the rest of the people spoke English. This changed slowly and by the 14th century English had become the language used by everyone. Words from French added in the Middle English period include: *art, authority, beauty, biscuit, button, coat, court, cream, judge, jury,* and *parliament.*

People in different parts of the country spoke different dialects of English. By the end of the 15th century, however, the dialect spoken in London was accepted as the standard language, especially after **William Caxton** introduced printing in 1476 and London became the centre of the new printing technology.

MODERN ENGLISH (15TH CENTURY – PRESENT)

During the 16th and 17th centuries, English grammar was further simplified. The use of *thou*, a singular and more intimate form of *you*, gradually disappeared. A large number of words came into English from Latin and Greek during the **Renaissance** to express new ideas in science and philosophy. Examples include: *architecture, hypothesis, physics,* and *species*.

This development continued with the growth of science in the 18th and 19th centuries, and many new scientific terms were added. The growth of the British Empire and international trade brought many addition from foreign languages such as *cashmere, china, cocoa, chocolate, gorilla, juggernaut, taboo, tobacco,* and *tomato*.

In the 18th century **Samuel Johnson** produced *A Dictionary of the English language* (1755), which set a new standard of quality for dictionaries and helped to standardize the spelling system. It was followed in the USA by **Noah Webster's** *A Compendious Dictionary of the English language* (1806). Webster standardized the spelling system in American English (for example *labour* was changed to *labor*). **James Murray's** *Oxford English Dictionary* was begun in 1858. Its second edition, published in 1989, recorded 615100 separate word forms.

OLD AGE

Society is getting older. In 1990 about 14% of the population of the US was over 60, in 2020 it will be about 20%. In Britain there was a 27% increase in the number of people over 65 between 1971 and 2002. With further developments in medicine more and more people can expect to live a long time. This means that **senior citizens** (= people over about 65) may become a more powerful group, but it also means that services for them will need to improve. As people live linger, the question of how to pay for retirement has become an important social and political issue for governments. Many people may need to work beyond the normal retirement age of 65. For people who have enough money from their pension and who are in good health, the years of retirement may be an opportunity to do some of things they did not have time for when they were working. Some people take courses, some go on more holidays/vacations, others do voluntary work and continue to use the skills they learned for their job. Public transport, theaters, and sometimes restaurants give discounts to retired people to encourage them to go out. In the US especially, senior citizens are expected to be active, if their health permits, and the sight of a 70-year-old lifting weights in a gym is not uncommon. Many elderly people, however, have a more difficult old age. Those who rely on the British state pension or US social security have to spend most of their money on food and heating and have little left for luxuries (= expensive pleasures). Others have poor health and cannot move around easily. Some are afraid to go out in case they are attacked and robbed. Many are lonely.

Older Americans who can afford a comfortable retirement may move to states like Florida and Arizona where the weather is warm all year. Many choose **assisted living** in an apartment in a **retirement community**, where there is somebody nearby to provide help if they need it. If they become ill they may need to move into a **nursing home** where they can get special medical care. Often the patient's husband or wife can live there too. The cost of nursing homes is very high, and while many are excellent, others are not good. A few older people live with their children, but Americans do not usually want to be dependent on their children.

In Britain, too, elderly people like to be independent and to live in their own home for as long as possible. Those who find it difficult to look after themselves may have a **home help** for a few houses each week. Some may use a meals on wheels service. Some towns have **pensioners' clubs** which serve cheap meals. People who are less able to get about may be taken each day to a **day centre** run by organizations like Age Concern where they can be with other people. As in the US, some elderly people move into **sheltered accommodation** or **warden housing**. Others go to live with one of their children. Many families, however, do not have room for their elderly relatives or do not want them to live with them. When these people can no longer care for themselves they have to move into a **care home**.

In Britain especially, elderly people get less respect than they do in many other societies. Nicknames such as 'wrinklies', 'crumblies', 'old codgers' and 'old buffers' are sometimes used to describe them in a cruel way. Elderly people are often thought by younger people to have little to contribute to society and to be a burden on the rest of population. They used to be referred to as **old age pensioners** or **OAPs** but the name 'senior citizens' was introduced as part of a campaign to give the elderly a more positive image.

OLD ENGLISH

Old English, sometimes called Anglo-Saxon, was the language of the German peoples who settled in England from around 400 AD. It had three main **dialects**: Kentish, Saxon and Anglian. Saxon was the language spoken at the court of King Alfred the Great, who encouraged people to translate Latin books into English, and so it became the main language of literature. Modern standard English, however, developed from Mercian, a variety of Anglian which was spoken in the Midlands. Relatively few Latin words dating back to the Roman occupation of England survived into Old English. After the arrival of the Vikings from the 8th century onwards, many Norse words, e.g. *dirt, blunder* and *squeak*, were added to the language.

Several written works have survived from the Old English period. Most of these are short religious writings or poems about great heroes. The most famous of these is *Beowulf*, composed by an unknown author and written down in the 8th or 9th century. *Beowulf* is set in 5th-century Scandinavia and tells the story of the hero Beowulf's battles with the monster Grendel and Grendel's mother.

To modern British people Old English looks at first like a foreign language. It was originally written in **runes** or **runic letters**, an ancient alphabet of 24 angular letters, and then in a form of the Roman alphabet that included several of these letters, such as the thorn (þ) for 'th', both voiced /ð/ and voiceless /θ/, and the ash (æ). Some Old English words, such as *dead, is, brother* and *and* in the following passage from Beowulf, have survived with little change into modern English. Some words become easier to recognize when they are translated, e.g. *yldra* meaning 'older' and *min* for 'my', whereas others are completely foreign to us. Word order is also different from modern English.

Hroðgar maþelode, helm Scyldinga:
'Ne frin þu æfter sælum! Sorh is geniwod
Denigea leodum. Dead is Æshcere,
Yrmenlafes yldra broþer,
Min runwita and min rædbora,
Eaxlgestatealla…'
(Hrothgar, protector of the Danes, spoke: 'Do not ask about it! There is more sorrow for the Danish people. Aeschere, Yrmenlaf's older brother, my trusted friend and my adviser, my close companion, is dead…'

Several shorter poems written in Old English have also survived. These include *The Seafarer, The Wanderer* and *The Dream of the Rood*, which all have a Christian message. Few authors are known by name, apart from Caedmon, a 7th-century monk, and the 9th-century Northumbrian or Mercian poet Cynewulf. Other authors of the period, such as Alcuin, wrote in Latin.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, a history of England beginning with the arrival of Christianity, was probably begun in the court of King Alfred in 891 and was continued in monasteries until 1154. The writers used a wide range of sources for the *Chronicle* and it is thought to be the first original prose text in English.

Old English was replaced by Norman French as the official language of England after the Norman Conquest of 1066, but it continued to be spoken by the ordinary people and, influenced by French and Latin, developed into Middle English, the language of the 12th to the 15th centuries.

OXBRIDGE

Oxbridge is a word made from the names Oxford and Cambridge and is used to refer informally to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge together, especially when they are being distinguished from other universities.

Oxford and Cambridge are the oldest universities in Britain. They are generally also thought to be the best universities to get a place at. An Oxbridge degree makes a good impression with many employers, and graduates of these universities may have an advantage when applying for jobs. Although efforts are made to attract more students from state schools, many of the **undergraduates** at each university have been educated at independent schools. The upper class have traditionally sent their children to Oxbridge, and many prime minister and politicians studied there. To many people, Oxford and Cambridge seem very remote places where only the very privileged can study.

Students at Oxford and Cambridge must be accepted at one of around 30 semi-independent **colleges**. Students are chosen after an **interview** in the college they want to go to. The teachers are called **dons**. Each colleges has its own teaching and research staff, who are **fellows** of the college, and its own buildings, including **hall** (= a dining hall), a library, a chapel, and rooms for students to live in during the term. The buildings are often arranged round a **quad** (= square). Until the 1970s colleges were single-sex, but now almost all are mixed. The universities provide other facilities centrally, including laboratories, lecture rooms and libraries.

The teaching system is different from that at most other universities. Students have **tutorials**, called **supervisions** at Cambridge, at which they read their essays to their **tutor**, a fellow who is a specialist in what they are studying. There are usually no more than one or two students at a tutorial and tutorials are encouraged by the college. Students also go to lectures that are arranged by the university and open to all students. Terms are short, and students are expected to prepare for them in the vacation. Final examinations at Oxford are called **schools**, and at Cambridge **the tripos**. Undergraduates at Oxford and Cambridge study for a BA degree, but after a period of time graduates can convert their BA to an **MA** (**Oxon**) or an **MA** (**Cantab**) without doing any further study. *Oxon* is short for Oxoniesis, and *Cantab* for *Cantabrigiensis*, Latin for 'of Oxford' and 'of Cambridge'.

At Oxford students sometimes have to wear **gowns**, at dinner in hall or when they go to see the college principal. When they sit examinations or go to a degree ceremony they have to wear **academic dress**. This consists of **subfusc**, black trousers or skirt, black shoes and socks or tights, a white shirt and a white tie for men a black tie or ribbon for women. They also wear their gown and a **mortar board** (= a black hat with a flat, square top) and, when they graduate, a **hood** that shows their status. At Cambridge students only have to wear gowns when they **matriculate** (= become members of the university) and at **graduation**.

The two universities are academic rivals, and rivals also in debating and sport. The Boat Race, held each year around Easter, attracts national attention. Rugby and cricket teams play against each other in varsity matches, as well as against professional teams.

PARKS

British towns and cities have at least one **municipal park**, where people go to relax, lie in the sun, have picnics, walk their dogs and play games. Most US city and town governments also provide parks. They are open to anybody free of charge. The most famous parks in Britain include Hyde Park and Regent's Park in London. In the US, New York's Central Park is the best known. Open-air events, such as plays and concerts, are sometimes held in these parks.

Most British parks were created in the 19th century, when more people moved into the towns. Some still have a rather old-fashioned, formal atmosphere, with paths to walk on, seats or **benches**, tidy **lawns**, flower beds and trees. There are sometimes signs that say: 'Keep off the grass'. A few parks have a **bandstand**, a raised platform on which brass bands play occasionally during the summer. Most parks are protected by iron railings and gates which are locked by the **park keeper** each evening.

Many parks have a **children's playground** with swings and roundabouts. Larger parks have a sports field, tennis courts and sometimes a boating lake. In the US softball diamonds are marked on the grass and in Britain there are goalposts for football. Large parks may have **picnic benches** and, in the US, **barbecues**. In the US it is usually illegal to drink alcohol in a park.

In Britain there are country parks, large areas of grass and woodland, where people can go for long walks. Some charge an admission fee. Many have **nature trails** where people can see interesting plants, birds or animals. National parks, such as Snowdonia in Wales, are areas of great beauty protected by the government. In the US there are both **state parks** and **national parks**. Many provide a safe place for wild animals to live.

PARLIAMENT

The institution in the UK responsible for making laws, raising taxes and discussing issues which affect the country. It is make up of three parts; the **sovereign** (= the king or queen), the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The word 'parliament' was first used in the 13th century, when Henry III held meetings with his noblemen to raise money from them for government and wars. Several kings found that they did not have enough money, and so they called together representatives from counties and towns in England to ask them to approve taxes. Over time, the noblemen

became the House of Lords and the representatives became the House of Commons. The rise of political parties in the 18th century led to less control and involvement of the sovereign, leaving government in the hands of the cabinet led by the prime minister. Although the UK is still officially governed by **Her Majesty's Government**, the Queen does not have any real control over what happens in Parliament. Both the House of Lords and the House of Commons meet in the Palace of Westminster, also called the Housed of Parliament, in **chambers** with several rows of seats facing each other where members of the government sit on one side and members of the **Opposition** sit on the other. Each period of government, also called a parliament, lasts a maximum of five years and is divided into one-year periods called **sessions**.

PERSONAL SPACE

Personal space can be imagined as a kind of bubble surrounding a person that protects their privacy and which other people may not normally enter. The amount of space people need to feel around them is different in every culture, though British and American people have similar ideas about how much it should be. People from cultures that like a lot of personal space feel awkward and embarrassed when somebody comes too close to them and try to move away; people who need less personal space are often offended when others seem to want to keep them at a distance.

The amount of personal space need also depends on several other factors. People of the same sex may sit or stand closer to each other than to somebody of the opposite sex. Strangers and casual acquaintances usually need more space than friends and members of the same family who know each other well. But in a noisy street people may need to stand closer in order to hear each other, and in underground trains in the rush hour in London people have to stand squashed together but they still try to respect each other's space as far as possible. Some British people avoid sitting next to strangers on buses and if there are lots of empty seats they choose one by itself.

For a private conversation Americans need at least a foot/30 centimetres between each other, and British people more. Distances as great as 5 feet/1.5 metres may also seem comfortable. Allowing somebody to get very close and enter your personal space may be a sign of trust or love.

British people tend to avoid touching or being physically close to people outside their own family. Americans are only a little more comfortable about touching each other. When people meet for the first time they shake hands and let go quickly and move back. In formal situations they may also shake hands when they say goodbye though they often avoid doing this. Women often greet members of their family with a hug or kiss on one cheek, and may also greet friends in this way. They also hug and kiss each other when saying goodbye. But they rarely hold hands or link arms with each other when walking long. Some men are embarrassed about kissing members of the family or children in public. They may shake hands but often simply nod and smile. Men rarely touch their friends unless to shake hands or slap them on the back in congratulation.

PETS

Over half of all British and US families keep an animal as a pet. Families with children are most likely to have pets, but other people, especially old people, often keep a pet for company. Some animals belong to a group of people: for example, many British railway stations, old people's homes and even offices have a resident cat.

The most popular pets for children include cats, dogs, birds, fish, rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters and mice, and children are usually expected to help take care of their pets. Older people are more likely to have a cat or dog, or perhaps a budgerigar. Since dogs and cats have different characters and needs, many people have a strong preference for one or the other. People who say that they are **dog people** like the fact that dogs like to go for walks, enjoy being touched and need lots of attention. **Cat people** like cats because they are independent. Other people prefer **exotic pets**, such as snakes, spiders, iguanas and stick insects. Many pets can be bought at a **pet shop**, though people often buy dogs and cats direct from breeders or from homes for stray (= lost) animals.

Most pets are treated as members of the family. People buy special pet food and biscuits, or sometimes fresh fish or meat. Pets have their own place to sleep, bowls to eat from and toys to play with. There are even clothes for pets, and **salons** where their fur is washed and cut.

Pets are a responsibility which must be taken seriously. Dog owners in the US have to buy a **dog licence** (*AmE* **dog license**) which allows them to keep a dog. This was formerly also the case in Britain. Pure-bred dogs may also be taken to local and national **shows** where there are prized for the best of each breed. But many people are not bothered about having a pure-bed dog and are happy with a **mongrel** (*AmE* **mutt**).

A few dogs are kept outside and sleep in a **kennel** (*AmE* **doghouse**). Most, however, like cats, are allowed to go where they like inside the house. Most dogs wear a **collar**, with a small metal disc attached giving the dog's name and address. In the US there are laws in most places requiring dogs to be kept on a **leash** (*BrE* **lead**). People teach their dogs to **walk to heel** (*AmE* **heeling**) and not to jump up at people. Some also teach them to do tricks like **fetching** or **begging**. Some people take their dog to **obedience school** (*BrE* **obedience classes**) for training. There is now pressure for dog owners to clear up any mess left by their dog, and people can be fined for not doing so.

Cats are less trouble to look after. They can often enter or leave their house as they please through a **cat flap**. If they are kept inside they are trained to urinate in a litter tray filled with **cat litter** (= a special absorbent material). Many cat owners give their cats a **flea collar** and a disc with their name and address on it in case they get lost.

Looking after a pet properly can be quite expensive. Many British people pay for their dog to stay at a local **kennels**, or their cat at a **cattery** when they go on holiday. In the US there are **pet motels**. Many people take out insurance to cover medical treatment by a **vet** and animals with emotional problems can be taken to a **pet psychologist**. When a pet dies many people bury it in their garden, but others arrange for it to be buried in a special **pet cemetery**.

If people do not want a pet of their own they can sponsor an animal through a charity and receive regular information about it. Many people also put out bird tables containing food for wild birds.

PLACE NAMES

Britain and the US have a rich variety of place names. Some names are derived from a feature of the country side. Others are named after a church or fort. Some honour famous people, while others have been brought from abroad.

Many names reflect the history of an area and of the people who once lived there. Some of the oldest place names in Wales and Scotland date back to the time of the Celts. Some towns in Southern England have Latin names dating from Roman times. Other names are of Anglo-Saxon or Viking origin and date from the period when these peoples invaded Britain. Later, the Normans introduced some French names.

In the US place names are derived from Native American words: Chicago, for example, means 'place of the onion' in the Algonquian language, Seattle is named after a chief, and Natchez after a tribe. Sometimes the names were translated, sometimes not: the Black Warrior River in Alabama runs through the city of Tuscaloosa, which was named after a Native American whose name means 'Black Warrior'. Names of Spanish origin are found mainly in the South-Western US. They include San Francisco, San Diego, Las Vegas and Los Angeles. A few names are of French origin, e.g. Baton Rouge and La Crosse. Some names are derived from more than one culture: Anaheim combines the Spanish name 'Ana' with the German 'heim' (=home).

Many British towns take their name from a river. In Wales and Scotland many towns have names beginning with *Aber-*, which means 'river mouth', e.g. Aberystwyth, Aberdeen. In England towns close to a river mouth often end with *–mouth*, e.g. Weymouth. The name of the river forms the rest of the name. names ending in *–ford* (Oxford) suggest a place where a river is shallow enough to cross. A town beside a lake may, in Scotland, contain *loch-* or, in England, *-mere*, e.g. Lochinver, Windermere.

In Scotland, there are several place names beginning with *Dun-*, meaning 'hill', e.g. Dunbar. Any place whose name ends with *–don* (Swindon), *-hurst* (Sandhurst), *-head* (Gateshead) or, in Wales, begins with *pen-* (Penarth), probably stands on or near a hill. Towns near passes may end in *–gate*, e.g. Harrogate, or, in Scotland, begin with *Glen-*, e.g. Glencoe. Names ending with *–coumbe* or *–combe* (Olfracombe) or *–dale* (Rockdale), or, in Wales, beginning with *cwm-* (Cwmbran) suggest that the town is in a valley.

American place names based on natural features are easier to recognize. Examples include Two Rivers, River Edge, Mirror Lake, Ocean City, Gulf Breeze, Seven Hill, Shady Valley, Twentynine Palms, Lookout, Little Rock, Round Rock, White Rock and Slippery Rock. French names include La Fontaine and Eau Claire. Some place names describe a product, e.g. Bean City, Copper City.

Many British towns developed around an early fort or castle. This may be indicated by a name ending in *–burgh* (Edinburgh), *-bury* (Salisbury), *-caster* or *–cester* (Doncaster, Gloucester) or *–chester* (Dorchester), or beginning or ending with *-castle* (Newcastle). A Welsh variant is *Caer-* (Caernarfon).

Names that include church-, *kirk-* or, in Wales *llan-* refer to a church (Offchurch, Kirkby, Llandaff). Towns where there was a monastery may have names ending in *–minster* (Kidderminster).

