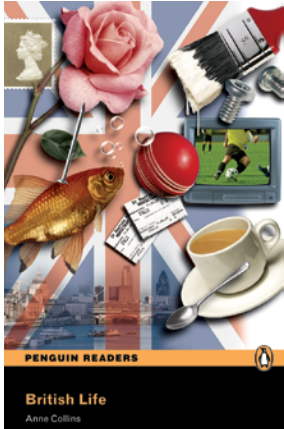




## British Life

Annie Collins



### About the author

Anne Collins is an experienced writer and adapter of films and stories for many publishers. She has also taught EFL students of different ages in several countries, and lives in Scotland. The subject, British life, provides many opportunities for both creative and factual work in the classroom.

### Summary

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

**Pages 1–7:** This section includes many subsections. The *Map of the UK* at the start of the book has interesting facts about the country. *The British* explains to us the difference between Great Britain and the United Kingdom, describes the languages spoken in Britain, explores some differences between the nationalities which make up Great Britain and draws our attention to key features of the British character. *The Royal Family* starts with a quiz on how much we know about the British royal family and continues with an up-to-date family tree and other 'royal' facts.

**Pages 8–17:** This section also includes many subsections. In *The British at Home* there are some statistics on home ownership and family size. *The Changing Family* and *A Change of Heart* explore what 'a family' means today, and the effect of the increasing divorce rate on British

family life. There is a discussion on marriage and stepfamilies. This is followed by a picture story, *A Change of Heart*, about some of the dilemmas that are faced by divorced couples and their children.

**Pages 18–25:** *Faces of Business* and *The Call Centre* describe a recent change in business, which appear to be the drop in making things in factories and the increase in providing services. This means giving help or doing jobs for people. There are statistics on average hours spent at work. The picture story, *The Call Centre*, is written from the view of a student starting work in a modern 'call centre'. *The City of London* takes the form of an interview with Charles Rogers, who works in London at the biggest financial centre in Europe.

**Pages 26–31:** In *The British and Food / Scones*, a British cook, Paul White, gives his ideas on how to make this traditional food for tea. There are also useful facts and figures on British eating habits and the trends. There is an illustrated practical recipe for the tea time favourite, scones, and there are notes on the British obsession with tea. *Weekend Activities* picks out three of Britain's favourite leisure activities: watching television, D-I-Y (Do-It-Yourself) and gardening.

**Pages 32–39:** *A Nation of Animal Lovers* explores the British love of animals reflected in two pages on British pets, TV pet programmes, *Battersea Dogs Home* and *Crufts Dog Show*. *The National Lottery* describes how many countries have had a national lottery for years, whereas the National Lottery is a relatively recent feature of British life. For this reason it continues to attract considerable media attention and is still a common topic of everyday conversation. *The British and Sport* includes a quiz with ten questions for students to answer. *The British on Holiday* talks about holiday trends and statistics. *Evenings Out* focuses on three popular evening activities: the theatre, the cinema, and musicals.

### Background and themes

The number of themes is endless in this book. Here are some of them:

**Identity:** Much of *British Life* focuses on understanding what it means in modern times to be British. By comparing what makes the countries that make up the United Kingdom different from each other, the author also describes what makes Britain different from the rest of the world. The book also shows that there are many misconceptions as to what others may think British life involves.



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**Change:** 'Change' is also an important theme in the book and it can be found everywhere in Britain – the change in the importance of the Royal Family, for example, and in how regular families have had to adapt to changes in family life, work and leisure.

**Culture and society:** The book shows that British people and their lives are filled with traditions, habits and beliefs that have influenced many other parts of the world. The British love of sport, animals, nature and the arts are parts of British life that have given much to the world at the same time as accepting new parts into itself.

### Discussion activities

#### Before reading

- Group work:** Find out what students already know about Britain. *In groups, write as much as you can about these topics in only one minute:*  
British food London The Royal Family  
The countries that make up Great Britain  
Spare time activities Holidays Sport
- Pair work:** Students work in pairs. They should imagine they have won a week's holiday in Britain and plan what to do: *In pairs, what would you do if you could spend a holiday in Britain for free? Write down your ideas.*
- Predict:** Ask students to look at the content page of the book in groups. Guide them with these instructions: *Look at the content page in groups and discuss what the book will be about. Choose five titles and write a few lines on what you imagine will appear in the section.*
- Write:** Ask students to work in groups. They should write a short paragraph about British life using at least ten of the words below:  
average divorce isle royal tradition  
couple financial increase insurance service  
industry step-family chat cricket flour  
lottery nursing-home pudding rat scone  
Ask students to look up the words they do not know in the Word List in back of the book.

#### Pages 1–7

##### While reading

- Group work:** With their readers closed, ask students to draw a sketch map of the British Isles, marking countries and cities. Guide them with these instructions: *In groups, with your readers closed, draw the map of the British Isles and mark these countries and cities:*  
England / London; Scotland / Edinburgh; Wales / Cardiff / Northern Ireland / The Republic of Ireland  
Then ask students to open their books to page 1 and to compare the map with their sketch. Who was closest?

