

## LECTURE № 1

The course is called “The Linguistic culture” and is mostly devoted to the English Language. The English language nowadays comprises (охватывает) a very large number of people across the globe. Nearly one quarter of the world’s population, or between 1.2 and 1.5 billion people, are already fluent or competent in English. The British Council estimates that about 375 million people speak English as the first language, another 375 million speak it regularly as the second language, and about 750 million more people speak English as a foreign language. Today, English is considered the universal language for business, international communications, entertainment, tourism, trade and technology. The majority of all resources on the internet are in English, affecting people to learn English to take full advantage of it. Above all, learning English is important for being able to exchange views and make friends with people all over the world. English has an official or special status in more than 70 countries. In Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand the English Language is the native one. Because of the lack of the time I’ll have to concentrate on the English language of Britain and the United States.

In the first part of the course I’ll try to introduce the main geographical, economic and cultural aspects of the life of Great Britain.

The second part of the course is devoted to the history, political structure, education, science and culture of the United States. We’ll also speak about the difference of the British and American variants of the English Language.

After the first and the second parts of the course you’ll have a test and you will write a composition. The final result (зачет) is put into your check –book.

All questions should be asked in writing.

You can find in full all the facts and events I’ll speak about in the book “The United Kingdom and the United States of America in Past and Present (2009) in the library of the faculty.

To study the English Language is impossible without learning at least some aspects of history, geography, culture and customs of Great Britain, as well as the daily activities of the British people. It is but natural that it will be quite difficult to communicate with the Britons without knowing and understanding the background

and cultural content of their country. For example, many students still confuse such notions as England, Great Britain and The United Kingdom.

The full name of the country is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The UK consists of four parts: England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The island of Great Britain consists of three main parts: England (the southern and middle part of the island), Wales and Scotland (the northern part of the island).

The UK is a highly developed industrial and economic country. It is known as one of the world's largest producers and exporters of iron and steel products, machinery and electronics, chemicals and textile, aircraft and navigation equipment. One of the chief industries of the country is shipbuilding. Only 7 per cent of the population is engaged in farming.



Snapshots of Britain

The British Isles are surrounded by the Irish Sea and the North Sea, the Norwegian Sea, the North Channel and the Atlantic Ocean. Owing to the shape of the country, any point in Great Britain is no more than 70 miles from the sea.

The total area of the British Isles is 325 000 square km. According to science the British Isles used to form a part of the continent. The rocky highlands of Scotland, for example, resemble the Norwegian coast. Evidence (доказательство) that the islands were the part of the continent is the shallowness (мель) of the English Channel between them and the mainland.

There are no high mountains in Great Britain. Highlands of Scotland are the tallest of the British mountains. Most of the rivers flow into the North Sea. The Thames is the deepest and the longest of the British rivers. Some of the British greatest ports are situated on the Thames.

Great Britain is not very rich in mineral resources; it has some deposits of coal and iron ore and vast deposits of oil and gas that were discovered in the North Sea.

Answer the following questions:

1. What parts does the United Kingdom consist of?
2. What's the difference between the names Great Britain and United Kingdom?
3. What is the climate of Great Britain like?
4. Do you know any English phrases, connected with the weather?
5. Have you ever been to England?
6. Which pictures do you imagine when you think of this country?
7. What do you know of Stonehenge?

## THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

About 2.000 years ago the British Isles were inhabited (населены) by the Celts who had been arriving from Europe from the 8th century BC. , mixed with the peoples who were already there. A lot of people and tourists come to the South of England just to see the ancient circle of stones, so-called Stonehenge, one of the most famous and mysterious archaeological sites of the world, built between 2500 and 1500 BC (before Christ, до нашей эры). It was used by the Druids for their ceremonies.

During the next 1.000 years there were many invasions (набеги). The Romans came in 43 AD, calling the country “Britania”.

In the 5th century London, the capital of the United Kingdom was founded by the Romans in 43 A.D. (лат. нашей эры) and called Londinium. In 61 A.D. the town was burnt down and when it was rebuilt by the Romans it was surrounded by a wall. That area within the wall is now called the City of London. For many centuries it is London's commercial and business and financial centre and contains the Bank of England, the Stock Exchange (фондовая биржа) and the head offices of numerous companies and corporations.