Names ending with *–ham* (Evesham), *-hampton* (Southampton), *-ington* (Workington), *-stock* or *–stoke* (Woodstock, Basingstoke), *-thorpe* (Scunthorpe), *-wich* or *–wick* (Norwich, Warick) mean that there was a village or farm there.

In the US place names that refer to buildings include House, Brick Church and High Bridge. Atlanta, Georgia is named after a railway/railroad.

Some British place names refer to ancient tribes. The elements *–ing* and *–ingham* at the end of a name mean 'people of' and 'home of the people of', as in Reading ('Read's peope') and Birmingham ('home of Beorma's people'). Places with names ending in *–by* were the homes of Viking invaders, e.g. Grimsby ('Grim's village').

Some towns take their name from Christian saints, particularly if they had local connections. These include St Albans, St Andrews and St David's. Towns named after people who lived in more recent times are rare in Britain. They include Nelson, named after Lord Nelson and the new town Telford, named after the engineer Thomas Telford.

By contrast, many towns in the US honour famous Americans, especially presidents. Abraham Lincoln is honoured in towns named Lincoln, Lincolnville, Lincolnwood, etc., Andrew Jackson at Jackson and Jacksonville and Thomas Jefferson at Jefferson, Jeffersonville and Jefferson City.

Other towns named after famous Americans include Houston, Texas, after Sam Houston; Cody, Wyoming, after Buffalo Bil; Boone, Tennessee, after Daniel Boone; and Custer, Montana, after General George Custer. Often the person is now little heard of, e.g. H M Shreve, a 19th century boat captain on the Mississippi River, whose name was used for Shreveport, Louisiana. A few towns are named after companies, e.g. Hershey, Pennsylvania.

Many American towns are named after a place in Britain or another country from which settlers in the US originally came. British names are found especially in New England. They include Boston, Cambridge, Gloucester, Manchester-by-the-sea, and Stafford. British names used in other parts of the US include the cities of New York and Birmingham, and Glasgow, a small town in Montana. Like New York (New Amsterdam), Brooklyn (Breukelyn) was originally named by Dutch settlers.

Names from other countries include New Orleans, Moscow, Athens, Paris, Naples and New Holland.

Americans enjoy creating unusual or humorous names, such as Tombstone in Arizona. Truth or Consequences in New Mexico is named after a radio quiz show. Other names include Cannon Ball, Pie Town, Smackover, Humble City, High Lonesome, Cut and Shoot, and Monkey's Eyebrow.

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

Political correctness or being 'political correct', often called simply **PC**, is concerned with avoiding certain attitudes, actions and, above all, forms of expression which suggest prejudice and are likely to cause offence. This may be against men or women, against older people, or against people with a particular skin colour, racial background or physical disability.

The idea of political correctness developed in the 1980s and 1990s and was based on the belief that the language we use influences the way we think. Later the phrase was often used in a negative way to refer to politically correct expressions that people thought were clumsy or an unnecessary change. Some people doubt whether changing words will remove prejudice in people's minds or in the social system.

In the 1960s and 1970s public debate caused many people to accept the principle that discrimination (= treating some people worse than others) is wrong. Changes of many kinds happened in schools and offices. History has been traditionally taught from the point of view of white people, but now more children learn about the history and culture of other groups in the community. In offices sexual and racial **harassment** (= comments or behavior intended to worry or upset somebody) are not allowed. The PC movement has also been against **stereotyping** (= having fixed ideas about people), especially of women and black people, and making jokes against minority groups.

A major concern of political correctness has been to avoid racist or sexist language that will offend particular groups. However some language changes are much older than the PC movement. *Ms* has been used for a long time as a title for women who do not wish to identify themselves as being either married (*Mrs*) or single (*Miss*). Other PC phrases, notably *chair* or *chairperson* instead of *chairman*, are also common. Changes in the US include saying *African American* instead of *Black, Native American* instead of *Indian* and using the term *people of colour* to refer to people who are not white.

Other changes have been less widely accepted. For example, the words *blind* and *deaf* were felt to suggest something negative, so people began using *visually impaired* and *hearing impaired*, which, they believed, did not carry the same negative associations. Less acceptable PC terms include *vertically challenged* (short), *differently sized* (fat), *physically challenged* (disabled), *economically exploited* (poor), *involuntarily leisured* (unemployed), and *domestic operative* (housewife). People who are against the idea of political correctness use such examples to argue against it.

POPULATION

In 2002 the United Kingdom had a total population of just over 59 million people. About 49.5 million live in England, 5 million in Scotland, 3 million in Wales and 1.7 million in Northern Ireland. Around 4.5 million of the population belong to **ethnic minorities**, of which the largest groups are Indian (1 million), Pakistani (0.7 million) and Caribbean (0.5 million) in origin. Much of the immigration from Commonwealth countries took place during the 1960s. since then immigration regulations have made it much more difficult for people from the Commonwealth to settle in Britain.

In the United States the population in 2003 was about 292 million people, of which about 211 million were white, 34 million were black, 10 million were Asian and 2.4 million were Native Americans. The US Census Bureau predicts that the nation will have about 323 million people by 2020 and 394 million by 2050. In 2001 immigration was just over a million people of whom the largest group was 206000 from Mexico.

In 2003 in Britain around 695000 babies were born. In 2001, the US had more than 4 million births but the birth rate of 14.5 for each 1000 people was about the same as for 1976, the lowest ever. The birth rate in the US has decreased by 38% since 1960. On average, males born in 2001 in both Britain and the US can expect to live 74 years and females 80 years. The main causes of death are heart disease and cancer.

Around 75% of the population of the UK live in cities, so that although people think of the British Isles as being crowded compared to some other parts of the world, much of the countryside is relatively empty. The most densely populated regions are the south-east, especially London, which has a population of nearly 7 million, and the regions around the industrial cities of Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle. Most of the population of Scotland lives in the lowlands, where the cities of Glasgow and Edinburg are.

In the US about 80% of the population live in cities. The largest are New York with about 8 million people, Los Angeles and Chicago. The states with the largest population are California with 35 million people, Texas with more than 21 million and New York with 19 million. Some large states have very few people: Wyoming has the fewest, 498000, or about 5 people for every square mile.

POSTAL SERVICES

Most letters and packages posted in Britain are dealt with by the Royal Mail, which is part of the Royal Mail Group, together with Parcelforce, which delivers larger packages, and the Post Office, which manages the country's many post offices. As well as selling stamps, post offices take in letters and packages that are to be sent by special delivery. Post offices also sell vehicle and television licences and often greetings cards and stationery. In villages they are often combined with a newsagent's and general store. In recent years, many smaller post offices have been closed because they do not make a profit, though this often led to protest from local people.

Mail (= letters, bills, etc.) is often called **post** in British English. When sending a letter, people can choose between two levels of service, **first class** or the cheaper **second class**. Normally, first-class mail is delivered the day after it is posted and second-class mail within two or three days. Every address in Britain includes a **postcode** of letters and numbers, for example OX1 2PX for an address in Oxford, that makes it possible to sort the post by machine. Letters are posted in red **postboxes**, also called **letter boxes**. Each has a sign giving times of **collections**. **Postmen** and

women deliver mail each morning direct to homes and businesses. They put the mail through a flap in the door, which is also called a **letter box**. In the country they travel round in red vans, but in towns and villages they often ride bicycles.

They system that deals with mail in the US, the **US Postal Service** (**USPS**), is an independent part of the government. Its head is the **Postmaster General**. **Mail carriers**, sometimes called **mailmen** though many are women, deliver mail to homes and businesses once a day. Most homes have **mailboxes** fixed outside, near the door. It is very uncommon for a house to have a letter box in the door for letters. People whose houses are a long way from the road have a special **rural mailbox** by the road. This has a flag which the mail carrier raises so that people in the house can see when they have mail. To mail (= send) a letter, people leave it on top of their own mailbox or put it in one of the many blue mailboxes in cities and towns. Every address in the US includes an abbreviation for the name of the state and a **ZIP code**, which is used to help sort the mail. Post offices sell stamps and deal with mail that has to be insured. Most cities have one post office which stays open late. Americans complain about the Postal Service, but it usually does an efficient job at a reasonable price.

In the US only Postal Service can deliver mail, though private **couriers**, are allowed to offer **express** services. This competition has hurt the postal services. In Britain Royal Mail lost its monopoly for letter delivery in 2005.

PRE-COLUMBIAN NORTH AMERICA

Pre-Columbian means 'before the time of Columbus' and refers to the period of North American history before the region was discovered by Christopher Columbus at the end of the 15th century.

The first people to arrive in America crossed over a strip of land, known as Beringia, between America and Eurasia about 40000 years ago. It is now covered by the Bering Strait. The people were **nomads** who hunted large animals such as mammoths and bison. They had only basic tools made of stone.

About 6000 BC some groups of people began to rely more on gathering wild fruits, nuts and vegetables for food. They also began to settle in permanent villages. They made a wider range of tools, from stone and animal bone, simple copper items, and baskets and nets from wild plants. This period, which is known as the **archaic period**, lasted from c. 6000 to 1000 BC, though in some parts of North America, especially the desert regions of California, people had a similar lifestyle until the arrival of the first Europeans.

Elsewhere, a major change in society began from about 1000 BC. Although **hunting and gathering** were still the main source of food, agriculture began about this time. Goods were taken long distances across the country to be traded (= exchanged for other goods). Society became much more complex and developed differently in different regions. The people buried their dead in earth mounds, similar to the barrows of Stone Age Britain, and often put precious objects in the mounds with them. These development are known as the **Woodland tradition**.

The period from 800 AD until the arrival of European settlers was one of even greater change. More widespread agriculture, and the growing of crops such as corn, beans and squashes, allowed the development of much larger villages and towns. Cahokia, Illinois, may have had a population of up to 30000 people. In these settlements temples were built on top of earth mounds. More than 120 temples were built at Cahokia alone. The style may have been influenced by temples in Central America. Large circles of wooden posts have also been found, which may have acted as a calendar, similar to Stonehenge in England. Another important site is the Moundbuilders. About 3000 people were buried at this site, many with pottery and copper axes.

In Colorado and Arizona people began to live in houses built with adobe (= mud bricks) in the sides of cliffs. The best preserved of these can still be seen at Mesa Verde. Canals and ditches were dug to take water into the desert so that corn, vegetables and also cotton could be grown there. They made baskets and sandals, and elaborate painted pottery. The Ancestral Puebloans or Anasazi, the ancestors of the modern Pueblo people were the most developed people and traded their goods as far as Mexico for feathers and copper. In the 16th century the Athabaskan tribes moved down from Canada. These were the ancestors of the modern Navajo and Apache tribes.

Although Columbus is traditionally believed to have been the first European to discover America there is good evidence that Vikings had settled in Canada long before. The remains of a Viking settlement have been found at

L'Anse aux Meadows, in Newfoundland, Canada. The Viking stories say that while they were in America they met 'Skraelings', probably Inuit peoples.
The arrival of people from Europe caused serious problems to the pre-Columbian peoples. The Europeans took their land in order to build settlements, and over time they controlled almost all of North America, putting the native peoples on a few **reservations**. In addition, the Europeans brought diseases that the Native Americans could not overcome, and many died.
In the USA today most people know about Native American peoples, or Indians as many still call them, from the time when they came into contact with Europeans but they know little about the Americans of the pre-Columbian period.

PRESIDENT

The President is the **head of state** of the US and is part of the executive branch of government. He (the President has so far always been a man) decides US policy on foreign affairs and is the **commander-in-chief** of the armed forces. He can appoint heads of government departments and federal judges. Congress must ask the President to approve new laws, although it is possible to pass a law without the President's approval. Each year, the President gives a State of the Union Address to Congress. The President works in what may be the most famous office in the world, the Oval Office in the White House in Washington, DC.
The Constitution requires that a president should be at least 35 years old, and have been born in the US. It is often said that the President is **directly elected** by the people, and this is true in comparison with countries like Britain where the Prime Minister is selected by Members of Parliament. In fact, although people vote for one of the candidates for President, an electoral college makes the final choice. A president can serve a maximum of two **terms** (four year each).
Americans have a lot of respect for the office of President, and they are shocked when the president is believed to have done something wrong or illegal. In such a case it is possible for Congress to **impeach** the President (= remove him from his job). Congress attempted to impeach President Richard Nixon during the Watergate scandal of the 1970s but he decided to resign before the impeachment process was completed. In 1999, President Bill Clinton was tried by the Senate after admitting that he had a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky, having earlier denied it. Many Americans continued to support him and the Senate decided that he was not guilty of 'high crimes and misdemeanours' (= offences for which a person can be impached).

PRESSURE GROUPS

Pressure groups work on behalf of a particular section of society, e.g. children or nurses, or for a particular issue or cause, e.g. banning the use of landmines. Groups that work on behalf of a section of society are sometimes called **interest groups**. Those that work for a particular cause are known as **promotional groups** or simply pressure groups. These pressure groups operate in a similar way in Britain and in the US.
There are several types of interest groups. Trade unions and **labor unions** represent workers in industry and are mostly concerned with their wages and welfare. **Professional bodies** such as the British Medical Association are similar to trade unions and the CBI represents the interests of employers. In Britain several watchdogs have been established by Act of Parliament to monitor (= check the performance of) certain industries, e.g. Ofgem, which oversees the gas and electricity industries on behalf of users. Many promotional groups are linked to **charities**. Since charities are not allowed to take part in party political activity, many set up a related organization to act as a pressure group. In the US many pressure groups form political action committees which are allowed to give money to political campaigns. Well-known promotional groups include Friends of the Earth and Amnesty International. There are also many smaller groups, usually less permanent, which are formed to protest about local issues.
Pressure groups aim to influence the government to the benefit of their members or the cause they support. They may draw attention to problems by asking people to sign a petition (= a formal request signed by many people), by giving media interviews, or by organizing demonstrations that will attract public and media attention. Groups who demonstrate and are often in the news include animal rights groups such as the Animal Liberation Front and PETA, and Fathers 4 Justice, a group that claims fathers are treated unfairly by the family courts in cases of divorce. Many groups try to get the support of well-known people such as pop stars. They also try to persuade politicians to support

their cause and to speak about it in Parliament or Congress, a practice known as lobbying. More established pressure groups may be consulted by a government department or take part in working groups when changes to the law are being considered. There are some groups who are ready to break the law in order to achieve their aims.

PRIME MINISTER

Originally, the king or queen could choose anyone they liked to be the chief of 'Prime' Minister, and for a long time the British prime minister could come from either the House of Lords or the House of Commons. In recent years the Prime Minister has always come from the Commons and the king or queen gives the job to the leader of the party with the largest numbers of MPs. Lord Home, who became leader of the Conservative Party in 1963, was the first politician to be allowed to renounce a peerage (= give up an inherited title and status) to become Prime Minister as Sir Alec Douglas-Home).

The Prime Minister is by tradition First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service. He or she chooses and presides over the Cabinet and heads the government. Unlike an American President, a British prime minister can remain in the job as long as the party he or she represents is in power. Margaret Thatcher, the first women prime minister, served for eleven and a half years until the Conservative party voted to replace her. The Prime Minister chooses senior ministers and recommends their appointment to the king or queen. While other ministers are responsible for particular government departments, the prime minister is concerned with policy as a whole. Cabinet committees usually report directly to him or her. The Prime Minister has regular meetings with the sovereign to inform him or her of the activities of the government.

The prime minister lives at 10 Downing Street, above the offices used by the Cabinet, and is often photographed outside the front door. Chequers, in the countryside outside London, is also an official home for the prime minister and is used at weekends and for more informal meetings.

PRISONS

Britain's system of justice relies heavily on **imprisonment** as a form of punishment. Until the late 18th century conditions in prisons such as Newgate were dirty and violent. In the 19th century conditions improved, thanks to the work of reformers like Elizabeth Fry. New prisons were built, in which most prisoners had their own **cell** facing into a large central area. Many of these prisons, such as Pentonville and Strangeways, still exist today, although Strangeways had to be rebuilt after most of the building was destroyed in riots in the 1990s.

The type of prison in which criminals **serve their sentence** depends on their **category**. Category A prisoners are considered dangerous and are held in high-security closed prisons, such as Wormwood Scrubs. Prisoners may be kept in **solitary confinement** if they are likely to harm others. Category B and C prisoners are also held in closed prisons. Category D prisoners are trusted not to escape and are sent to low-security **open prisons**. Prisoners **on remand** (= waiting for their trial) are held in **remand centres**, but problems of overcrowding have resulted in many of them being kept in prisons or police stations. Young people aged 15-20 are normally sent to young offender institutions, sometimes called detention centres or youth custody centres. These have replaced the old Borstals. However, if space is not available young people are sometimes sent to adult prisons. A prison is run by a **governor** who is responsible to the Home Office, and the prisoners are guarded by **warders**.

There is not enough space available in prisons for the number of people being given **custodial sentences**. In the 1990s there were riots at several prisons because of poor conditions. Cells intended for one person often contain two or three. Despite this, some people think life in Britain's prisons is nor hard enough. Some prisons are described as 'universities of crime', where prisoners gain new skills in breaking law and have access to drugs.

There are many British slang expressions connected with prison. To *do time* is to serve a prison sentence and to have been *inside* means to have been in prison. Time spent in prison is *porridge*. Prison itself is *the nick, the slammer* or *choky*, warders are *screws*, and the prisoners are *lags*.

In the US the federal and state governments have **prisons**, sometimes called **penitentiaries** or **correctional facilities**. Counties and cities have **jails**. Federal prisons are classified as minimum, low, medium or high security. All **inmates**

(= prisoners) who can work must do so. People are sent to a **prison** if their sentence is for several years. If the sentence is a year or less they are sent to **jail**. Some prisoners on **work release** are allowed to leave jail during the day to go to a job. Prisoners often spend the last few months of their sentence in a **halfway house** where they are helped to prepare for life outside prison.

The number of people in prisons and jails in the US is higher as a proportion of the population than in any other country. In 2002 it went above two million for the first time, twice what it was in 1990. Problems include overcrowding and the use of drugs. The fact that over 10% of African American men aged between 25 and 29 are in prison compared to 1% of white men is seen as evidence that African Americans are treated unfairly by the justice system and are more likely to be sent to prison than white Americans.

In the US people who are waiting trial often do not go to prison but instead **make bail** (= pay money to the court) as a guarantee that they will return for the trial. People sent to prison as punishment rarely serve their full sentences but after some time are released **on parole**, which means they must report regularly to a government official. It is possible that two people who have committed the same crime may receive different punishment. To stop this happening some states have introduced **mandatory sentencing**, which means that the punishment for a crime is fixed by law, not decided by a judge.

PRIVACY

The British value their privacy (= having a part of their life that is not known to other people) and believe that everyone has a right to a **private life**. Many British people like to 'keep themselves to themselves' and do not discuss their private affairs. Things people like to keep private vary but may include personal relationships, family problems, how much they earn, their health, their political opinions, and sometimes what they do in their free time. It is considered rude to ask somebody about their private life, even if you know them well.

