Contents



1. Identity: the foundations of British culture *p3*

1.1. Geography p5

1.1.1. **Britain:** what is it and what does it look like? *p6*

1.2. History *p15*

1.2.1. Come in, make yourself at home:

Celts, Saxons, Vikings and Normans *p16*

1.2.2. The split personality takes shape *p23*

1.2.3. **The modern age:** empire, slavery and sacrifice *p31*

1.3. Language and belonging *p43*

1.3.1. **Language lessons:** how the British talk *p44*

1.3.2. **Being British:** I wish I'd never asked... *p50*



2. Literature and philosophy *p57*

2.1. Literature *p59*

2.1.1. How important is literature to Britain? *p60*

2.1.2. **Well versed:**Brit lit in the medieval era *p62*

2.1.3. **From sonnets to novels:** literature grows up *p67*

2.1.4. The Romantics and the realists p75

2.1.5. **Success stories:** modern British literature *p84*

2.2. Philosophy *p97*

2.2.1. The greatest hits of British philosophy *p98*



3. Art, architecture and design *p107*

3.1. Art and design *p109*

3.1.1. **Foreign aid:** the early personnel of painting *p110*

3.1.2. **Morals, mares and mug shots:** British art finally gets serious *p114*

3.1.3. **Constable, Turner and Blake:**the golden age *p117*

3.1.4. **From cubes to dead sharks:** art over the last century *p121*

3.1.5. **Mixed motifs:** the icons of British design *p130*

3.2. Architecture p135

3.2.1. **Picking through the ruins:** ancient British buildings *p136*

3.2.2. **Built on faith:** the love of a good church *p138*

3.2.3. **Castles, piles and factories:** the big builds *p144*

3.2.4. **In and out of love with Modernism:**20th century builds *p151*

3.2.5. **Home truths:** domestic architecture and planning *p155*



4. Performing arts *p159*

4.1. Music *p161*

4.1.1. **Folk stories:** traditional music *p162*

4.1.2. **Flashes of brilliance:** British classical music *p167*

4.1.3. **Rebel forces:** rock, pop, punk and the rest *p173*

4.2. Theatre, dance and comedy *p185*

4.2.1. Setting the scene for Shakespeare:

how theatre found its golden age *p186*

4.2.2. **Light brigade:** from Restoration Comedy to Gilbert and Sullivan *p194*

4.2.3. **Mirth, musicals** and a good portion of angst: modern theatre *p200*

4.2.4. Britain on the dancefloor *p208*

4.2.5. **Laughing gear:** modern British comedy *p213*



5. Cinema, photography and fashion *p219*

5.1. Cinema *p221*

5.1.1. **An underdog's story:** the Brits and their films *p222*

5.1.2. From dog stars to Hitchcock:

early cinema p224

5.1.3. **Big films and bigger audiences:** the golden age *p227*

5.1.4. **From bedsits to Bond:** cinema in the 1960s *p231*

5.1.5. **Let's hear it for the little guy:** modern British cinema *p234*

5.2. Photography *p241*

5.2.1. Fixing the shadows *p242*

5.2.2. **Art, war and glamour:** modern photography *p245*

5.3. Fashion *p249*

5.3.1. Clothes and the British sense of style p250



6. Media and communications *p259*

6.1. Media *p261*

6.1.1. **Reverting to type:** national and regional newspapers *p262*

6.1.2. **On the rack:** magazines *p266*

6.1.3. A love affair with telly *p268*

6.1.4. **Waves of radio:** from ITMA to Moyles *p272*

6.1.5. **New media:** Britain on the Web *p275*

6.2. Communications *p279*

6.2.1. **Posting letters** and making calls *p280*

6.2.2. **The age of the strain:** getting about Britain *p282*



7. Food and drink *p287*

7.1. Food *p289*

7.1.1. The changing culture of British food *p290*

7.1.2. **Stews, bakes, jellies and puds:** the regional menu *p294*

7.1.3. **The lost art of dining:** eating habits *p302*

7.2. Drink *p307*

7.2.1. **Fancy a brew?** Brits and their drinks *p308*

7.2.2. **Whose round is it?** Drinking habits *p315*



8. Living culture: the state of modern Britain *p319*

8.1. **Divided loyalties:** class, race and family *p322*

8.2. **How Britain takes** its religion *p326*

8.3. **Unwritten rules:** politics and the system of government *p331*

8.4. **Cashing in:** the economy, wealth and social security *p339*

8.5. **Law and order:** courts, prisons and the police *p343*

8.6. **Testing times:** the education system *p347*

8.7. Time out: holidays, festivals and free time p351

8.8. **Cricket to conkers:** a love affair with sport *p356*