Chester is very important town in the north-west of England. In the past it used to be a Roman fort; its name comes from the Latin word “castra”, meaning «fortified camp». In Chester there is a famous museum which contains over 5000 ancient and modern toys.

There are plenty of other historical and cultural cities and towns in England: Kent, Bristol, Bath, Brighton, Bournemouth, and many others.

The history of the English language really began in the 5th century with the arrival to the British Isles of three Germanic tribes (племена): the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes, who crossed the North Sea from what today is Northern Germany. Most of the Celtic speakers were pushed west and north by the invaders - mainly into what is now Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The Angles who came to England gave birth to the language called “English”.

The invading Germanic tribes spoke similar languages, which developed into what is now called Old English. Old English did not sound or look like English today and English speakers of today would have great difficulty in understanding it. Nevertheless, about half of the most commonly used words in Modern English have Old English roots. The words be, strong and water, for example, are derived from Old English. Old English was spoken until around 1100.

In 1066 the Duke of Normandy (Northern France), invaded and conquered England after a well-known the Battle of Hastings. As a result of this the Norman leader became the King of England “William the Conqueror”, who built Tower and Salisbury Cathedral. He was crowned at Westminster Abbey. Salisbury Cathedral is a splendid example of an English Gothic architecture; inside there is one of four copies of Magna Charta (the agreement made in 1215 between King John and feudal barons) and the oldest clock in England.

The Normans brought with them the French language, which became the language of the Royal Court (королевского двора), and the ruling and business classes. For about 300 years there was a kind of linguistic class division, when the lower classes spoke English and the upper classes lords and barons spoke French. The English are the descendants (потомки) of all the invaders, and learners of English can find many words in the English language which originated from French.

In the 14th century so-called Middle English became dominant in Britain. It was the language of the great poet Chaucer (1340-1400). Towards the end of Middle English, a change in pronunciation (the Great Vowel Shift) started, with vowels being pronounced shorter. Since the 16th century the British had contacts with many nations from around the world. This, and the Renaissance (Возрождение) of Classical learning, meant that many new words and phrases entered the language.

The invention of printing brought standardization to English spelling and grammar. Books became cheaper and more people learned to read. In 1604 the first English dictionary was published. A southern English accent (the dialect of London) became generally accepted and most easily understood.

Hamlet's famous "To be or not to be" lines were written in Early Modern English by Shakespeare. The main difference between Early Modern English and Late Modern English (1800-Present) is vocabulary. Late Modern English has many more words, arising from two principal factors: firstly, the Industrial Revolution and technology created a need for new words; secondly, the British Empire at its height covered one quarter of the earth's surface, and the English language adopted foreign words from many other countries and the parts of Great Britain.

Wales is the country in the west of Great Britain. It is mainly a mountainous land with a chiefly agricultural economy and an industrial and coal-mining area in the south. The landscape is really beautiful. Cardiff, a large city in the south, was chosen as the capital of Wales in 1955, mainly because of its size. Since 1536, Wales has been governed by England and the heir to the throne of England has the title of Prince of Wales. The Welsh language is an ancient Celtic language, similar to Breton, spoken in Brittany, France.

Scotland is in Highlands. The capital of Scotland is Edinburgh, well known for its castle. Glasgow is the industrial capital of Scotland. It is the third largest city in Great Britain. The typical products of Scotland are timber, whisky, and salmon. Golf is the Scottish natural sport and it seems to have originated in this country. Scotland is also the land of myths and mysteries; every castle has "its ghost". And of course everyone knows about so-called "the Loch Ness Monster". «Nessie» is said to be about six meters long, with a long, thin neck. The first report of the monster in Loch Ness was in 565 A.D.

One third of the population of Northern Ireland (Ulster) lives in and around the capital Belfast - the most important port, commercial, industrial and cultural centre with theatres, orchestras, ballet and opera companies.

A lot of British customs and habits as well as the language phrases are connected with the English weather.

The common ideas foreigners have about the weather in Britain are: "It rains all the time, it's very damp"; "There's a terrible fog in London, just like in Sherlock Holmes'...", "The sun never shines in July or August". But contrary to popular opinion, it does not rain all the time. Indeed, the weather changes so frequently that it is difficult to forecast and it is not unusual for people to complain that the "weathermen" were wrong.

Answer the following questions.

1. What were the origins of Old English?
2. What is the Great Vowel Shift?
3. What definition can you give to English as the global language?