In the US the Constitution protects people's right to privacy. A police officer has no power to stop people and ask them what they are doing unless they have committed a crime. Information about people can be shown to others only under special circumstances, and usually only with their permission. When newspapers print details about the family life of a politician or film actor they are often criticized for **invasion of privacy**. On the other hand, actors and politicians tell the press about their family life for publicity reasons, and ordinary Americans appear on television talk shows where they discuss their bad marriages, health problems and how they cannot control their children. The apparent contradiction in attitudes may be explained by the fact that Americans believe strongly in the right to privacy, but as long as that right is respected, they are happy to give it up. They believe it is better to be open and honest than to have secrets. The British may be less willing than Americans to talk about their own lives but they have an equally strong desire to know about the private lives of famous people. There is a constant argument, for instance, about the extent to which the media should be allowed to report the private lives of members of the royal family.

Americans don't tell the world everything about their lives. Money and sex are rarely discussed. Husbands and wives usually know how much each other earns, but other family members do not. People may say how much they paid for something, especially if the price was low, but asking somebody else how much they paid is acceptable only for small things, not a house or a car. In general people are happier offering information than being asked for it.

Being given advice can also disturb an American's sense of privacy because it seems to suggest that somebody else can solve your problem better than you can yourself. When offering advice, people use indirect language, and instead of saying, 'You should do this', they may say, 'I tried doing this, and it worked for me'.

PUB (*formal* **public house**) (in Britain)

A building where people go to drink and meet their friends which serves a range of alcoholic drinks and soft drinks. Pubs are important in the social life of many people in Britain. People often go to the pub nearest their home, known as their **local**. Pubs have their own character and atmosphere. Some attract young people by playing loud music, others have large television screens so that people can watch sport and there are also traditional village pubs which are often very old and are the centre of village life. Most pubs have more than one **bar** (= a room to drink in) where drinks are sold from a counter, also called a **bar**. Often people in a group will take it in turns to go to the bar to buy a **round** (= a drink for each person in the group). The most popular drinks are beer and lager. **Tied houses** (= pubs owned by

breweries) sell beers made by the company and **guest beers** from other breweries, and **free houses** (= pubs not owned by a brewery) offer beers made by several different companies, often including **real ales** made using traditional methods. Pubs usually sell crisps and nuts and many do simple **pub meals** such as sausage and chips or a ploughman's lunch. Others, sometimes called **gastro-pubs**, sell a wider range of food and are like restaurants. Under Britain's **licensing law** alcohol can only be sold to people over 18, and children under 14 are not allowed in pubs unless there is a **family room**, a room without a bar, or an outside area called a **beer garden**. Before 1998 pubs were only allowed to open at luchtime and in the evening, but since then **opening hours** have become more flexible so that pubs can open all day and even for 24 hours if they have a licence to do so. When **closing time** approaches, the **barman** or **barmaid** rings a bell and calls out 'Last orders!', to give customers time to order one more one more drink. After the bar person has called 'Time!' customers are allowed ten minutes **drinking-up time** to finish their drinks and leave. Pubs always have a name which is shown on a brightly painted sign hanging outside with a picture on it. Many names are hundreds of years old and may have their roots in legends, such as *St George and the Dragon*, some are named after kings and queens or historical figures, and others refer to things in country life, such as *The Plough* or *The Bull*.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Public schools are, in most of Britain, **independent schools** and, despite their name, are not part of the state education system. Schools run be the state are called state schools. In Scotland however, which has a separated education system from the rest of Britain, the term *public school* refers to a state school. Only about 10% of children attend independent public schools, and their parents have to pay **fees** that may amount to many thousand pounds a year. A small number of children from less wealthy families win **scholarships**, in which case their fees are paid for them.

Many of Britain's 200 public schools are very old. They include Eton, Harrow, Winchester and, for girls, Cheltenham Ladies' College and Roedean. Most public schools were single-sex schools but many now teach girls and boys together. Public schools were originally grammar schools which offered free education to the public and were under public management. This was in contrast to private schools which were privately owned by the teachers. Since the 19th century, the term *public school* has been applied to grammar schools that began taking fee-paying pupils as well as children paid for from public funds.

Most pupils go to public school at the age of 13, after attending private prep schools. Many public schools are **boarding schools** where students live during term-time. Most have a **house system**, with **boarders** living in one of several **houses** under the charge of a **house-master** or **housemistress**. Older pupils are chosen as **prefects** (= pupils who have authority over younger pupils) and in a few schools younger pupils have to do small jobs for the senior pupils. This is sometimes called *fagging* and was usual in most public schools in the past. at most schools pupils have to wear a school uniform and at some of the oldest schools this is very old fashioned. Sport is an important part of the curriculum and schools compete against each other in cricket, Rugby, football, hockey, rowing, etc. Many schools have a chapel where pupils attend Anglican services and there are also a small number of Roman Catholic public schools.

Public schools aim for high academic standards and to provide pupils with the right social background for top jobs in the Establishment. A much higher proportion of students from public schools win university places, especially to Oxford and Cambridge Universities, than from state schools. Former public school students may also have an advantage when applying for jobs because of the '**old school tie**', the **old boy network** through which a former public school pupil is more likely to give a job to somebody from a public school, especially his own public school, than to someone from a school in the state system. Some people send their children to public school mainly for this reason; others believe public schools provide a better education than state schools. Public schools have in the past been associated with strict discipline, bullying and occasionally homosexuality.

In the US a *public school* is a school run by the government. Schools that students have to pay to attend a called **private school**. There are many private schools in the US, some of which are boarding schools. Some, like Phillips Exeter Academy and the Bath Academy, are very similar to Britain's public schools. They are very expensive, have a

high reputation, and many of their students come from rich and well-known families. Children often go to the same school as their parents. Many of the most famous schools of this sort are in New England.
Some US private schools give special attention to a particular area of study. There are, for example, schools for people who are good at music or art. Military schools are often chosen by parents who are in the armed forces, or who think their children need a lot of discipline. Religious groups also run private schools, although not all of the students who attend practice that religion. Schools run by the Catholic church are called **parochial schools**.
Private schools in the US are often single-sex and their students usually wear a uniform. This is unusual in American public schools. Parents choose a private school for their children for a number of reasons, but in general they believe that the quality of education is higher in private schools, and there is some evidence to support this. Most private schools offer scholarships to students from poorer families, and in some parts of the US the government may under certain circumstances pay for children to attend a private school.

PUNISHMENT
Punishment for people who break the law is decided in a court of law. In the US federal, state and local governments each have their own systems of law and of punishment. The Constitution forbids 'cruel and unusual punishment', but it is the responsibility of the Supreme Court to decide whether a punishment is 'cruel and unusual'. In Britain, the Scottish legal system is different from that in England and Wales, but methods of punishment are similar throughout Britain.
When an accused person is found guilty of a crime the judge decides what punishment they should suffer. In both Britain and the US the least serious offences are punished by **fines** which must be paid to the court. Fines or **fixed penalties** (= fines at a level decided in advance) are often **imposed** for minor traffic offences such as parking illegally and can be paid by post without the need to go to court.
If a fine is not considered adequate, a person may be **sentenced** to do community service (= work without pay in hospitals, homes for old people, etc.) or be put **on probation** (= required to have regular meetings with a social worker over a set period). When the crime committed is more serious, the **convicted** person is likely to be given a prison sentence. If it is their **first offence** the sentence may be **suspended** (= only carried out if the person is found guilty of another crime) and the person is allowed to remain free on a **conditional discharge**.
If a person is given a prison sentence its length depends on how serious their crime is and on their past **record**. If a person thinks the sentence is too severe they have the right to **appeal** against it in a higher court, which has the power to reduce the sentence. As a reward for good behavior prisoners are often given **remission** (= are released early). Others get **parole**, which means that they can go free as long as they do not commit any further crimes. In the US the number of people on probation has increased in recent years, as there is not always room in prisons for all those given a prison sentence. A variety of **non-custodial punishments** (= ones not requiring time in prison) have been tried in both Britain and the US, including **electronic tagging**. This punishment requires people to stay in their home and wear a device that informs the police if they leave.
In Britain the maximum sentence that can be **handed down** by a judge is a **life sentence**, which in fact usually means spending about 20-25 years in prison. Convicted murderers are given life sentences. The most serious punishment in the US is the **death penalty**. Not all states allow capital punishment, and in those that do, before it can be carried out there may be many years of appeals.

RACING
Horse racing has been popular as a **spectator sport** throughout the British Isles for hundreds of years. It was also the first sport organized in the American colonies. This was in 1664 on Long Island, New York. Four years later the first Americans sports trophy, a silver bowl, was presented there.
There are two main types of horse racing. In **flat racing** horses run against each other over a set distance. In National Hunt racing, also called **steeplechasing**, horses jump over fences and ditches round a course. the main **flat races** in Britain each year are the English Classics, five races for three-year-old horses. These are the Derby and the Oaks (both run at Epsom), the Thousand Guineas and the Two Thousand Guineas (run at Newmarket) and the St Leger (run at Doncaster). The four-day Royal Ascot meeting is an important social occasion, attended by members of the royal

family. The most famous **steeplechase** is the Grand National, which was first run in 1836 and which takes places each spring at Aintree. Many people who take no interest in horse racing have a bet on this race. Racing attracts people from all levels of British society but only the rich can afford to own and train a **racehorse**.

In the US flat racing is called **thoroughbred racing** or just racing, **steeplechasing** is not often seen. The most famous race is the Kentucky Derby, which began in 1875 and is run each year at Louisville, Kentucky. This is a big event on national television, and informal bets are made in offices and homes, even in states where gambling is illegal. Other important races are the **Preakness** at Baltimore, Maryland, and the Belmont Stakes at Elmont, New York. Only 11 horses have won the triple crown since 1919, and none since 1978. The most famous was Citation.

Famous British and US jockeys have included Willie Carson, Pat Eddery, Lester Piggott, Peter Scudamore, Willie Shoemaker, LaffitPincay, Angel Cordero, Steve Cauthen, Kieren Fallon and Frankie Dettori. Horses famous in Britain have included Arkle, Desert Orchid, Nijinsky, Red Rum, Best Mate and Shergar, and in the US Galant Fox, Secretariat, Affirmed, Man o' War, Native Dancer and Cigar, which was chosen **Horse of the Year** in 1995 and 1996.

A type of race popular in America is **harness racing**, in which a horse pulls a small two-wheeled cart called a **sulky** with its driver. The most famous race is the Hambletonian, popularly called the 'Hambo', at the Meadowlands Racetrack in New Jersey. Harness racing's triple crown is the Hambletonian, the Kentucky Futurity, and the Yonkers Trot.

Betting on the result of a race is for many British people in important part of the sport and contributes to the atmosphere of excitement and tension at a **race-course**. before a race starts **bookmakers** take bets, calculate **the odds** and say which horse is the **favourite**. People can also bet on a race on the Internet or at a **bookmaker's** or **betting shop**. Betting shops show live television broadcasts of races.

Americans also like to **play the ponies**. People can bet beside the track or **off-track**. Telephone bets can be made in some states. Even though many Americans do not approve of betting, most have accepted horse racing as an exciting sport and a US tradition. This is reflected in popular culture. *Camptown Races* is one of Stephen Foster's most popular songs. Damon Funyon set many of his short stories at race tracks, the mystery novels of Dick Frances are set in the world of racing and Hollywood has produced popular films about racing such as *National Velvet* (1945) and *The Black Stallion* (1980).

RADIO

People in Britain listen to the radio a lot, especially in the morning and the early evening or while they are in their cars. Many people rely on the radio to hear the latest news. Later in the evening television attracts larger audiences. Radio used to be called **the wireless**, but this is now very old-fashioned.

Around 50% of the British radio audience listen to the BBC; the rest listen to independent **commercial radio**, which has advertising. There are ten national BBC **radio stations**. Radio 1 plays new rock, pop and dance music, Radio 2 broadcasts popular music, comedy and documentaries, Radio 3 offers classical music, jazz and arts programmes, Radio 4 broadcasts popular news and current affairs programmes such as *Today*, drama and arts programmes, and Radio 5 Live has sport and news. The other BBC stations, which cater for more specific interests and can be listened to only on **digital radio**, are 1Xtra, Five Live Extra, 6Music, BBC7 and Asian Network. The BBC also operates the World Service, which broadcasts to most parts of the world. Independent radio stations which broadcast in competition with the BBC and are paid for from advertising include Classic FM, Virgin Radio, Talk Sport and in London, Capital FM. There are also several commercial digital stations such as Core, Planet Rock and One Word. Programmes broadcast by the BBC and the main independent stations are listed in the *Radio Times* and *TV Times* and in national newspapers.

Many people also listen to **local radio**. Local radio stations concentrate on local news, traffic reports and pop music. Smaller stations are run by students or by hospitals for their patients. Ofcom issues licences to commercial broadcasters.

In the US there are more than 13000 radio stations. Many people listen to the radio during **drive time**, the time when they are travelling to or from work. There are no national radio stations, but there are **networks**, groups of stations that are associated with each other. The network **affiliates** (= stations in the group) use some of the same programmes. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), a part of the US government, issues licences to radio stations and says what **frequency** they can use. The FFC also gives a station its **call letters**, the letters that it uses to identify itself. Many stations make their name from their call letters or frequency, e.g. *Sunny 95.*

Each station has a specific **format** (= style of programmes), which it hopes will be popular with its **listernership** (*AmE* for 'audience'). Some stations play a particular kind of music, such as 'top 40' (= popular songs) or country music. Other stations have **talk radio** and **phone-in programmes**, in which radio **presenters** discuss an issue and invite people listening to telephone the station and take part in the discussion. Ethnic radio stations operated by people from particular cultural groups offer programmes in languages other than English. Some stations broadcast religious **programming**. In 2004 Air America Radio was started as a new network that aims to offer a politically liberal radio to stations nationwide.

Many towns also have a **public radio station**, which is part of the NPR network. Public radio stations often have public affairs programming and classical music, which is not common on commercial radio. The Broadcasting Board of Governors, an independent agency of the US government, operates the Voice of America, which brings information about the US, its culture and language to people around the world.

RAILWAYS AND RAILROADS

The world's first railway along which passengers travelled on trains pulled by **steam locomotives** was opened in 1825 between Stockton and Darlington in north-east England. By the early 1900s, when railways reached the height of their popularity, there were about 23000 miles/37000 kilometres of railway **track**. Victorian engineers such as Isambard Kingdom Brunel designed bridges for the railway, and architects designed elaborate station buildings such as St Pancras in London.

The railway played a vital role in Britain's industrial development during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Later, with the invention of the internal combustion engine (= the type of engine used in cars), road transport became more popular for both goods and passengers. In 1947 regional railway companies were nationalized and became British Rail (later BR), but following the Beeching report in 1963 many **lines** (= routes) were closed in order to save money. In 1994 the government decided that BR should be returned to private ownership. Tracks and stations were made the responsibility of a company called Railtrack, while trains were once again operated by several companies on a regional basis. People have been encouraged to use trains and other forms of public transport to help reduce fuel consumption and pollution.

The railway network connects all the major towns in Britain, and now, via the Channel Tunnel, links Britain with France and Belgium. Railways are used for both short and long journeys, for commuting to work each day, and for transporting **freight**. In 2003 more than a billion journeys were made by rail in Britain and rail travel had increased by 36% in ten years. Some routes are now electrified and have high-speed trains. Others still rely on diesel-powered locomotives. Some trains are old, dirty and overcrowded. They also have a reputation for being late, and jokes are often made about the excuses given for delay. These have included 'leaves on the line' in autumn, and 'the wrong kind of snow'. Tickets are quite expensive, although students and old people can get **railcards** which entitle them to cheaper fares.

Following several major railway accidents and the failure of the Railtrack company in 2002 the government set up Network Rail to be responsible for the railway system used by the **train operating companies**, private companies which run the trains. These companies provide information about trains to the public through their organization, National Rail.

Most Americans have never been on a train. This is sad because the **railroads**, as they are generally called in the US, were the means by which the Old West was settled. Passenger trains today mainly serve commuters around large cities. The only major long distance railway business is done by **freight trains** (*BrE* also **goods trains**)

The first US rail company was the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in 1828, but its **cars** (*BrE* **carriages**) were pulled by horses. Steam power was used by the 1830s, and the Pullman car was invented in 1856. The Civil War led to the rapid

development of railroads, and the nation was connected from east to west in 1869 when the Union Pacific Railroad and Central Pacific joined their tracks in Utah. The 20th century brought more powerful locomotives and huge stations, like Grand Central in New York. The greatest period of US railroads began in the middle of the 19th century and lasted about 100 years. This time has been celebrated with popular songs like *I've Been Working on the Railroad, Freight Train Blues, John Henry, Chattanooga Choo Choo, Orange Blossom Special* and *Casey Jones*. Trains and railroad workers were also the subjects of many films and novels.

After World War II car ownership greatly increased and people no longer used trains as a means of transport. Union Pacific, once known for its two-level 'dome lounge cars' from which passengers could see the scenery, stopped long-distance passenger services in 1971. Amtrak, a company controlled by the government, now runs the California Zephyr, the Texas Eagle and other trains but it is not very successful in attracting passengers.

Some Americans are **train buffs** and take special steam locomotive trips. Americans also collect model trains, some of which, including the heavy Lionel sets from the 1940s, are now valuable. In Britain old and young alike visit railway museums at e.g. Didcot and York. **Trainspotting** (= recording the names and registration numbers of locomotives) used to be a popular hobby, especially boys, but is less common now.

RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION

Received Pronunciation, often called **RP**, is the accent that is widely accepted as the standard accent in British English. Although only about 5% of British people speak with an RP accent, it is considered the correct form of speech. Pronunciations given in most dictionaries are RP, or an adapted form of it.

RP is a social accent not linked a any particular region of Britain, though it developed originally from the form of Middle English spoken around London. At that time London was the economic centre of England and the place where people were trained for professions such as the law. From the 15th century it became a centre for publishing. RP was the accent of upper-class people, and of the most highly educated people. The connection between RP and education was important in establishing the accent.

People became increasingly conscious of accent and by the late 19th century it was considered necessary to adopt RP and lose any trace of a regional accent in order to have a successful career, especially in the army of government. RP was spread among children of the upper and upper middle classed through the public school system. Others took elocution lessons in order to learn to speak 'properly'. Later, RP was taught in state schools. The public school accent and the **Oxford accent**, the accent adopted by some members of Oxford University, which many former public school pupils attended, are now considered by many to be rather artificial.

The RP spoken by members of the upper class, including the royal family, is called **advanced RP** or **marked RP**. Many people think that, like the Oxford accent, it sounds affected. It may be described as 'clipped' if it is spoken with a tight mouth, or 'plummy' if it sounds as though the speaker had a plum in his or her mouth. The vowel sounds of marked RP are distinctive, for example the 'a' in *sat* sounds more like the 'e' in *set*, the short 'o' in *cost* sounds like the long 'o' in *for*, and *really* and *rarely* sound the same.