- Read and check:** Tell students to work in groups and fill out the following chart as they read pages 3 and 4: *Write down as much as you know about what each of these people are like and what they do:*

English	Scottish	Welsh	Irish

- Discuss:** *In pairs read pages 6 and 7 and discuss how much life in the UK has changed.*

#### After reading

- Discuss:** In pairs, get students to discuss these questions after they read the section: *In pairs, re-read pages 2 to 7 and answer the following questions:*
  - Why are so many British people from India, Pakistan, Hong Kong and The Caribbean?*
  - What are the pros and cons of a multi-racial society?*
  - On page 4 the writer describes British people as being shy, not very good at making friends and not very interested in clothes. Are British people you know like this? How are people from your country different from this?*
  - Do you think the Royal Family is good for Britain?*
  - Why do you think so many British people prefer to own their homes rather than rent them? How many people in your country own their homes?*
- Role play:** Put students into groups and tell them to work on the following activity: *In groups of four, each student chooses to be an English, an Irish, a Welsh or a Scottish person. Each student describes their life and the others guess who they are.*
- Write:** Ask students to work on the following writing activity: *Choose the topic you found most interesting in this section and write a short paragraph saying why.*

#### Pages 8–17

##### While reading

- Compare:** Tell students to work in groups and to do the following activity: *In groups as you read pages 8–10, compare the British home and the British changing family with your own. After discussing these topics, fill out this chart:*

British home and family	Home and family in my country

- Write:** Ask students to read the article on divorce and its reviews and to work on the following: *Read the article reviews on pages 10 and 11. How far do you agree with them? Write your own review.*  
Choose five reviews and ask students to read them out loud.



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- 13 Group work:** Tell students to read the picture story on pages 12 to 17: *In groups, read the story A Change of Heart and think of a different ending for the story. Discuss your ideas and write them down.*

### After reading

- 14 Discuss:** Ask students to work in pairs in the following activity: *In groups discuss how far you agree with these statements about family life. Use a scale of 1–5. 1 = completely agree / 5 = completely disagree.*
- *The ideal age to get married is 25. ....*
  - *If couples do not want to have children, there is no point in getting married. ....*
  - *Even if they don't love each other, couples should stay together for their children. ....*
  - *Divorce usually damages children. ....*
  - *Divorce should be made more difficult. ....*
  - *Women should stay at home and look after their children instead of going to work. ....*
  - *Men are mainly to blame for the break-up of marriages. ....*
- 15 Write:** Ask students to work on the following activity after reading pages 12–17. Guide them with these instructions: *a) at the end of A Change of Heart how do these people – Luke, Luke's mother, Luke's father, Steve – feel? b) who makes you feel sad? Why?*

### Pages 18–25

#### While reading

- 16 Pair work:** Tell students to discuss the following as they read pages 18–19: *How do these facts about Britain from Faces of Business compare with the situation in your country?*
- 75% of people work in service industries.*
  - The working day runs from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.*
  - British workers get four weeks paid holiday a year.*
  - 45% of British workers are women.*
  - 16% of men are self-employed.*
- 17 Group work:** Put students into groups and ask them to work on the following as they read the picture story on pages 19–23: *In The Call Centre what problems does Emma face? Would you do this kind of work? Why/why not?*
- 18 Research:** Tell students to work in groups and to do the following activity after they read pages 24 and 25: *In groups, read about the City of London and decide which five other things you would like to know about the city. Write them down and give them to another group. Each group will do research work for the following class.*

### After reading

- 19 Role play:** Ask students to work in groups of three and to work on the following: *You are Emma, Marian and a customer. Act out two conversations Emma has with different customers the following day. Then Marian tells Emma what she thinks about her job. Choose three groups to role play their conversations.*

- 20 Write:** Tell students to work on the following writing activity after reading pages 24–25: *Imagine you are in London. You have visited the city and learn a lot about it. Write a letter to your best friend telling them what you saw, how you felt and what you are planning to do.*

### Pages 26–31

- 21 Compare:** Ask students to work in pairs and to do the following activity as they read pages 26–27: *Read about British food and then fill out a chart comparing it with the food you eat in your country.*

British food	Our food

### After reading

- 22 Discuss:** Students pick out one or two facts from the section on British food that they found interesting or surprising: *Discuss what you think about British food and the many facts about it. Then a) compare the facts you have chosen in small groups and b) discuss which kinds of food and drink mentioned in this section have you eaten? Did you enjoy it / them?*
- 23 Pair work:** Ask students to work in pairs on the following discussion activity: *a) How popular are watching TV, D-I-Y and gardening in your country? b) What other popular weekend activities are there?*

### Pages 32–39

#### While reading

- 24 Discuss:** Ask students to work in groups and to discuss the following after they read pages 32–33: *a) What is your reaction to the British attitude to animals? b) How does this compare to the situation in your country? c) Does your family own any pets?*
- 25 Write:** Ask students to work in groups on the following writing activity after reading pages 34–35: *Your group has just won £5 million. How would you spend it? How would it change your lives? Write down your ideas.*
- 26 Group work:** When students have tried the quiz and checked the answers on pages 36 and 41, they could discuss these questions: *a) Does anything you have read surprise you? b) How important is sport in your country / to you?*

### After reading

- 27 Role play:** Ask students to work in pairs and to do the following activity: *Some British people are going to spend two weeks on holiday in your country. Make a list of suggestions for places they should visit and things they should do. Then use this information to role play two British tourists talking to two people from the country.*

### Vocabulary activities

For the Word List and vocabulary activities, go to [www.penguinreaders.com](http://www.penguinreaders.com).