The status of RP was strengthened in the 1920s after the BBC began radio broadcasts. For a long time announcers spoke with RP accents, and the accent became known as the **BBC accent**. Standard English, the form of English grammar considered correct, is, when spoken with an RP accent, sometimes called **BBC English**, **Oxford English**, or **the Queen's/King's English**.

Today the BBC uses announcers with regional accents although very strong regional accents are avoid because they would be difficult for many listeners to understand. Speakers with slight Scottish or Welsh accent are often chosen because these accents are considered more classless than English regional acents on the one hand or RP on the other. Most educated people now speak a modified form of RP with some regional variation.

RELIGION IN BRITAIN

In the Census of 2001, British people were asked for the first time to answer a question about their religion, although they were not forced to answer the question. 77% replied that they had a religion and 71% of them said that they were

Christian, 3% Muslim and 1% Hindu, with smaller groups replying that they were Sikh, Jewish or Buddhist. Although the majority of the population describe themselves as Christian, only a small proportion, about 4% go to church regularly. British people rarely discuss religion and feel that a person's religious beliefs are a private matter.

The established (= official) church in England is the Church of England. Members of the Church describe themselves informally as 'C of E'. in scotland it is the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, known by Scots as 'the kirk'. There is no established church in Wales and Northern Ireland. In Wales the Church of England is known as the Church in Wales. The Church is involved in political life as archbishops and some bishops are members of the House of Lords and are chosen by the Queen following the advice of the Prime Minister. The monarch must be a member of the Church of England and is its official head. Christian religious education is provided in state schools but children do not have to take part. About 10% of the population are Roman Catholic and there are also Catholic schools.

Protestant groups other than the church of England are called Free of Nonconformist Churches. The Free Churches include the United reformed Church, the Baptist Church and the Methodist Church. Nonconformist churches are also sometimes called chapels.

Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus in Britain are mainly from families who came to Britain after World War II from India and Pakistan, although there has been a Muslim community in Britain since the 16th century. Many Jews are from families who came to Britain as refugees from other countries in Europe at various times in the 19th and 20th centuries. Synagogues, mosques, Hindu temples and gurdwaras (= Sikh places of worship) are found in cities and many towns.

RELIGION IN THE US

In 2002 the largest Christian church in the US was the Roman Catholic Church with 63 million members, followed by the Southern Baptist Convention with 16 million members. There are many different Christian churches in the US and the majority of religious Americans are Protestant Christians. In 2001 76% of Americans described themselves as Christian. Although there is no established (= official) religion in the US, religion plays an important part in public life and churches are centres of social events and business activities as well as places of worship. The Pledge of Allegiance includes the phrase 'one nation under God' and the official US motto is 'In God We Trust'. Since the 1960s some Americans have tried to stop government support of religion. The Establishment Clause in the Constitution forbids the establishment of a state religion. In 1963 the Supreme Court decided it was 'unconstitutional' for students to pray or read the Bible in class but many schools ignore this ruling. What is taught about evolution in schools is a subject of much legal debate with some religious people objecting to the teaching of evolution as scientific fact and other Americans arguing that creationism (= the belief that the universe was made by God exactly as described in the Bible) is religion and should not be taught in schools.

The largest Protestant groups in the US are the Baptists. Other groups include Methodist, Lutherans, Presbyterians and Episcopalians, who are part of the Anglican communication. The Pentecostal Church is a charismatic church, where emotions are freely expressed and spiritual healing is practiced. Other Christian religious groups include the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Christian Scientists, the Mormons and the Seventh-Day Adventists. There are groups who have a special way of life apart from the modern world such as the Shakers, the Amish, the Mennonites and the Hutterites. There are many evangelical churches in the US and evangelists and televangelists include Billy Graham, Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell.

Other large religious groups in the US include Jews and Muslims. As in Britain many Jews came to the US as regugees from Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries.

RETIREMENT

In Britain most people retire in their sixties. The majority of men retire at 65. The **retirement age** for women used to be 60, but now many women retire at 65. Some people **take early retirement** (= choose to retire early) from about 50. In the US the usual retirement age is also 65. People can choose to retire earlier but may get less money from their pension. In the US, the phrase *early retirement* suggest that retirement has been proposed by a persons' employer as an alternative to them being made redundant (= unemployed). Companies do this sometimes when they need to reduce the number of people working for them. Since older people are usually paid more than younger ones, the company

may ask them to retire and hire younger people to replace them. A few people choose to continue working after the age of 65, though some employers require employees to retire between 65 and 70.
When somebody retired after many years with the same employer they used to be given a present by the company. Traditionally this was a gold watch or a clock. Now, few people work for the same company for all their working lives and do not receive a present from their employer. Instead, their colleagues contribute money for a present and organize a party.
A person's quality of life in retirement depends largely on the amount of money they have. Many receive pensions, some have savings in the bank. In Britain people have at least a basic pension from the state. In the US most people can receive social security benefits, and can get government help in paying for their medical care. Many retired people have to live on a **fixed income** and find retirement hard.
Now that older people have better health and live longer, people over retirement age are becoming an increasingly important economic and social force. The number of retired people in Britain and the US is growing, and through organizations like the American Association of Retired Persons and, in Britain, the National Pensioners Convention, they have increased power to demand the services they need and the rights they deserve. This is sometimes referred to as 'grey power'.

ROADS AND ROAD SIGNS

The US road system is the largest in the world, mainly because of the long distances between cities. The distances between Boston and San Francisco, for instance, is more than 3000 miles/4827 kilometres. The US began to build the interstate highway system in 1956. By 2004 it had more than 42000 miles/67578 kilometres of road. The interstate system greatly helped the country's economy, but it also hurt the economies of many small towns nt on an interstate. Interstates running north to south have odd numbers and those going from east to west have even numbers. They often have only two or three **lanes** in each direction through the countryside but may have eight or more each way through cities. The New Jersey Turnpike, for instance, has 14 lanes each way near New York City.
Other major roads in the US are called **superhighways**, **freeways**, **expressways**, **thruways** or **parkways**. There are also many country and local roads, called variously **arterial roads**, **feeder roads** or **farm roads**. Some states have **tollways** or **turnpikes**, on which drivers must pay a roll.
Interstate highways are marked with red and blue signs showing an 'I' followed by the road's number. Other US highways have red, white and blue signs. Some states roads, like those in Louisiana and Texas, have signs in the shape of the state. Since 1995 states have been able to set their own speed limits. This usually 65 or 70 mph/105 or 112 kph on interstate roads but lower on other main roads.
In Britain the fastest and most direct routes between major cities are by motorways, which usually have three lanes of traffic in each direction and a speed limit of 70/112 kph. Each motorway is identified by the letter 'M' and a number. Main roads other than motorways are called **A-roads** and are numbered A6, A34, etc. Some A-roads are **dual carriageways** with two or more lanes each way. Most A-roads now follow a **bypass** round towns. Narrower roads which have only one lane in each direction are called **B-roads**. Most roads have **white lines** and **Catseyes**™)= objects sunk into the ground that reflect a car's lights) down the middle. Only a very few roads have tolls but Britain's first toll motorway, the M6 Toll opened in 2003 as an alternative to the heavily used M6 near Birmingham. Narrow country roads below B-road standard may be known locally by the name of the place they go to, e.g. Orston Lane.
In Britain the Highway Code describes the many signs placed beside roads. Red circular signs give instructions that must by law be obeyed. These include 'no overtaking' signs and signs about speed limits. Red triangular signs give warnings about possible dangers ahead, e.g. slippery roads. Direction signs to major towns are blue on motorways and green on other roads; signs to smaller places are white. Old-fashioned **signposts** can still be seen in some country areas.
In the US red road signs, like 'Stop', must be obeyed. Signs that indicate danger, as in areas where rocks might fall, have a yellow diamond shape. Arrows indicating bends in the roads are shown in green circles on white signs. Many other US road signs are now similar to those in Europe.

In Britain there is pressure from both business and private road users for more and better roads, despite the damage to the environment and increase in pollution that this may cause. People who are against the building of new roads regularly challenge proposed routes of new motorways or bypasses. If they fail, environmentalists set up protest camps along the route of the new road. Recently, experts too have cast doubt on the wisdom of building more roads, saying it simply encourages greater use of cars. In the US there are few protests against road building. People generally want more roads to make their journeys faster and more convenient.

ROMAN BRITAIN

The Romans occupied Britain from around 55BC to AD410 and there are many signs of the occupation still visible today at archeological sites and Roman roads and walls stretching across the countryside.

Julius Caesar came to Britain in 55BC and 54BC, defeating some of the local Celtic tribes and introducing taxes and establishing trade. When, in AD43, this was under threat, the emperor Claudius ordered an invasion and southern Britain became **Britannia**, a province of the Roman Empire which was ruled by a Roman **governor**. In AD78 the governor Agricola brought Wales under Roman control, but failed to conquer the Picts and other Scottish tribes in the north. The emperor Hadrian visited Britain in AD122 and after that Hadrian's Wall, much of which can still be seen today, was built between Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Bowness marking the northern frontier of the province.

The Romans founded over 20 large towns called **coloniae**, including Colchester which was built as the new capital, Gloucester and Lincoln. It took many years before a town had all the things expected by a Roman citizen, such as a forum (= meeting place) with shops and a town hall, and baths and theatres, which were all highly decorated. London developed first as a trading centre and became the focus for several roads, soon replacing Colchester as the capital. Many roads were built to transport soldiers to border areas and for travel between towns, the most famous of which are Watling Street which ran from Dover to London and then on to St Albans and Chester, Ermine Street between London and York and the Fosse Way which ran from Exeter to Lincoln.

By AD410, when Roman officials left Britain, the country had already been attacked by the Picts and invaded by Germanic tribes from northern Europe. More soldiers were sent to defend the province, but when part of the army was moved to deal with trouble elsewhere, the British rebelled against Roman rule and Roman influence declined. Germanic settlers, the Angles, Saxons and Jutes, began arriving in Britain from about AD430 and took over much of the south and east of the country.

RUGBY

Rugby is a fast, rough team game that is played throughout the British Isles. The game split off from British football in the mid 19th century when the Football Association forbade players to handle the ball. There are two **codes** of Rugby football, **Rugby Union** and **Rugby League**, which have slightly different rules and scoring systems. In Rugby League each team has 13 players, compared with 15 in Rugby Union. Players sometimes change from one code to the other during their careers.

In Rugby, teams try to **win possession** of a large oval-shaped ball and carry or kick it towards the opposing team's **goal line**, the line at each end of the **pitch** where the H-shaped **goalposts** are. If the ball is **touched down** (= put down by hand) on the grass beyond the touchline, a **try** (worth five points in Rugby Union, four points in Rugby League) is scored. A further two points are scored if the try is **converted** (= kicked between the goalposts, above the horizontal crossbar). Points can also be obtained from **penalty goals** scored as a result of **free kicks**, and from **drop goals** (= kicks at the goal during play). Players try to stop opponents carrying and passing the ball by **tackling** them. When a minor rule is broken players restart play by forming a **scrum** (= linking together in a group) ô by taking a free kick.

Rugby Union, also called **rugger**, is the older of the two Rugby codes. It is said to have begun at Rugby School in 1823. Rugby Union is played mainly by men, though there are now some women's teams. The most important national competitions include the county championship, the Pilkington Cup and the Schweppes Welsh Cup.

Rugby League broke away from Rugby Union in the 1890s. rugby had become popular among adults in northern England and many could not afford to take time off work to play in matches without being paid. The Northern Union, later called the **Rugby League**, was formed in 1895 and soon had many full-time paid professional players. The most important competitions include the Challenge Cup and the League Championship. The two codes may reunite in the

future, particularly since in 1995 the International Rugby Board allowed Rugby Union players to become paid professionals.
National Rugby Union teams from England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland play against each other for the triple crown. The teams also play with France and Italy in the annual Six Nation's Championship, and against Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and other countries. Major international grounds include Twickenham and Murrayfield.
Most Americans have little knowledge of Rugby and in the US it is mostly played by amateur players in colleges and universities. Rugby was first played in the US in 1874 at Harvard University, but after the development of American football in about 1880 it almost disappeared. It continued to be played in California, but it was not until 1975 that the USA Rugby Football Union was established in Denver. By 1998, 1420 clubs were associated with the organization. Competitions include the Saint Patrick's Day Tournament in El Paso, Texas, the Aspen Ruggerfest in Aspen, Colorado, and, for women, the Mardi Gras Tournament in New Orleans.

SANTA CLAUS

Santa Claus, also called simply **Santa** or, in Britain, **Father Christmas**, is a fat, cheerful old man with a long white beard who brings children their presents on Christmas Eve. Traditionally, he wears a bright red suit, a red hat lined with white fur and shiny black boots. Santa Claus is said to live at the North Pole and to have a workshop there where he and his elves makes toys. Santa Claus is also called **St Nick** and identified with St Nicholas, who lived in the 4th century AD and is the patron saint of children.
In the period before Christmas children write letters to Santa telling him what gifts they would like. In Britain these letters are 'posted' up the chimney or sent to local newspapers, which arrange for Santa to send a reply. Children are careful to behave well, because Santa only brings toys to good children.
During this time Santa can also be found visiting many large shops, so that children can sit on his knee and tell him what presents they would like. In Britain children have to pay to enter Santa's **grotto** and in return receive a small gift from him; in America visiting Santa is free.
On 24 December, the night before Christmas, children hang **stockings** (= long stocks) at the end of their beds. Santa leaves the North Pole with a **sled** or **sleigh**. Santa's sled is pulled by **reindeer** called Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen and Rudolph who know how to fly. They travel through the air stopping on the roof of every house where a child is sleeping. Santa slides down the chimney and leaves big presents under the Christmas tree and small ones in the stockings. He usually finds that the children have left him a plate of **Christmas cookies** or, in Britain, a **mince pie** (= a small pastry containing dried fruits), and possibly salt or a carrot for his reindeer.
Santa Claus in an important symbol of Christmas, and pictures of him appear on Christmas cards and decorations. He is mentioned in poems and Christmas songs such as *The Night Before Christmas* and *Rudolph, the Red-nosed Reindeer*. As children get older they realize that Santa Claus cannot be real and stop believing in him.

SEASIDE AND BEACH

In the 18th century British people started going to the **seaside** for pleasure and for their health. Seaside towns such as Brighton, Lyme Regis and Scarborough became fashionable with the upper class. **Bathing** in the sea became popular and bathing machines were invented for people to get changed in. later, towns like Blackpool, Clacton-on-Sea and Margate, which were close to industrial areas or to London, developed into large **seaside resorts** to which workers went for a day out or for their holiday. Long piers were built stretching out to sea and soon had a wide range of amusements built on them. **Promenades** were built along the shore for people to walk along. Rows of **beach huts** and **chalets** (= buildings where people could get changed or sit and have tea) took the place of bathing machines, and **deckchairs** were for hire on the beach. There where ice-cream sellers, whelk stalls, stalls selling buckets and spades for children to build sandcastles, and the occasional Punch and Judy show. In the early 1990s it became popular to send seaside postcards to friends. Children bought seaside **rock**, a long sugary sweet with the name of the place printed through it.

Most British people like to go to the sea for a day out or for a weekend. Resorts like Blackpool are still popular, but others are run-down and rather quiet. British people now prefer to go on holiday to **beach resorts** in Spain, Greece or the Caribbean because the weather is more likely to be sunny and warm.

Americans talk of going to the **ocean** or the **beach**, rather than the seaside. Some places, especially on the East coast, have very popular beaches and people travel long distances to go there. Florida is especially popular and at **spring break** (= a holiday in the spring for high school and college students) it is full of students.

Beach activities include swimming, **surfing** and **wind-surfing**, also called sailboarding. Many people go to the beach but never go into the water. They spend their time playing games like **volleyball** (= hitting a large ball backwards and forwards over a net) and **Frisbee** (= throwing a flat plastic disc). Other people go to the beach to get a **tan** and spend all their time **sunbathing**. Many people worry about getting skin cancer if they get burnt by the sun and so put on **sun cream** or **sun block** to protect their skin. A day at the beach often also involves a picnic meal or, especially in the US, a **barbecue** (= meat cooked over an open fire).

SKYSCRAPERS

Skyscrapers are very tall buildings that contain offices or places to live. The first were built in Chicago in the late 1880s but they have since been copied all over the world. After 1913 the top few storeys of skyscrapers were often stepped back (= built gradually narrower, floor by floor, to allow more light to reach street level).

Many of the most famous skyscrapers are in New York City. The Chrysler Building, at 1047 feet/319 metres, was by far the tallest building in the world in 1930 when it was built. The taller Empire State Building, 1250 feet/381 metres high, was finished the following year. The towers of the World Trade Center, built in the early 1970s, were about 1350 feet/412 metres tall. Many visitors to New York took the ferry to Staten Island so that they could see the **Manhattan skyline**, the outline of all the tallest buildings in New York.

The Sears Tower in Chicago, built shortly after the World Trade Center, is said to be 1454 feet/443 metres high and is currently the tallest building in the US. The Petronas Tower, built in 1996 in Malaysia, are about 1483 feet/452 metres tall, though some people in Chicago disagreed with the way they were measured and say that the Sears Tower is really taller. But in 2004 the Taipei 101 Tower in Taiwan became the world's tallest building at 1660 feet/507 metres high.

By comparison with skyscrapers in the US, those in Britain are rather small. Canary Wharf, an office building in London's Docklands, stands only 800 feet/244 metres high but it replaced Tower 42, also in London, as Britain's tallest building in 1986. Other skyscrapers in the City of London include the Lloyds Building, designed by Richard Rogers.

Skyscrapers which contain people's homes are, in Britain, usually called **high-rises** or **tower blocks**. They became a common feature of British cities when hundreds of them were built to replace slums in the 1950s and 1960s. Many are 20 or 30 storeys high, and have several flats on each floor. The tallest residential block in Britain is the Shakespeare Tower, part of the Barbican complex in London, which is 419 feet/128 metres high. At first, high-rises were welcomed because they provided cheap, modern housing but later they were not considered desirable places to live. Many suffered from lack of repair and have been pulled down. People who live in high-rises often complain that they are not private enough, that there is nowhere for children to play, and that they feel cut off from life in the street. Other people argue that the buildings provide housing for large numbers of people and that it is the failure to maintain the buildings that has made them unattractive places to live.

SLANG

Slang words are very informal words. They may be new, or existing words used in a new sense and context. As time goes by, some are used more widely and are no longer thought of as slang. *Clever* and *naughty*, for instance, were both formerly slang words that are now accepted as standard. Many slang words die out after a few years or sooner. The regular introduction of new words to replace them helps keep the language alive.

A lot of slang words are restricted to a particular social group. Use of slang suggests an easy, informal relationship between people and helps reinforce social identity. In the 18th century the word *slang* described the language of criminals, but since then every group in society has developed its own slang terms. The groups that use most slang are

still those closest to the edge of society: criminals, prisoners and drug users. Young people also develop slang expressions to distance themselves from older people.

The **street language** of young people changes fast. Street slang includes words relating to young people's attitudes. Young people today may describe something exciting as *cool, massive, wicked,* or (especially in *AmE*) *bad* or *phat*. If something is old-fashioned or undesirable it is *naff*. Anything bad is *rank* or *minging*. A *geek, prat, anorak, nerd* or *dweeb* is somebody who seems rather stupid. Going out and having a good time is *chilling*. As people get older they sometimes keep on using the same slang words and in this way slang may indicate a person's age. The parents of today's young people used *great, super, fab, swinging, square* or *berk* and *clot*, when they were young, and many of them still use these words. Some older people try to use current street slang in order not to seem old-fashioned, though in many cases it sounds odd and inappropriate.

A lot of street slang refers to drink, drugs and sex. Many of these words and phrases are not socially acceptable and are widely considered rude and offensive. The expressions *pissed, hammered* and *rat-arsed* relate to being drunk. There are many expressions for vomiting after drinking too much, e.g. *blowing chunks, chundering* or (*AmE*) *praying to the porcelain god*. Slang words for drugs include *smack* (heroin) and *crack* (cocaine). Expressions connected with drug-taking include *chasing the dragon* (= smoking heroin in tinfoil) and *jacking/banging up* (= injecting drugs). Some of these terms have become more widely known through films like *Trainspotting*. *Shagging, screwing* and *getting your leg over* all refer to sex. Other common slang expressions refer to the body's waste functions, e.g. *piss, take a leak, have a shit* and *take a dump*. Some words, such as *fuck* and *shit*, have become frequently used swear words but they are still likely to offend many people.

Slang words are also widely used for things found in everyday life. The television, for instance, can be called the *box* and the remote control the *flicker* or *zapper*. The *blower* or the *horn* is the telephone. A *dive* or a *hole* is a cheap restaurant, bar or nightclub. Money can be referred to as *dough, dosh, dollars* (whatever the currency) or *moolah*.

Some slang expressions are **euphemisms**. Many older people use euphemisms for bodily functions, e.g. *spend a penny, powder your nose,* and *visit the bathroom*. Some common serious diseases have slang names which are lighter in tone than the formal name, e.g. *the big C* for cancer. Somebody with a bad heart has a *dicky ticker*. People use expressions like *pass away, kick the bucket* or *pop your clogs* to refer to dying. In business, some companies, instead of sacking or firing an employee, may speak of *letting them go* or (*AmE*) *dehiring them*.

Some professions and areas of work have their own terms, often called **jargon**, which are different from slang. Many people learn buts of the jargon of other groups through television programmes and films about hospitals, law courts, prisons, etc. Some of the jargon used by people who work with computer has also become well known. Most people know, for instance, that a *hacker* is somebody who gets into other people's computer systems without permission.

SLAVERY

Slavery has been practiced in many countries, but played a particularly important role in the history of the US. The first **slaves**, who were considered to be the property of another person and to have no rights of their own, were taken from Africa to North America by the Dutch in 1619 and by the time of the American Revolution (1775) there were 500000 slaves, mostly in the South. Slaves were taken from Africa in ships in very bad conditions, with many dying during the trip. Once they arrived, they worked mainly on cotton plantations where the quality of their lives depended on the treatment they received from their **master**.

After the Revolution, northern states made slavery illegal, but it continued in the South. It became illegal to bring slaves into the US in 1808, but by then many were being born there, so slaves markets continued. In the 1830s opposition to slavery grew from the **abolitionist movement**, whose leaders included William Lloyd Garrison who published an anti-slavery newspaper, *The Liberator* and Harriet Beecher Stowe who wrote a famous novel about a slave called *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* In 1831 a former slave, Nat Turner organized an **uprising** of slaves in Virginia and in 1859 a white man, John Brown tried to free some slaves. The work of the Underground Railroad had more effect, trying to help slaves escape to the North, and some people hoped to end slavery by sending slaves back to Africa, creating the new country Liberia in 1822. Laws were made to restrict slavery, but the South wanted it to expand and

politicians found it increasingly difficult to agree. In 1820 the Missouri Compromise said that Missouri would be admitted to the US as a **slave state** (= one where slavery was allowed) and Maine as a **free state** (= where slavery was not allowed). However, conflict between the North and South increased and in 1861 the slave states left the US, marking the start of the Civil War.

After the North won the Civil War and brought southern states back into the US, slavery was ended, but conditions did not improve for many slaves. Some moved to the North, but many of those who stayed in the South continued to work on the plantations where they were paid for their work but didn't get enough money to pay for food and clothes.

The British were also involved in slavery from the 17th century when many slaves were taken from Africa to British colonies in the Caribbean to work on sugar plantations. Many businessmen made a lot of money from the **triangular trade** between Britain, Africa and the West Indies. They transported cloth and iron goods to West Africa and exchanged them for slaves which were then taken to the West Indies and exchanged for sugar which was taken back to Bristol and other British ports for sale in Europe. The Quakers were among the first people to campaign against slavery and it was made illegal in Britain in 172, but campaigns led by William Wilberforce and others then grew for the total abolition of the **slave trade**. It was not until 1807 that it was made illegal for British ships to carry slaves and for British colonies to import them, and slavery was not finally abolished in the British Empire until 1833, when all slaves were set free and their owners were compensated.

SOAP OPERAS

Soap operas, also called **soaps**, are amongst the most popular television programmes. They are stories about the lives of ordinary people that are broadcast, usually in half-hour **episodes**, three times or more each week. Episodes broadcast during the week are often repeated in a single **omnibus** programme at the weekend. They are called *soap operas* because in the US they were first paid for by companies who made soap. Most soap operas have their own website and some people buy books about their favourite soap and visit the places where the stories are supposed to happen.

Most soap operas describe the daily lives of a small group of people who live in the same street or town or who work in the same place such as a hospital. The most successful soaps reflect the worries and hopes of real people, though the central **characters** frequently have exaggerated personal problems in order to make the programmes more exciting. Some **storylines** deal with sensitive social issues, such as alcoholism and racism.

In Britain soap operas are usually broadcast in the early evening. The longest-running soap opera in the world is *The Archers*, 'an everyday story of country folk', which began on BBC radio in the 1950s. The most popular of the television soaps is ITV's *Coronation Street*, first broadcast in 1960. Its main rival is the BBC's *EastEnders*. Other popular soaps include ITV's *Emmerdale*. *Neighbours* and *Home and Away*, both from Australia, are aimed at younger audiences. Older US soaps such as *Dallas* and *Dynasty*, are occasionally repeated on satellite television.

In the US, soap operas are also called **daytime dramas**. A few, like *Dynasty* and *Dallas*, have been successful in the evenings, but most soaps are broadcast during the afternoon. Though soaps have a limited audience, the names of many of the long-running ones, e.g. *Days of Our Lives, General Hospital* and *The Young and the Restless*, are well known. Many people who watch soaps have one or two favourites which they try never to miss.

SPORT AND FITNESS

The British are very fond of sport, but many people prefer to watch rather than take part. Many go to watch football, cricket, etc. at the ground, but many more sit at home and watch sport on television.

Most people today take relatively little general **exercise**. Over the last 30 or 40 years lifestyles have changed considerably and many people now travel even the shortest distances by car or bus. Lack of exercise combined with eating too many fatty and sugary foods has meant that many people are becoming too fat. Experts are particularly concerned that children spend a lot of their free time watching television or playing computer games instead of being physically active. In recent years, however, there has been a growing interest in fitness among young adults and many belong to a **sports club** or **gym**.

In Britain most towns have an amateur football and cricket team, and people also have opportunities to play sports such as tennis and golf. Older people may play bowls. Some people go regularly to a **sports centre** or **leisure centre**

where there are facilities for playing badminton and squash, and also a swimming pool. Some sports centres arrange classes in **aerobics**, **step** and **keep-fit**. Some people **work out** (= train hard) regularly at a local gym and do **weight training** and **circuit training**. A few people do judo or other **martial arts**. Others **go running** or **jogging** in their local area. For enthusiastic runners there are opportunities to take part in long-distance runs, such as the London marathon. Other people keep themselves fit by walking or cycling. Many people go abroad on a skiing holiday each year and there are several dry slopes and snowdomes in Britain where they can practice.

Membership of a sports club or gym can be expensive and not everyone can afford the subscription. Local sports centres are generally cheaper. **Evening classes** are also cheap and offer a wide variety of fitness activities ranging from yoga to jazz dancing. Some companies now provide sports facilities for their employees or contribute to the cost of joining a gym.

Sports play an important part in American life. professional baseball and football games attract large crowds, and many people watch games on television. Although many parents complain about their children being **couch potatoes** (= people who spend a lot of time watching television), there are sports sessions at school for all ages. College students are usually also required to take physical education classes to complete their studies.

Many popular keep-fit activities began in the US. Charles Atlas, Arnold Schwarzenegger and others inspired people to take up **body-building** (= strengthening and shaping the muscles). Many women joined the 'fitness craze' as a result of **video workouts** produced by stars such as Jane Fonda and Cindy Crawford which they could watch and take part in at home. New fitness books are continually being published and these create fashions for new types of exercise, such as **wave aerobics**, which is done in a swimming pool, and **cardio kick-boxing**, a form of aerobics which involves punching and kicking a punchbag. Many richer people employ their own **personal trainer**, either at home or at a **fitness centre**, to direct their exercise programme. Local YMCAs offer programmes which include aerobics, gym, running, weights, treadmills and rowing machines, as well as steam rooms and swimming. But many people just walk or jog in the local park or play informal games of baseball or football.

STANDARDS OF LIVING

The British enjoy the high standard of living of an industrialized western country. Most British people tend not to judge **quality of live** by money alone though, and would point out benefits such as a stable political situation, freedom of speech and choice, and relatively little official interference in their lives.

Disposable income (= the amount of money people have to spend after paying taxes) is commonly used to measure the standard of living. This has risen steadily since the 1960s and has more than doubled since 1978. People with low wages or who are unemployed, and people who have retired, have less income and a lower standard of living. Although disposable income has been rising in the country as a whole, the gap between rich and poor grew wider towards the end of the last century after the tax burden on the riches people was reduced in the 1980s. the distribution of wealth as opposed to income is even more uneven. In 2001 the richest 1% owned about 25% of the wealth and the poorer half of the population owned only 5% of total wealth. Standards of living also vary from region to region. The wealthiest region is the South-East. Figures published for 1999 show that, compared with an average of 15% of the population in the countries of the European Union living in low-income households, the figure for Britain was 19%. By 2002 it was 17%.

In the 1920s people in the US began to believe in the American dream, the idea that anyone who worked hard could have material goods as a reward. Having such goods proves that a person is hard-working, so many people try to have everything their neighbours have, a practice called 'keeping up with the Joneses'. As a result, American is often said to be a **consumer society**. The material standard of living is very high and the cost of living relatively low. Many Americans have large **discretionary incomes** (= money which they do not need for food and clothing and can spend as they choose) and can therefore buy many consumer goods but, as in Britain, there is a large and increasing gap between rich and poor as many people in low-paid jobs have not benefited from the general increases in income. In 2003, 12.5% of the population were living below the **poverty line**, the highest figure sin 1998.

TRANSLATION PRACTICE FOR READING COMPREHENSION

STATELY HOMES

In Britain there are many large stately homes that belong or used to belong to upper-class aristocratic families. The houses are called *stately homes* from the opening lines of a poem by Felicia Hermans (1793-1835). They are sometimes also called **country houses** because most of them are in the countryside. Some are approached through large iron gates down a long drive. Many have formal gardens and are surrounded by a large private **park**, often with a lake.

Stately homes range from small **manor houses** to **palaces**. Manor houses date from the 14th century and are often square stone buildings with a central **courtyard**, and some are entered by crossing a moat which was originally a means of defence. Some larger houses were built in the 16th century, including Hampton Court in south-west London, Burghley House near Peterborough and Hardwick Hall near Derby.

Many stately homes date from the 18th century, and are associated with famous architects. Blenheim Palace near Oxford was designed in the baroque style by Vanbrugh and Hawkmoor. Holkham Hall in Norfolk, designed only a few years later by William Kent is in the Palladian style. Kedledton Hall near Derby, the home of the Curzon family, was mainly the work of Robert Adam. The large estates attached to stately homes attracted landscape gardeners such as 'Capability' Brown, who laid out the gardens at Burghley, Blenheim and Chatsworth.

Stately homes are very expensive to look after and, in order to get enough money to do this, some owners open their houses to the public. They charge visitors an **admission fee**. Many stately homes have been given by their owners to the National Trust, an organization which raises money to look after them from gifts, membership fees and admission charge. In many cases, the former owners continue to live in part of the house. This arrangement means that the house is well cared for, and the family does not have to pay inheritance tax when the owner dies.

Visitors go to stately homes to admire their architecture, and to walk round the gardens. They also go to see valuable furniture, paintings, tapestries and china that have been collected over a long period. Sometimes, documents about the family or about historical events are also displayed. There is generally a café and a shop selling souvenirs. During the summer, concerts or plays may be performed in the house or gardens. Some owners have added other attractions: at Longleat House, for example, there is a safari park.

" The stately homes of England
How beautiful they stand!
Amidst their tall ancestral trees,
O'er all the pleasant land."
" The stately homes of England
How beautiful they stand!
To prove the upper classes
Have still the upper hand."

the first verse of Fecilia Hermans' poem followed by Noel Coward's 1938 version.

STONE'HENGE

Britain's most famous prehistoric monument, on Salisbury Plain in southern England. It consists of two circles of large standing stones, one inside the other. The inner circle consisted of arches made by laying one stone across the tops of two others. Some of these have fallen, but some are still in position. Stonehenge was built between 3000 and 1500 BC. Nobody knows why it was built, but many people think it was to study the stars and planets or tow worship the sun, because a line through its centre would point directly to the position of the rising sun on Midsummer's Day or of the setting sun in midwinter. Since the 1980s young people, including many hippies and New Age Travellers, have been going there for their own midsummer celebrations, but the police usually prevent them from getting near the stones. Stonehenge was made a World Heritage Site in 1986.

STREET NAMES

In Britain, main roads outside towns and cities are known by numbers rather than names. An exception is the A1 from London to north-eastern England, which is often called the Great North Road. Roads that follow the line of former Roman roads also have names, e.g. the Fosse Way. If a main road passes through a town, that part of it usually has a name, often that of the place which the road goes to, e.g. London Road.

The main shopping street in a town is often called High Street, or sometimes Market Street. Many streets take their name from a local feature or building. The most common include Bridge Street, Castle Street, Church Street, Mill Street and Station Road. Some names indicate the trade that was formerly carried on in that area. Examples are Candlemaker's Row, Cornmaket, Petticoat Lane and Sheep Street. Many streets laid out in the 19th century were named after famous people or events. These include Albert Street, Cromwell Road, Shakespeare Street, Wellington Street, Trafalgar Road and Waterloo Street. When housing estates are built, the names of the new roads in them are usually all on the same theme. Names of birds or animals are popular. Others are based on the old names for the fields that the houses were built on, e.g. Tenacres Road, The Slade and Meadow Walk. The name of a road is written on signs at each end of it, sometimes together with the local post code.

Some streets have become so closely identified with people of a particular profession that the street name itself is immediately associated with them. In London, Harley Street is associated with private doctors and Fleet Street with newspapers.

In the US main roads such as interstates and highways are known by numbers. Most towns and cities are laid out on a **grid** pattern and have long **streets** with **avenues** crossing them. Each has a number, e.g. 7th Avenue, 42nd Street. The roads are often straight and have square **blocks** of buildings between them. This makes it easier to find an address and also help people to judge distance. In Manhattan, for example, Tiffany's is described as being at East 57th Street and Fifth Avenue, i.e. on the corner of those two streets. The distance between West 90th Street and West 60th Street is 30 blocks.

As well as having numbers, many streets are named after people, places, local features, history and nature. In Manhattan there is Washington Street, Lexington Avenue, Liberty Street, Church Street and Cedar Street. Some streets are named after the town to which they lead. The most important street is often called Main Street. A **suburb** or **subdivision** of a city may have streets with similar names. In a subdivision of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, all the names end in 'wood', e.g. Balsawood Drive, Limewood Drive and Aspenwood Drive.

Some roads are called boulevards, with Hollywood's Sunset Boulevard and Miami's Biscayne Boulevard among the best known. Avenues usually cross streets, as in New York, but often the word is chosen as part of a name for no particular reason. *Avenue* and *boulevard* once indicated roads with trees along each side, but few have trees today. A *road* in the US is usually found outside cities, though Chicago uses the name for some central streets.

Some street names have particular associations: Grant Avenue in San Francisco is associated with Chinatown, Beale Street in Memphis with the blues, and Bourbon Street in New Orleans with jazz. In New York Wall Street is associated with financial world, Madison Avenue with advertising and Broadway with theatres.

STUDENT LIFE

The popular image of student life is of young people with few responsibilities enjoying themselves and doing very little work. this is often not true. Many older people now study at college or university, sometimes or a part-time basis while having a job and looking after a family. Many students are highly motivated and work very hard.

In Britain reduce government support for high education means that students can no longer rely on having their expenses paid for them. Formerly, students received a **grant** towards their living expenses. Now most can only get a **loan**, which has to be paid back. From 1999 they have had to pay a fixed amount towards **tuition fee** and from 2006 universities will be able to increase the amount up to a maximum of £3000 per year. In the US students already have to pay for **tuition** and **room and board**. Many get a **financial aid package** which may include grants, scholarships and loans. The fear of having large debts places considerable pressure on students and many take part-time jobs during the term and work full-time in the vacations.

Many students in Britain go to a university away from their home town. They usually live in a **hall of residence** for their first year, and then move into a rented room in a private house or share a house with **housemates**. They may go back home during vacations, but after they graduate most leave home for good. In the US too, many students attend colleges some distance from where their parents live. They may live **on campus** in one of the halls, or **off campus** in apartments and houses which they share with **roommates**. Some students, especially at larger universities, join a

fraternity or sorority, a social group usually with its own house near the campus. Fraternities and sororities often have names which are combinations of two or three letters of the Greek alphabet. Some people do not have a good opinion of them because they think that students who are members spend too much time having parties.
In Britain the interests of students are represented by a **student's union** which liaises with the university on academic matters, arranges social events and provides advice to students. Individual union are affiliated with (= linked to) the NUS. The student union building is usually the centre of student life and has a bar and common room, and often a restaurant and shops. British universities have a wide range of societies, clubs and social activities including sports, drama and politics. One of the highlights (= main events) of the year is **rag week**, a week of parties and fund-raising activities in support of various charities.
Especially in their first year, US students spend a lot of time on social activities. One of the most important celebrations, especially at universities which place a lot of emphasis on sports, is homecoming. Many **alumni** (= former students) return to their **alma mater** (= college) for a weekend in the autumn to watch a football game. During homecoming weekend there are also parties and dances, and usually a parade.
When social activities take up too much time, students **skip lectures** (= miss them) or **cut class** (*AmE)* and **take incomplete** (*AmE*), which means they have to finish their work after the vacation. In the US this has the effect of lowering their course grades, but most US universities expect this behavior from students and do little to stop it. Students are thought to be old enough to make their own decisions about how hard they work and to accept the consequence. A few students **drop out** (*AmE* **funk out**) but the majority try hard to get good grades and a good degree.

SUFFRAGETTES

The US has had major campaigns to win **suffrage** (= the right to vote in political elections) for two groups of people: women and African Americans. But the word *suffrage* is more closely associated with women's voting rights, and the women who took part in the movement were often called **suffragettes**. Today, most people in the US use the word **suffragists**, and it also includes the men who supported the movement.
The suffrage movement became important in the US in the second half of the 19th century. As early as 1848 a meeting was held in Seneca Falls, New York, to discuss the issue. But only in 1920 was the US Constitution changed to give women the right to vote. The **Nineteenth Amendment** to the Constitution is sometimes called the **Anthony Amendment**, after Susan B Anthony, who was an important suffragist.
In the late 19th and early 20th century women in Britain also began to demand the right to vote. After several bills promising them suffrage were defeated in Parliament, British suffragettes turned to violent protest. As well as holding noisy public meetings they chained themselves to iron railings and broke windows of government buildings. One suffragette, Emily Davison, threw herself in front of the king's horse during a race at Epsom and died from her injuries. When suffragettes were put in prison many of them went on hunger strike (= refused to eat anything), so that the authorities had to force food into them to keep them alive. Leaders of the campaign, such as Emmeline Pankhurst, the head of the Women's Social and Political Union, and her daughters Christabel and Sylvia, were imprisoned on many occasions under the terms of the so-called **Cat and Mouse Act** of 1913, which allowed the women out of prison just long enough for them to get well before they were imprisoned again. The campaign was interrupted in 1914 at the start of World War I, so that women could contribute to the war effort. When the war ended in 1918 the government at last agreed to give the vote to women over 30, partly in recognition of their role in the war. Finally, in 1928, women won equal voting rights with men and were allowed to vote from the age of 21.

SUPERSTITIONS

Superstitions are beliefs that certain things or events will bring good or bad **luck**. Many people believe that lick plays an important part in their lives, and they **wish somebody luck** (= say 'good luck') in many situations such as before an exam or an interview for a job. People learn superstitions while they are children, and though few adults will admit to being **superstitious**, many act on superstitions out of habit. Most superstitions are centuries old, and British and American people have many in common.

People are also interested in **fate** (= a power that controls everything) and in knowing what will happen to them in future. Most people know which **sign of the zodiac** they were born under, and read their **horoscope** or **stars** in magazines, though only a few take it seriously.

There are many well-known **omens** (= signs) of bad luck, some of which have a religious origin. The number 13 is considered unlucky because there were 13 people (Jesus and the twelve Apostles) at the Last Supper. Tall buildings often do not have a 13th floor; instead the numbers go from 12 to 14. Some people believe they will have a bad day when the 13th day of the month falls on a Friday (**Friday the 13th**) and don't like to travel then. In Britain the **magpie** is widely considered an unlucky bird and has been associated with the Devil. The number of magpies seen is important: 'One for sorrow, two for joy, three for a girl, four for a boy.'

A well-known cause of bad luck is to **walk under a ladder** leaning against a wall. **Treading on cracks** between paving slabs is also bad luck, and it is unwise to **cross on the stairs** (= pass somebody going in the opposite direction). A person who **breaks a mirror** will have seven years' bad luck. It is unlucky to **spill salt**, but bad luck can be avoided by throwing a little of it over the left shoulder with the right hand. People should not **open an umbrella indoors** as this will annoy the sun. some people think it is bad luck to let a **black cat** cross in front of them; others think black cats bring good luck, and they give paper black cats as token at weddings.

Some people carry a **lucky charm**, such as a rabbit's foot or a special coin. Finding a **four-leaf clover** (= a clover plant with four leaves instead of the usual three) is also lucky. People sometimes place an old **horseshoe** over the front door of their house. It must be hung with both ends pointing upwards; if it is hung upside down the luck will run out through the gap. Sports teams and military regiments often have a lucky **mascot**, usually an animal or a model of an animal which travels with them.

Rituals are actions that people believe are necessary in order to have good luck. When people talk about something that they hope will **come true** (= happen), they may touch something made of wood and say '**touch wood**' (*AmE* '**knock on wood**'). If something goes badly for somebody on two occasions, people may say '**third time lucky**' (*AmE* '**third time's charm**'). If people fear that they have **tempted fate** (= assumed too confidently that everything will go well), they may believe that wishing somebody good luck will bring them the opposite, and often say '**break a leg**' instead. They also think it is unlucky to call Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* by its name and prefer to call it 'the Scottish play' instead.

There are many other ways, apart from reading a horoscope, of finding out what will happen in the future. **Fortune-tellers** at fairs use a **crystal ball** or **read a palm** (= look at the lines on a person's hand) to **foretell** the future. Other people use **tarot cards** (= special cards with pictures on) or **read tea leaves** (= look at the size and arrangement of tea leaves left after a cup of tea). Some people take all this seriously but many treat it as fun.

There are superstitions that apply to the weather. A well-known rhyme is 'Red sky at night, shepherd's delight, red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning. In the US *sailor's* replaces *shepherd's*. (A red sky in the evening means good weather ahead, while a red sky in the morning means storms are coming). British people believe that if it rains on 15 July (St Swithin's Day) it will rain everyday for the next 40 days. On Groundhog Day, 2 February, Americans look for a groundhog coming out of its hole. If it sees its shadow (i.e. if it is sunny) then winter will last a lot longer, but if it sees no shadow, winter is almost over.

It is common for people to say '**bless you**' or '**gesundheit**' (German for 'good health') when somebody sneezes. This was originally said in order to prevent a person's soul being sneezed out of their body.

SWEAR WORDS

Many people find **swearing** offensive and it is safest to avoid doing it. Swear words are used mainly in two situations: to relieve feelings of anger and frustration when something bad happens, and to show your anger to somebody who has upset you. The words used often lose their normal meaning and act simply as a way of expressing feelings. Swear words are usually short and have a strong sound that can be spat out. Since many swear words have four letters they are sometimes called **four-letter words**.

Like slang expressions, swear words come in and out of fashion and over time often lose their power to shock. They are replaced by new, stronger words, though the outdated words may continue to be used by older people. Exclamations such as *Drat!, Blow!* and *Blast!*, for instance, are now rarely heard among young people, although the older generation still use them.

Swear words are also called **bad language**, and swear words that refer to sex or to bodily functions are called **dirty language** or **obscene language**. Other swear words have a religious origin and are sometimes called **oaths**. Many were used for **cursing** (= asking for the help of a supernatural power to punish somebody). Often, obscene and religious language are combined, as in the expression *Fucking hell!* A person who is very angry and using a lot of swear words may be said to be **cursing and swearing** or **effing and blinding**.

The most common oaths include *Heavens above!* and *Oh, Lord!*, and the stronger *Damn!, God! Christ! Jesus Christ!* and *For Chrissake!* which may cause offence to Christians. Many people are upset when they hear obscene language. The strongest swear words include *Fuck!* and *Shit!* Other things people say when they are angry or annoyed are *Bugger!* (*BrE*), *Dang!* (*AmE*) and *Darn!* (*AmE*). Swear words used to insult people include *Bastard!, Bitch!, Son of a bitch!, Asshole!, Cunt!* and , especially in the US, *Motherfucker!*

Expressions with 'it' added such as in *Damn it!* and *Fuck it!* are used as alternatives to the single word. When 'off' is added, as in *Fuck off!*, its derivative *Eff off!, Piss off!* and *Bog off!*, the expressions take on the meaning of 'Go away!'

The words *fucking, frigging, chuffing* (BrE) and *freaking* (*AmE*) are used as intensifiers (= words that strengthen the meaning of a word) in expressions like *Fucking hell!* and *You're a freaking liar! Damn,* and the strongest *bloody* (*BrE*), are used before nouns, as in *a damn nuisance* and *You bloody fool!*

Some people feel strongly that it is always wrong to swear and do not like to hear others swearing. The angrier the tone of voice, the more unpleasant and frightening it is likely to be. Other people swear only when a situation makes them very upset. But some people use swear words in almost every sentence. People may apologize if they use a swear word in front of somebody who does not approve of swearing, possibly by saying 'Pardon my French'. Some people may use an ordinary word or a mild swear word in place of the stronger one they would really like to say. People may say *Sugar!*, for instance, instead of *Shit!*, though this is now rather old-fashioned. Children are usually not allowed by their parents to swear, and so often find bad words especially interesting.

When strong swear words are spoken on television they may be **bleeped out** (= replaced by a high-pitched noise) to avoid causing offence. Some words may not be used during times when children might hear them. Film classifications are based partly on the language used in them. Newspapers and books may leave out some of the letters in swear words, for example printing *fuck* as f***. As a result this is sometimes known as 'the F-word'.

TARTAN

Tartan is a traditional woolen cloth from Scotland that has patterns of squares and lines woven in various colours. Patterns depended originally on dyes available from local plants, so each area developed its own tartan. Tartans were not at first associated with a particular clan. From the late 18th century, Scottish regiments wore different tartans as an identifying feature, and the design of an individual tartan for each clan followed soon afterwards. The most famous tartans include 'Black Watch', the tartan of the Royal Highland Regiment, which is black and dark green, and 'Royal Stuart', the mainly red tartan of the royal family.

Scotsmen may wear a kilt (= a man's skirt with pleats that reaches to the knees) and sometimes a **plaid** (= cloak), or simply a tie, in their clan's tartan. Apart from those who work in the tourist industry, few Scots wear tartan as part of their ordinary clothing. Men wear kilts when taking part in Scottish dancing displays or for formal occasions such as weddings.

Many Scots consider it wrong to wear the tartan of a clan to which they do not belong, but this has not prevented tartan, or tartan-like patterns, becoming fashionable in Britain and abroad. For some people tartan has romantic associations with Scotland's history and its wild and beautiful countryside. Women's kilts, skirts and dresses, as well as scarves, bags, travelling rugs, and many other articles, are made in tartan patterns. Goods sold to tourists, such as tins of shortbread biscuits, are decorated with tartan patterns to indicate their origin.

THE BILL OF RIGHTS

The Bill of Rights is the name given to two different documents.
In the US the Bill of Rights consists of the first ten **amendments**, or changes, to the US Constitution. All of the amendments were agreed in 1791, two years after the Constitution was signed. They give Americans rights which are now considered basic, but which were unusual at the time. The government cannot limit these rights.
Some of the amendments apply to all Americans. The First Amendment promises freedom of religion and also **free speech** and freedom of the press, which means that ordinary people and journalists can speak or write what they want, without restriction by the government. The Second Amendment, which gives people the right to own guns, is now the subject of much debate. The Fourth Amendment says that people cannot be arrested and their houses may not be searched, unless the police have a good reason for doing so. The Ninth and Tenth Amendments say that people and states have other rights beside those mentioned in the Constitution, but that the US government has only the powers that are listed there.
Other amendments give rights to people who are accused of a crime. The Fifth Amendment says that people do not have to give evidence against themselves. Somebody who wants to use this right says, '**I plead the Fifth**' or '**I take the Fifth**', and this is often thought to mean that they are afraid to answer questions in case they get into trouble. The Sixth Amendment promises that people who have been accused of a crime will get a trial quickly. In fact, US courts are so busy that people often have to wait a long time, but the government cannot make them wait longer than necessary. The Seventh Amendment gives people who are accused of a serious crime the right to have their case heard by a jury, so that 12 ordinary citizens, not just a judge, decide whether they are innocent or guilty. The Eighth Amendment says that people who are found guilty of a crime cannot be given 'cruel and unusual punishments'. There has been a lot of discussion about exactly what this mean. This amendment was once used as an argument against capital punishment but it was decided later that the death sentence was not a cruel and unusual punishment.
In Britain the Bill of Rights is the informal name of the Act Declaring the Rights and Liberties of the Subject, which was passed by Parliament in 1689. This Act dealt with the relationship between the king or queen and Parliament, not with the rights of individuals. The earlier Declaration of Right had greatly reduced the power of the king or queen, and the new Act helped make Britain a constitutional monarchy, in which real power lies with Parliament, not with the monarch. The Act also prevented a Roman Catholic from becoming king or queen.

THE CITY

The business and financial centre of London is called **the City** or **the City of London**. It covers an area in east central London north of the River Thames, between Blackfriars Bridge and Tower Bridge. It is only about one square mile/2.5 square kilometers in size and is often referred to as **the Square Mile**.
Many financial institutions have their head offices in the City, including the Bank of England in Threadneedle Streets, the London Stock Exchange in Old Broad Street and Lloyd's of London in Lime Street. Many banks, insurance companies and **stockbrokers** (= companies that buy and sell shares for others) have been in the City many years. When journalists talk about 'the City' they are usually not referring to the place but to the people involved in business and commerce, as in: *The City had been expecting poor results from the company*.
In the City old and new buildings stand next to each other. The most famous older buildings include St Paul's Cathedral, the Guildhall and the Mansion House, where the Lord Mayor of London lives. Tower 42, which is 600 feet/183 metres high, and the Swiss Re Tower, nicknamed 'the Gherkin', are two of the City's more recent landmarks. The Barbican Centre includes an art gallery, a theatre and a concert hall, as well as flats/apartments.
Few people live in the City and at night the population is about 7000. During the day it rises to about half a million, as business people commute to the City by car, bus and train. In the past the traditional image of the **City gent** was of a businessman in a dark suit and bowler hat, carrying a briefcase and a newspaper or an umbrella. The expression *She's something in the City* means 'She has an important job with a bank or firm of stockbrokers', and suggest wealth and high social status.

THE CIVIL SERVICE

British **civil servants** are servant of the **Crown**, which in practice means the government. Responsibility for the Civil Service is divided between the Cabinet Office and the Treasury. The Prime Minister is Minister for the Civil Service.
Some civil servants work in government departments. They are expected to work with a government formed by any political party and to remain fair and impartial, whatever their personal opinions. A change of government, or the appointment of a new minister in charge of a department, does not involve a change of its civil servants. This is very useful to ministers who are new to an area of responsibility and have little time to learn about it. The most senior civil servant in a department is called the **Permanent Secretary**.
Ministers are not allowed to ask civil servants to do work that is intended to promote a political party. In the past ministers relied almost entirely on the advice of their civil servants when making decisions and the power that senior civil servants had over politicians has been humorously shown in the television series *Yes, Minister*. Now, party politics and pressure from Members of Parliament and commercial organizations may have greater influence on decision-making.
Most civil servants are not directly involved in government. They have technical or administrative jobs outside London, e.g. calculating and collecting taxes, paying social security benefits or running Jobcentre Plus offices. In 2002 there were about 500000 civil servants, 80 percent of whom were employed outside London. The Civil Service Commissioners are responsible for employing new staff and for ensuring that recruitment methods are fair.
In the US civil servants are government employees who are chosen on the basis of ability and experience, not political favour. The US Civil Service was created so that government employees would not lose their jobs every time a new president was elected. Although the President can appoint people to important jobs, the majority of the three million government employees are civil servants. People wanting a government job take the **Civil Service Exam**. Civil servants are expected to be loyal to the government, and not to any political party. Some people believe that, because it is difficult to dismiss civil servants, they do not work very hard or efficiently. Each individual state also has its own civil service which works in a similar way.

THE CIVIL WAR (*BRE* **THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR**)
A war fought between the northern and southern states of America from 1861-65. In the 19th century, an increasing number of people mostly from the industrial northern states, called **abolitionists**, wanted to make slavery illegal, but the more agricultural southern states wanted the right for each state to decide whether to keep slavery or not. Southern states also wanted individual states to have more power than the US federal government and many became **secessionists**, believing that southern states should **secede from the Union** (= become independent from the US). In 1860, Abraham Lincoln became President and although he was against slavery, he said that he would not end it. The southern states did not believe this and eleven states left the Union and formed the Confederate States of America, often called the **Confederacy**, with Jefferson Davis as its President and its capital in Richmond, Virginia. On 12 April 1862 the **Confederate Army** attacked Fort Sumter, which was in the Confederate state of South Carolina but still occupied by the **Union Army**, and the Civil War began. Over the next four years, the Union army tried to take control of the South. After the battle of Gettysburg in 1863, President Lincoln made the famous Gettysburg Address about democracy. The same year he issued the Emancipation Proclamation which made slavery illegal, but only in the Confederacy. Slaves played an important part in the war, giving information to Union soldiers and also serving in the Union army. In the South especially, people suffered greatly during the war and had little to eat. On 9 April 1865, when the South could fight no more, General Robert E Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S Grant at Appomattox Court House in Virginia. After the war, many Southerners still had very bad feelings towards the North and did not want to end slavery. On 14 April 1865, an actor who supported the South, John Wilkes Booth, shot and killed president Lincoln at Ford's Theatre in Washington. Many southern cities had been destroyed during the war and the economy ruined, and there followed a long, difficult period of **Reconstruction**.

EDUCATION
THE K-12 SCHOOL SYSTEM
Although many American children attend **daycare**, **nursery school**, or **preschool**, formal education is usually considered to begin around the age of five when children go to **kindergarten**. Kindergarten, first grade, second grade

etc. to twelfth grade are together referred to as **K-12**. Each school system has its own way of organizing and naming schools. Usually, kindergarten to fourth, fifth, or sixth grade is together called **elementary school** or **grade school**. Grades six or seven to twelve are part of **secondary school**, and may be divided in different ways. In some places, fifth or sixth grade to eighth grade is called **middle school**. Other school systems have **junior high school**, which includes seventh, eighth and sometimes ninth grades. **High school** (or **senior high school**) covers three or four years from ninth or tenth grade to twelfth grade.

The K-12 **curriculum** (= subjects studied) includes English, and sometimes music, art, and physical education. Foreign languages and other **elective courses** (= subjects that students can choose) are added at different levels depending on the school system. Secondary education is not usually specialized towards training in a specific career. Students who want to go to college often take **college-prep classes**, while other students take courses in practical subjects.

There are no national exams to move from one grade to the next. However, recent federal guidelines require states to monitor student's achievement levels, so that many states now test more frequently. Generally, teachers **grade** students throughout the year on how well they do on tests, on homework and in classroom discussions. At the end of a **semester** or of a year, students who do not have at least a D (= 60%) **grade point average** (**GPA**) have to repeat the class. Students who successfully complete twelfth grade receive a **high school diploma**. Those who do not **graduate** from high school can obtain a **General Equivalency Diploma** (**GED**) by taking an exam.

THE LEGAL SYSTEM

The **judicial** system is one of three branches of the US federal government. In addition to federal courts there are also **state**, **county** and **city courts**.

THE COURTS

Each type of court has its own **jurisdiction** (= the type of cases it can deal with). Some courts **hear** only **criminal cases**. Other courts are for **civil cases**, in which one person **sues** another over a disagreement. Cases are first heard in **trial courts**. A person who is found not guilty in a criminal **trial** can never be **tried** again for the same crime. But a person found guilty in a criminal trial, and both sides involved in a civil trial, have the right to **appeal** against the court's decision. The case then goes to a **court of appeals**.

State courts of appeals are called **superior courts** or **district courts**, and most states have a **supreme court**. This is the highest court in the state and hears only the most serious appeals. There is a separate federal court system, which deals with crimes that are **federal offences** (= against federal law) or crimes that involve two or more states.

The highest court in the US is the **Supreme Court**. It hears appeals of cases that involve important **constitutional** principles and decides if laws are **unconstitutional** (= against the Constitution).

THE PEOPLE IN A COURTROOM

The most powerful person in a courtroom is the **judge**. Most courts have only one judge, but some higher courts have several. State judges are often elected, but federal judges are appointed by the President.

The people on either side of a case are represented by **lawyers**, also called **attorneys**. In a criminal trial the **defendant** (= the person accused) is represented by a **defense attorney**, unless he or she is too poor to pay for a lawyer and the court appoints a **public defender**. The **prosecution** is led by a **prosecutor**, who works for the **district attorney**, or, in federal cases, by a **federal attorney**. In a **civil lawsuit** the defendant and the **plaintiff** (= the person who claims to have been wronged) pay for their own attorneys. In cases involving only small amounts of money, people go to **small claims court** and represent themselves.

A group of ordinary citizens called a **jury** listen to most cases and decide the result.

THE COURT PROCESS

In a criminal case, the defendant may agree to a **plea bargain** (e.g. agree to plead guilty if the charges are reduced). In a civil case, the two parties may agree to **settle out of court**. If this cannot be done, the case goes to trial.
At the beginning of a trial, both attorneys make **opening statements** to explain their cases. Then each side calls **witnesses** and presents **evidence**. Each witness **takes the stand** (= goes and sits in a special place) and **testifies** (= says what he or she knows about the case). During the trial, the judge decides what information will be **allowed** and also makes sure that the rules of the court are obeyed.
An important principle in a criminal trial is that the defendant is **innocent until proven guilty**. **Jurors** are not allowed to discuss the case with each other or make a decision until both sides have finished. At the end of the trial, both attorneys give **closing arguments** that summarize their cases. The judge may then give special instructions to the jury. The jury then **deliberate** together. In a criminal trial the jury decide the **verdict** and if the verdict is 'guilty', the judge gives the **sentence**. In a civil trial the jury decide who wins and may also decide the amount of **damages** (= money to be paid as compensation).

THE LEGAL SYSTEM

In Britain, for historical reasons, the system of law used in Scotland is different from that in England and Wales, with the law in Northern Ireland similar to that in England. When making decisions Scottish courts look for an appropriate general principle and apply it to a particular situation. English law relies on **case law**, a collection of previous decisions, called **precedents**. English courts look at precedents for the **case** being tried and make a similar judgement.
A basic principle of law in Britain is that anyone accused is **innocent until proven guilty**, so it is the job of the **prosecution** to **prove beyond reasonable doubt** that the **defendant** (= the person accused) has broken the law as stated in the **charge**. If this cannot be proved the person must be **acquitted** (= allowed to go free, with no blame attached).
British law is divided into **civil law** which concerns disagreements between individuals about matters such as business contracts, and **criminal law** which deals with offences that involve harm to a person resulting from somebody **breaking the law**. In civil cases, the **plaintiff** (= the person who claims to have been wronged) **brings an action** against the **defendant** in the hope of winning **damages** (= a financial payment) or an **injunction** (= a court order preventing the defendant from doing something). Criminal cases are brought against criminals by the state, in England and Wales by the Director of Public Prosecutions and in Scotland through **procurators fiscal**.
In England and Wales most towns have a Magistrates' Court where minor cases are judged and more serious cases are passed to higher courts by three magistrates called Justices of the Peace, specially trained members of the public. The more serious cases are heard in a Crown Court by a **judge** and a **jury**. Minor civil cases, such as divorce and bankruptcy, are heard in the county courts and more serious ones in the High Court of Justice. Appeals against decisions from the Crown Court of the High Court go to the Court of Appeal and a few cases, where a question of law is in doubt, are passed to the House of Lords.
In Scotland, criminal cases are heard in **District Courts** by members of the public called **lay justices**. More serious cases go to regional **sheriff courts** and are heard by the sheriff and a jury. Appeals go to the High Court of Justiciary in Edinburgh. Civil cases begin in the sheriff court and may go on appeal to the Court of Session.
In the US, the **judicial** system is one of the three branches of the federal government, but the legal system operates at many levels with state, county and city courts as well as federal courts. The right to **trial by jury** is provided by the Constitution. Each type of court has its own **jurisdiction**, that is it deals with certain kinds of cases. Both civil and criminal cases are first heard in **trial courts** and there is a right to appeal against the court's decision in a **court of appeals**. Many states have **family courts** where people get divorced and **small claims courts** which deal with small amounts of money. States also have trial courts, which hear a wider range of cases, and courts of appeal called **superior courts** or **district courts**. Most states have a **supreme court** where the most serious appeals are held. States have their own **criminal code**, but some crimes are **federal offences**, i.e. against federal law, and crimes may fall under **federal jurisdiction** if more than one state is involved.
Most courts have only one **judge**, but some higher courts have several. In the US Supreme Court, the nine judges are called **justices**. The people on either side of a case are represented by **lawyers**, also called **attorneys-at-law**. In a criminal trial the defendant is represented by a **defense attorney**, or if he or she is too poor to pay a lawyer, the court

will appoint a **public defender**. The **prosecution** is led by an **assistant district attorney** or, in federal cases, by a **federal attorney**.

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

The National Curriculum was introduced in all state schools in England and Wales in 1988. Children's education from 5 to 16 is divided into four **key stages**. Key stage I covers ages 5-7, key stage 2 ages 7-11, key stage 3 ages 11-14 and key stage 4 ages 14-16. At key stages 1 and 2 pupils study English, mathematics, science, technology, history, geography, art, music and physical education. A modern foreign language is added at key stage 3. Pupils at key 4 must study English, mathematics, science, physical education, technology and citizenship and may take several other subjects. In Wales the Welsh language is also studied. Detailed guidance about what children should be taught is given in official **programmes of study**. A disadvantage for teachers has been the increase in the number of documents they are expected to read and the reports they have to write. The National Curriculum does not apply in Scotland, where individual schools decide which subjects and topics to teach.

Attainment targets are set within each subject and pupils' progress is checked at the ages of 7, 11 and 14 when they complete National Curriculum Tests (**NCTs**). Pupils are graded into eight levels for all subjects except art, music and physical education. At the age of 16, at the end of key stage 4, pupils take GCSE exams, which are also based on material covered in the National Curriculum. Some children struggle to reach the required standard. If they have learning difficulties, their parents may ask for them to be **statemented**, i.e given an official document saying that they have **special educational needs**.

The NCTs allow education authorities, in theory at least, to compare standards between different schools. Since the National Curriculum was introduced many people have expressed doubts about the publication in the press of **school league tables** showing the relative performance of schools and about the increased competition.

There is no national curriculum in the US. Stage governments are responsible for deciding the curriculum for primary and secondary schools. The curriculum is often the cause of debate between people who want to emphasize basic skills, such as reading, writing and mathematics, and others who see the curriculum as a political issue and want schools to teach respect for other cultures or history from the point of view of African Americans, or to offer less traditional topics.

THE NEW AGE

People have often questioned the accepted philosophies of the modern western **materialist** society, and have looked to much older traditions for an increased spiritual awareness. Since the 1980s this movement, and the ideas behind it, have been given the name *New Age*. The movement started in California but quickly spread throughout the US and northern Europe. It attracts young people, and some older people. **New Age people** believe that a more **holistic** approach to life, which takes account of the whole of personal experience and of the cycles of nature, can help to restore the spiritual balance within themselves and harmony in the environment.

The New Age movement has been especially involved in religion, philosophy, medicine, and a broad area of study called **earth mysteries** which includes astrology and people's relationship with the environment. Some people have turned to religions that combine elements of Christianity with the worship of nature, or to eastern religions, such as Buddhism, that emphasize the personal development of the individual. There has also been a fascination with the **occult** and **parapsychology**, including telepathy, the mental communication of thought to have special powers. Each year, on Midsummer's Day, large crowds attempt to reach Stonehenge to celebrate the summer solstice, because they believe that it is one of the most magical places in Britain.

Crystals (= pieces of special kinds of stone) are used for a type of healing. **Meditation** is used as a way to gain greater self-awareness. **New Age music**, which is usually soft and slow, is used to make it easier to meditate. **Incense** helps promote a good atmosphere. Some people use **psychedelic drugs** though they are illegal. New Age food is usually entire natural. It includes **health foods** and organic products (= fruit, vegetables and meat that have been produced without any chemicals). Many people associated with New Age culture are **vegetarians**.

The New Age interest in nature has led to greater concern for environmental issues among the wider public. New Age people are often involved in protests at the sites of new roads or other projects that threaten to take extreme measures and may be regarded by others as cranks (= people obsessed with a particular idea), though they also gain respect for their commitment.

THE PEERAGE

Peer of the realm are people who hold the highest ranks in the British aristocracy. As a group, they are sometimes referred to as **the peerage**. There are two main types of peers: **hereditary peers** hold **titles** that are passed from one **generation** to the next, while **life peers** have a personal title which lasts for their own lifetime but is not passed on to their children.

The peerage is divided into five main ranks. The most senior rank is that of **duke** (for a man) or **duchess** (for a woman), a hereditary title which was created in Norman times. There are five royal Dukes, including the Duke of Edinburg, and 24 other dukes. The second most senior rank is that of **marquess** (man) or **marchioness** (woman), of which there are under 40. The third rank is that of **earl** (man) or **countess** (woman), of which there are nearly 200. This is the oldest title of all. Next in rank is a **viscount** (man) or **viscountess** (woman). The fifth and lowest rank of the peerage is that of **baron** (man) or **baroness** (woman), of which there are around 500 with hereditary titles. At present, about two thirds of all peers hold hereditary titles, many of which were originally given by the reigning king or queen to close friends or in return for some service. Senior titles often include the name of the place where the family comes from, e.g. the Duke of Devonshire, the Marquess of Normanby. A woman may be a duchess, marchioness, etc. in her own right or receive the title when she marries a duke, etc.

Life peers include the **Lords of Appeal in Ordinary**, usually referred to as Law Lords, who are the most senior judges in the land, the Lords Spiritual, who are the archbishops of Canterbury and York and 24 bishops of the Church of England and, since 1958, many other men and women who have been **given a peerage** in recognition of their public service. Most of these are given the rank of baron or baroness.

There are complicated rules for how to address and refer to members of the peerage. Dukes, for instance, are addressed formally as 'Your Grace', marqueses and earl as 'My Lord', and viscounts and barons as 'Lord X'. there are also rules for addressing members of their families. Most British people know that such complicated forms of address exist but many would not be able to use them correctly, and would probably think that they are rather strange and old-fashioned.

Peers cannot be elected to the House of Commons as Members of Parliament unless they have first **disclaimed** their title. Tony Benn campaigned for members of the peerage to have this right and was himself the first to be able to give up his title and become an MP. Former members of the House of Commons who have been **elevated to the peerage** as a reward for their service are sometimes said to have been 'kicked upstairs'.

At present, all life peers and some hereditary peers may take part in the government of Britain by **taking their seat** in the House of Lords, though many do not attend regularly. There has for a long time been talk of changing this right for hereditary peers, which many people consider undemocratic, and even of abolishing the House of Lords. At the end of 1997 there were about 650 hereditary peers compared with 500 life peers. About 500 of the total were Conservative peers, most of whom were hereditary peers. In 1998 the Labour government announced that it would reform the House of Lords by introducing laws to abolish the right of hereditary peers to sit in the House of Lords, and creating about 600 new life peers to take their place. The number of hereditary peers in the House of Lords was reduced to 92 but by 2005 the proposed reform was not complete.

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

By many standards, American education is very successful. Although young people must attend school only until they are 16, over 80% continue until they graduate, at around age 18. Over 50% obtain some post-secondary or **further education**, and about 27% graduate from a college or university.

On the other hand, about 20% of adults are said to have very limited reading skills. Since control over education is mostly at the local level, its quality varies greatly from place to place. Money is an important reason for this. Over 40% of the money for elementary and secondary education comes from property taxes paid to the local government,

so wealthy areas have better-funded schools than poorer areas. Crime and violence are also serious problems in some schools.
Most Americans agree that a good education gives people the best chance of getting a good job and of improving their social position. **Life-long learning** is an important concept for Americans, and many adults take part in **continuing education**, **adult education**, and **distance-learning** programmes. Adults of all ages return to education to pursue new degrees to further their career or for personal development.

THE ROYAL FAMILY (IN BRITAIN)
The term used to refer to the present Queen and her family: her husband, Prince Philip and their children, Prince Charles, Princess Anne, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward, together with their wives or husbands and children. The wider family, who gather on ceremonial occasions, includes the Queen's cousins and their children. The present **royal house** (= ruling family) is the House of Windsor and Elizabeth II is descended from William I (1066-97), and before that from Egbert, King of Wessex 802-39. The **monarch** or **sovereign** (= king or queen) originally had sole power but over time the sovereign's power have been reduced and, though the present Queen is still **head of state** and **Commander-in-Chief** of the armed forces, she acts on the advice of her ministers and Britain is in practice governed by **Her Majesty's Government**. The Queen has some official duties, such as opening a new session of Parliament and giving royal assent to new laws, but her main role is as a representative of Britain and the British people. She is also head of the Commonwealth and works to strengthen links between member countries. Other members of the royal family also represent Britain, act as patrons of British cultural organizations and support the work of charities. Through most of the 20th century, the royal family were only seen on formal occasions and remained distant and dignified. However, at the end of the 20th century, the younger **royals** began to live more public lives and attracted enormous media attention, and traditional respect for the royal began to decline. Especially after the death of Princess Diana, the royal family was criticized and many people began to think that they were out of touch with modern attitudes. Since then they have tried to be more open and to meet a wider range of people. Some people in Britain have no strong feelings about the royal family although they might like some aspects of the **monarchy** to be more modern. Others would not want to see any big changes. There are also people who would prefer not to have a monarchy, to be citizens rather than subjects.

THE SUPREME COURT
The **judicial** branch is one of the three branches of US federal government and operates the system of law courts. The Supreme Court in Washington, DC is the highest court in the US, and is very powerful. It has nine judges, called **justices**. Traditionally, they are called the **nine old men**, although in 1981 Sandra Day O'Connor became the first woman justice. The head of the court has the title of **Chief Justice of the United States**. Justices are appointed by the President, although the Senate must confirm (= give its approval to) the choice.
Some of the power of the Supreme Court was given to it in the Constitution. In 1803, in a famous case called *Marbury v Madion*, the court gave itself the additional power of **judicial review**. This means that is has the power to decide if a law is constitutional (= follow the principles of the Constitution). If a law is said to be **unconstitutional**, it cannot be put into effect unless it is added to the Constitutional, a long and difficult process that has succeeded only 27 times in more than 200 years. In this way the Supreme Court has the power to block laws made by the US government and state as well as local laws.
The Supreme Court is a court of appeal and hears cases on appeal that were first heard in the lower courts. It can hear only a small number of appeals and so tries to choose cases that involve important principles of law. Once the Court has decided a case, lower courts use it as a **precedence**, i.e. they follow the Supreme Court's decision in similar cases.
Many of the Supreme Court's decisions are famous because they changed some aspect of US life. for instance, in the cases *Scott v Sandford* (1857), *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896) and *Brown v Board of Education* (1954) the Court made important decisions about the rights of African Americans. In *Miranda v Arizona* (1966) the Court said that police officers must inform the people they arrest of their constitutional rights. In 1978, the decision in *Regents of the*

University of California v Bakke upheld (= supported) affirmative action but made reserve discrimination illegal. This meant that, when trying to give more opportunities to women, African Americans and minority groups, people cannot deny members of other group fair treatment. The *Roe v Wade* decision of 1973 gave women across the US the right to abortion. The decision in *US v Nixon* (1974) required President Nixon to hand over evidence that later led to his having to resign.

TOYS AND GAMES

Most young children are given toys for their birthday or at Christmas. Many regularly spend their pocket money or allowance on smaller toys. Popular toys include building bricks such as Lego, plastic farm animals, toy cars. Model railways and dressing-up costumes. Girls especially have **dolls**, and several sets of clothes to dress them in. Action Man figures are mainly for boys and Barbie dolls for girls. Babies are given **rattles**, soft **cuddly toys** and a teddy bear. **Action figures**, small plastic models of characters from television shows or films, are also popular. Some parents do not allow their children to have guns or other 'violent' toys because they do not want them to think it is fun to kill people.

Among traditional games that are still popular are marbles, which is played with small, coloured glass balls, **board games** such as Happy Families, and **word games** such as hangman. Board and card games are played with family or friends, but children play alone with computer games or video games.

Many children collect objects, such as shells, model animals, stamps or picture cards. In the US baseball cards, cards with a picture of a baseball player on them, are sold with bubblegum. In Britain picture cards are often given free in packets of breakfast cereal.

Children play outside with skipping ropes, bicycles, skateboards and Rollerblades. In **playgrounds** there are often swings, a slide, a see-saw and a climbing frame (*AmE* jungle gym) to climb on. Traditional games played outside include hopscotch, a game in which children hop over squares drawn on the ground to try to pick up a stone, and tag, in which one child chases the others until he or she catches one of them and then that child has to chase the rest.

Toys are often expensive and, even if they can afford them, many parents are unwilling to spend a lot of money on something that they know their children will soon get bored with. Children want toys they see advertised on television or in comics, or toys that their friends already have. There are sometimes crazes for toys connected with characters from a film.

Few people give up toys and games completely when they become adults. Many keep their old teddy bear for sentimental reasons. There are now also **executive toys**, made specially for adults to keep on their desks. Many people play card games like bridge and poker, and board games such as Scrabble, Monopoly, backgammon and chess.

TRADE UNION (*AME* **LABOR UNION**)

An organization of workers which exists to protect their interests, improve conditions of work etc. In Britain, the **trade inion movement** started in the 19th century after the Industrial Revolution when workers began to form groups to argue for improved wording conditions and pay. Each **trade** (= type of work) formed its own **trade union** but, over the years, some combined to form larger, more powerful groups. In 1900 the Labour Representation Committee was founded to enable the unions to enter politics and it later became the Labour Party. By 1926 45% of the workforce were members of a union and the General Strike showed there was wide support for the union movement. After World War II union membership continued to grow, reaching a peak in 1979 with a total of 13.5 million members. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s **industrial relations** in Britain were bad, with many **strikes**, and in 1979 the Conservative government introduced a number of changes to the law to control the activities of unions. Unions were not allowed to send members to support strike action by another union (called **secondary picketing**), union leaders could only declare a strike with the support of the majority of their members in a **secret ballot** and the **closed shop** which required all employees in an industry to join a union, was ended. Many trade unions are **affiliated** (= linked) to the TUC which represents the trade union movement as a whole and in 2004 had 71 affiliated unions and about 7 million members. In the US, the early unions were mainly craft unions, but in 1905 the IWW united miners and textile workers and became the first **labor union**. Modern labor unions began as a result of Franklin D Roosevelt's New Deal and in 1935 the Wagner Act gave workers the right to **collective bargaining** (= negotiation by a group of people) for

pay increases, and this led to many new unions being formed. The many strikes after World War II caused Congress to pass the Taft-Hartley Act which restricted the right of workers to strike and also made the closed shop illegal. Most labor unions belong to the AFL-CIO, which was created in 1955 when the American Federation of Labor joined the Congress of Industrial Organizations. In 2004 there were 61 unions in the AFL-CIO, representing over 14 million workers.

TRANSPORT

Most journeys in Britain and the US are made by road. Some of these are made on **public transport** (*AmE* **public transportation**) but most are by private car.

In Britain many people rely on their car for daily local activities, e.g. getting to work, doing the shopping, and visiting friends. People living in urvan areas may use buses, trains or, in London, the Underground, to get to city centres, mainly because traffic is often heavy and it is difficult to find anywhere to park a car. Some places in the country may have a bus only two or three times a week so people living there have no choice but to rely on their cars.

In the US large cities have good public transportation systems. The El railroad in Chicago and the underground systems of New York, Boston, San Francisco and Washington, DC are heavily used. Elsewhere, most Americans used public transport to get to work. In Los Angeles it was less than 10%. Families often have two cars and, outside major cities, have to drive fairly long distances to schools, offices, shops, banks, etc. many college and even high-school students have their own cars.

Long-distance travel in Britain is also mainly by road, though railways link most towns and cities. Most places are linked by motorways or other fast roads and many people prefer to drive at their own convenience rather than use a train, even though they may get stuck in a traffic jam. Long-distance **coach/bus** services are usually a cheaper alternative to trains, but they take longer and may be less comfortable. Some long-distance travel, especially that undertaken for business reasons, may be by air. There are regular flights between regional airports, as well as to and from London. A lot of freight is also distributed by road, though heavier items and raw materials often go by rail.

In the US most long-distance travel is by air. American had two main long-distance bus companies, Greyhound and Trailways which merged in the early 1990s. Amtrack, which is financially supported by the federal government, provides long-distance rail services for passengers. There are many smaller private companies that operate commuter railways for the cities. Other private railway companies such as Union Pacific now carry only freight, though in fact over 70% of freight goes by road.

The main problems associated with road transport in both Britain and the US are **traffic congestion** and **pollution**. It is predicted that the number of cars on British roads will increase by a third within a few years, making both these problems worse. The British government would like more people to use public transport, but so far they have had little success in persuading people to give up their cars or to share rides with neighbours. Nevertheless, in the ten years to 2003 travel by rail increased by almost a third. Most people feel that public transport needs to be improved. Americans have resisted government requests to share cars because it is less convenient and restricts their freedom. Petrol/gasoline is relatively cheap in the US and outside the major cities public transport is bad, so they see no reason to use their cars less.

Despite the use of unleaded petrol/gasoline, exhaust emissions (= gases) from vehicles still cause air pollution which can have serious effects on health. The US was the first nation to require cars to be fitted with catalytic converters (= devices that reduce the amount of dangerous gases given off). Emissions are required to be below a certain level, and devices have been developed to check at the roadside that vehicles meet the requirement. Stricter controls are also being applied to lorries/trucks. Car manufacturers are developing cars that use electricity and other fuels that case less pollution.

The cheapest and most environmentally-friendly ways to travel are to walk or ride a bicycle. In Oxford and Cambridge bicycles are common, and many other cities now have special **cycle routes** or **cycle lanes** beside the main road. Elsewhere, there are so many cars on the roads that cycling can be dangerous. Sustrans aims to increase travel by bicycle by providing safer routes. In the US bicycles are used mostly for fun or sport.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Vocational training is intended to give people the skills and knowledge they need to perform a particular job, and involves practical instruction as well as theory. Most vocational training takes place not in universities but in colleges of further education and in colleges specializing in art, accountancy, etc. some secondary schools now also offer an introduction to vocational training.

NVQs (**National Vocational Qualifications**) are qualifications that can be obtained by people already working in a particular industry. Colleges of fur ther education run courses to provide a theoretical background. NVQs are awarded on the basis of practical work, spoken and written test, and coursework. There are five levels, from Foundation to Management. Since 1992 many students in schools and colleges have been working for GNVQs (**General National Vocational Qualifications**), as an alternative to GCSEs and A levels. GVVQs cover similar areas to NVQs and are intended as introductions to a particular field of work and the skills required. Students can choose from over 500 subjects. At the lowest of its three levels, Foundation, a GNVQ is equivalent to a GCSE and from 2002 they are being replaced by new vocational GCSEs.

In the US there are no national qualifications like NVQs, though some professional organizations decide on their own qualifications and some of these have become widely accepted. Much vocational training is done by private institutions which are sometimes called **proprietary schools**. Although many of these are good, in general they have a bad reputation. This is partly because there are no controls over who can operate such a school. Some proprietary schools try to get as many students as possible, including some who will probably not be able to complete their training.

Most US secondary schools programmes do not provide a choice between an opportunity to take some practical or vocational classes. Large school districts may have **magnet schools**, schools that attract students with certain interests, and some of these may have a large choice of vocational courses.

VOLUNTARY WORK

Voluntary work is work that you do not get paid for and usually involves doing things to help other people, especially the elderly or the sick, or working on behalf of a **charity** or similar organization. Most charitable organizations rely on unpaid **volunteers**, and thousands of Americans and British people give many hours of their time to doing some form of social work or organizing fund-raising events to support the work. **volunteering** is especially popular in the US and the reasons for this may be found in basic American values such as the Protestant work ethic, the idea that work improves the person who does it, and the belief that people can change their condition if they try hard enough.

Volunteering is usually enjoyable, as people choose jobs close to their personal interests. For instance, people who like animals which have been treated cruelly. Some voluntary work is short-term, e.g. when people from a community get together to create a park. Other work is longer term, such as that of the US organization Habitat for Humanity which builds houses for poor people. Parents often volunteer at their children's schools, and do things like building a play area or raising money for new equipment. Young people are also encouraged to do voluntary work. schoolchildren visit old people in hospitals or homes, and students at college often raise money for charities. In the US young people over 18 can take part in **AmeriCorps**, a government programme that encourages them to work as volunteers for a period of time, with the promise of help in paying for their education later. Older Americans who do not work may spend much of their free time volunteering.

In Britain a lot of voluntary work is directed towards supporting the country's social services. The WRVS and other organizations run a meals-on-wheels service in many parts of Britain, providing hot food for old people who are unable to cook for themselves. The nationwide Citizens Advice Bureau, which offers free advice to the public on a wide range of issues, is run mainly by volunteers, and the Blood Transfusion Service relies on voluntary blood donors to give blood for use in hospitals. Political parties use volunteers at election time, and Churches depend on volunteers to keep buildings clean.

Both Britain and the US have organizations dedicated to helping people overseas. Britain's Voluntary Service Overseas sends people to work in developing countries for up to years to share their skills with the local population. The US Peace Corps has similar aims and programmes.

WEATHER

The popular view of the British weather is that it rains all the time. This is not true and Britain gets no more rain in an average year than several other European countries. In some summers the country goes for weeks with nothing more than a **shower**. Perhaps the main characteristic of Britain's weather is that it is hard to predict. This is probably why people regularly listen to **weather forecasts** on radio and television. However, the **weather forecasters** are sometimes wrong.

The British are not used to extremes. In summer the temperature rarely goes higher than 30°C (86° F). **Heatwaves** are greeted with newspaper headlines such as 'Phew! What a scorcher!' In winter the south and west are fairly **mild**. The east and north get much colder, with **hard frosts** and snow. A **cold snap** (= period of very cold weather) or heavy falls of snow can bring transport to a halt.

Samuel Johnson observed that 'when two Englishmen meet their first talk is of the weather', and this is still true. The weather is a safe, polite and impersonal topic of conversation. Most British people would agree that bright sunny weather, not too hot and with enough rain to water their garden, is good. Bad weather usually means dull days with a lot of cloud and rain or, in winter, fog or snow. The British tend to expect the worst as far as the weather is concerned and it is part of national folklore that summer bank holidays will be wet. It may be *pouring with rain, teeming down, bucketing,* or even just *drizzling* or *spitting,* but it will be wet.

The US is large enough to have several different **climates**, and so the weather varies between regions. In winter the temperature in New York state is often -8°C (17°F) or lower, in the summer in Arizona it is often above 40°C (104°F). Arizona gets less than an inch/2.5 centimetres of rain most months; the state of Washington, DC can get 6 inches/15 centimetres. The Northeast and Midwest have cold winters with a lot of snow, and summers that are very hot and humid. The South has not, humid summers bur moderate winters. The Southwest, including Arizona and New Mexico, is dry and warm in the winter and very hot in the summer. Some parts of the US suffer tornadoes (= strong circular winds) and hurricanes.

In autumn people put **storm doors and windows** on their houses, an extra layer of glass to keep out the cold win. Cities in the **snow belt** have several **snow days** each winter, days when people do not go to school or work. But then **snow ploughs** clear the roads and life goes on, even when the weather is bad.

In the US it is considered boring to talk about the weather, but some phrases are often heard. In the summer people ask, 'Is it hot enough for you?' or say that the street is 'hot enough to fry an egg'. When it rains they say 'Nice day if you're a duck', or that they do not mind the rain because 'the farmers need it'.

Many people in Britain and the US, as elsewhere, are worried about **global warming** due to emissions from vehicles and factories of **greenhouse gases** such as carbon dioxide (CO_2) and nitrous oxide (NO_2) and any **climatic changes** this may cause.

WEDDINGS

A *wedding* is the occasion when people **get married**. *Marriage* is the state of being married, though the word can also mean the wedding ceremony.

Before getting married a couple **get engaged**. It is traditional for the man to **propose** (= ask his girlfriend to marry him) and, if she accepts, to give his new **fiancée** an **engagement ring**, which she wears o the third finger of her left hand. Today many couples decide together to get married.

The couple then **set a date** and decide who will perform the marriage ceremony and where it will be held. In the US judges and religious leaders can perform weddings. Religious weddings are often held in a church or chapel, but the ceremony can take place anywhere and couples often choose somewhere that is special to them. In Britain many couples still prefer to be married in church, even if they are not religious. Others choose a **civil ceremony** conducted by a **registrar** at a **registry office**, or, since 1994 when the law was changed, at one of the many hotels and historic buildings which are licensed for weddings.

Traditionally, the family of the **bride** (= the woman who is to be married) paid for the wedding, but today the couple usually pay part of the cost. Many people choose a traditional wedding with a hundred or more **guests**. Before the wedding, the couple send out printed **invitations** and guests buy a gift for them, usually something for their home. In the US couples **register** at a store by leaving there a list of presents they would like. Guests go to the store to look at the list and buy a present. In Britain couples send a **wedding list** to guest or, as in America, open a **bride's book** in a large store.

Before a wedding can take place in a church it must be announced there on three occasions. This is called **the reading of the banns**. Some religious groups refuse to allow a couple to marry in church if either of them has been divorced, but they may agree to **bless** the marriage after a civil ceremony.

Before the wedding the bride and **bride groom** or **groom** (= her future husband) often go to separate parties given for them by friends. At the groom's **stag party** guests drink alcohol and joke about how the groom is going to lose his freedom. For the bride there is a **hen party**, called in the US a **bachelorette party**. Sometimes these parties take the form of a weekend trip to a foreign city.

At the wedding the groom's closest male friend acts as the **best man** and stands next to him during the ceremony. Other friends act as **ushers** and show guests where to sit. The bride's closest woman friend is **chief bridesmaid** (*AmE* **maid of honour**), or **matron of honour** if she is married, and other friends. Children are **bridesmaids** if they are girls or **pages** if they are boys.

Many women choose to have a **white wedding**, and wear a long white **wedding dress**, with a **veil** (= a piece of thin white material) covering the face. The bride's wedding clothes should include 'something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue', to brink luck. The bridesmaids wear matching dresses especially made for the occasion and, like the bride, carry **bouquets** of flowers. The bridegroom, the best man and other men may wear **morning dress** (= a long-tailed jacket, dark trousers and a top hat) or, in the US, a **tuxedo** (= a black suit with a white shirt). Women guests dress smartly and often wear hats. Men often hire the clothes for a wedding but women often use a wedding as an opportunity to buy something new.

The bride traditionally arrives at the church a few minutes late and enters with her father who will **give her away** to her husband. The bride and groom **exchange vows** (= promise to stay together and support each other). The groom places a **wedding ring** on the third finger of the bride's left hand, and sometimes the bride gives him a ring too. The couple are then declared **man and wife**. They **sign the register** (= the official record of marriages) and as they leave the church guest throw rice or **confetti** (= small pieces of coloured paper in lucky shapes, such as horseshoes and bells) over them.

The '**happy couple**' and their guests then go to the **wedding reception** at the bride's home, a hotel or the place where the ceremony took place if it was not a church or registry office. There are often speeches by the best man, the bride's father and the bridegroom. The bride and groom together cut a **wedding cake**, which usually has several tiers (= layers), each covered with white icing (*AmE* frosting), with figures of a bride and groom on the top one. Before the **newly-weds** leave for their **honeymoon** (= a holiday to celebrate their marriage) the bride throws her bouquet in the air: there is a belief that the woman who catches it will soon be married herself. The car the couple leave in has usually been decorated by their friends with the words '**just married**' and with old tin cans or shoes tied to the back.

WEEKENDS

The weekend last from the end of working hours or school hours on Friday until Monday morning. For most people it is a chance to be at home with their family, spend time on a sport or hobby or go out somewhere. Both adults and children look forward to the freedom of the weekend and to having time to please themselves. On Friday people with jobs may say **TGIF** (Thank God it's Friday) and may go to a bar together after work. people who work in factories, shops and restaurants and on buses often have to work at weekends and instead get time off during the week. Sometimes people take an extra day off on Friday or Monday to make a **long weekend**, especially if they want to have a short holiday/vacation. Several holidays, such as Memorial Day in the US and Spring Bank Holiday in Britain, are on a Monday in order to create a long weekend.

At the weekend (*AmE* **On the weekend**) people may do jobs around the house, look after their garden, wash the car, play sport or watch television. On Saturday mornings many US television channels show cartoons. The weekend is

also the busiest time of the week for shopping. Shops are open on both Saturday and Sunday. For a long time many British people opposed **Sunday trading** and wanted to 'keep Sunday special', but there was pressure from some of the larger stores and DIY shops to be allowed to open, and now many people like shopping on a Sunday.

Friday and Saturday nights are popular, especially among young people, for parties and visits to clubs and pubs. People also go to the theatre or cinema, eat out at a restaurant, or invite friends to their house for dinner or a barbecue.

On Sundays many people have a **lie-in** (= stay in bed longer than usual). Some people go to church on Sunday morning. In the US many adults enjoy reading the newspaper while eating **brunch**, a combination of breakfast and lunch that includes dishes from both. Brunch is eaten between about 10 and 12 in the morning and is enjoyed in a relaxed atmosphere. In Britain some people sit around and read the Sunday papers. They may have other members of the family round for **Sunday lunch**. Many people go out for a walk or visit a theme park, stately home or other attraction, depending on their interest. In summer man families go out for the day to the countryside.

In general people are very busy at the weekend and often finish it more tired than they began it, so for many Monday morning is the least pleasant part of the week.

WORLD ENGLISH

English is the most widely spoken language in the world. It is the **first language**, or **mother tongue**, of over 300 million people living in countries such as Britain, Ireland, the US, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa, and it is spoken as **second language** by many millions in countries where English is an official language. English is learned by many more people worldwide as a **foreign language**. English has many regional varieties such as South African English and Indian English and has also developed as a **global language** or **international language**, used a as **lingua franca** (= shared language), sometimes called **ELF** (English as Lingua Franca) between people for whom it is not a first language. It is estimated that now only one out of every for users of the language is a native speaker of English.

English has achieved the status of a world language over a long period of time, and for various historical and cultural reasons. In the 17th century English was spread by settlers going from Britain to America, and in the 18th and 19th centuries by the expansion of the British Empire. Many countries which were part of the empire kept English as their official language after independence because there were several local languages. As an official language, English is generally used in government, public administration and the law, and children may be taught in English. Since the middle of the 20th century, English has been an official language of international organizations such as the United Nations.

Economic factors are also important. Britain and the US are both major business and financial centres, and many multinational corporations started in these countries. Elsewhere, a knowledge of English is often seen as necessary for success in business, and in countries which have become tourist destinations.

Advances in technology and telecommunication have also helped to establish English as a global language. Many inventions important to modern life, e.g. electricity, radio, the car and the telephone, were developed in Britain or the US. English became the language for international communications in air traffic control and shipping. Now, major computer systems and software developers are based in the US, and English is one of the main languages used on the internet.

Britain and the US have interested in the development of **English Language Teaching** (**ELT**). The British Council has offices worldwide which promote British culture and support the teaching of English. The United States also has libraries and cultural programmes in many countries. The English language broadcasts of the BBC World Service, Voice of America and other services are widely popular, and many people listen to the news broadcasts in order to get news about events in their own country. The BBC and Voice of America also broadcast programmes for learners of English.

As an international language, English continues to develop. People who speak English as a first or second language have their own variety of the language, each of which is changing independently of other varieties. There are many differences, for instance, between British English and American English, and between Australian, South African,

Indian, African and Jamaican English, though all can be understood, more or less, by speakers of other varieties. Foreign learners of English learn one of the major varieties, usually British or American English, or some sort of international English.

As a global language, English can no longer be thought of as belonging only to British or American people, or to anyone else. This loss of ownership is often uncomfortable, especially in Britain. As the number of people using English as a second or foreign language is increasing faster than the number who speak it as a first language, further drifts away from a British or American standard are likely.

The status of English as a global language has unfortunately tended to mean that British and American people assume everyone speaks English, so they do not need to learn foreign languages. The numbers of students who study foreign languages have decreased.

WORLD WAR II (ALSO **THE SECOND WORLD WAR**)

A war (1939-45) between the Axis power (Germany, Italy and Japan) and the Allies (Britain and the countries in the British Empire, France, and later the USSR and the US). Many other countries were also involved both directly and indirectly.

The war started when Germany, under Adolf Hitler and the Nazis, invaded and took control of other countries and the Allies wanted to prevent German power growing in this way. Britain declared war on Germany in September 1939 when German troops entered Poland, and soon afterwards Winston Churchill, who in Britain is closely associated with the Allies' victory in the war, became the British prime minister.

In 1940 Germany attacked Britain but was not successful, mainly because of the British victory in the Battle of Britain. In 1941 Germany invaded Russia and Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, an action which brought the US into the war. In 1942 Japan increases its control over several countries in Asia but was checked by US forces in the Pacific. In the same year, at the Battle of El Alamein, Allied forces began to defeat Germany and Italy in northern Africa. In 1943 the Allies took Italy and Russian forces began to advance on Germany from the east. In 1944 the Allies invaded northern Europe with the Normandy landings and began to defeat Germany in Europe. The war ended in 1945 when the Allies took control of Germany, Hitler killed himself, and Japan was defeated as a result of atom bombs being dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Germany and Japan surrendered separately in 1945.

Over 50 million people were killed in the war, more than 20 million of them were Russians. World War II is also remembered for the very large number of Jewish and other people killed in German concentration camps and the harsh treatment of prisoners of war captured by the Japanese.

(To be continued)