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The English say «Other countries have a climate, in England we have weather*. It happens because the weather changes more often than in other countries. British winters are mild and springs are cool because of the winds that blow from the Atlantic Ocean. They blow 2 days out of every 3.

In spring sunshine and showers follow each other so often during the day that an umbrella or a raincoat is absolutely necessary in England. The weather changes so frequently that it is difficult to forecast. It is not unusual for people to complain that the weathermen were wrong.

The weather in spring is generally mild but sometimes the days are really fresh. Spring is the season when nature awakens from its long winter sleep: the temperature grows, the sky becomes blue, and the sun grows warmer. Everything is full of new life again. The days grow longer and warmer; the ground gets covered with green grass.

Summer is the hottest season in England. The sunrays become hot, the days are long, and the nights are short and warm. It's time for holidays, when people go to the seaside for sunbathing and swimming. It usually gets hot in July. The summer nights are short, but they are wonderful.

As for autumn it isn't so nice. It's a season of winds and beautiful sunsets. The leaves turn yellow and reddish and fall to the ground and the birds migrate to warm countries. In autumn the days become shorter. A spell of sunny weather in September is called Indian summer or «Golden Autumn». In England September and October are warm and dry, but November is the foggiest month. Late autumn is generally an unpleasant season. Everything begins to take a different colour. The trees look bare. The flowers have faded away. The sky is overcast with low clouds. Everything looks gloomy.

In winter in England they can hardly forecast their weather. Sometimes it rains and sometimes it snows. In England it isn't so cold in winter as in our country and they don't get so much snow as we get here in Ukraine. The rivers in England never freeze, that's why children there go skating very seldom. When there are 8 degrees of frost in England everyone complains of hazards. The weather in England is very changeable. A fine morning can change into a wet afternoon and evening. And a nasty morning can change into a fine afternoon. That is why it is natural for the English to use the comparison "as

changeable as the weather" of a person who often changes his mood or opinion about something. "Other countries have a climate; in England we have weather". This statement is often made by the English to describe the meteorological conditions of their country.

The English also say that they have three variants of weather: when it rains in the morning, when it rains in the afternoon, or when it rains all day long.

The weather is the favorite conversational topic in England. When two Englishmen meet, their first words will be "How are you?" And after the reply "Very well, thank you; how are you?" the next remark is almost certain to be about the weather. When they go abroad the English often surprise people of other nationalities by this tendency to talk about the weather, a topic of conversation that other people do not find so interesting.

The best time of the year in England is spring (of course, it rains in spring, too). The two worst months in Britain are January and February. They are cold, damp, and unpleasant. The best place in the world then is at home by the fire.

Summer months are rather cold and there can be a lot of rainy days. So most people, who look forward to summer holidays, plan to go abroad for the summer, to France or somewhere on the Continent.

The most unpleasant aspects of the weather in England are fog and smog. The climate in the United Kingdom is defined as a temperate oceanic climate, or *Cfb* on the Köppen climate classification system, a classification it shares with most of north-west Europe.[1] Regional climates are influenced by the Atlantic Ocean and latitude. Northern Ireland, Wales and western parts of England and Scotland, being closest to the Atlantic Ocean, are generally the mildest, wettest and windiest regions of the UK, and temperature ranges here are seldom extreme. Eastern areas are drier, cooler, and less windy, and also experience the greatest daily and seasonal temperature variations. Northern areas are generally cooler and wetter, and have slightly larger temperature ranges than southern areas.

The UK is mostly under the influence of the maritime polar air mass from the north-west. Northern Ireland and the west of Scotland are the most exposed to the maritime polar air mass which brings cool moist air; the east of Scotland and north-east England are more exposed to the continental polar air mass which brings cold dry air. The south and south-east of England are the least exposed to polar air masses from the north-west, and on occasion see continental tropical air masses from the south, which bring warm dry air in the summer. On average, the temperature ranges from 25-18 degrees.

Weather is not the same as climate. The weather at a place is the state of the atmosphere there at a given time or over a short period. The weather of the British Isles is greatly variable.

The climate of a place or region, on the other hand, represents the average weather conditions over a long period of time.

The climate of any place results from the interaction of a number of determining factors, of which the most important are latitude, distance from the sea, relief and the direction of the prevailing winds.

The geographical position of the British Isles within latitudes 50° to 60° N is a basic factor in determining the main characteristics of the climate. Temperature, the most important climatic element, depends not only on the angle at which the sun's rays strike the earth's surface, but also on the duration of daylight. The length of day at London ranges from 16 hours 35 minutes on June to 7 hours 50 minutes on 21 December. British latitudes form the temperate nature of the British climate, for the sun is never directly overhead as in the tropical areas. Britain's climate is dominated by the influence of the sea. It is much milder than that in any other country in the same latitudes. This is due partly to the presence of the North Atlantic Drift, or the Gulf Stream, and partly to the fact that north-west Europe lies in a predominantly westerly wind-belt. This means that marine influences warm the land in winter and cool in summer. This moderating effect of the sea is in fact, the cause of the relatively small seasonal contrasts experienced in Britain.

The moderating effect of the ocean on air temperature is also stronger in winter than in summer. When the surface water is cooler than the air above it – as frequently happens during the summer months – the air tends to lose its heat to the water. The lowest layers of air are chilled and become denser by contradiction, and the chilled air tends to remain at low levels. The surface water expands because it is warmed, and remains on the surface of the ocean. Unless the air is turbulent, little of it can be cooled, for little heat is exchanged.

Opposite conditions apply in winter. The air in winter is likely to be cooler than the surface water, so that the heat passes from water to air. Air at low levels is warmed and expands and rises, carrying oceanic heat with it, while the chilled surface water contracts and sinks, to be replaced by unchilled water from below. This convectional overturning both of water and of air leads to a vigorous exchange of heat.

The prevailing winds in the British Isles are westerlies. They are extremely moist, as a result of their long passage over warm waters of the North Atlantic. On their arrival to

Britain, the winds are forced upwards, and as a result large-scale condensation takes place, clouds form and precipitation follows, especially over the mountainous areas.

North and north-west winds often bring heavy falls of snow to north Britain during late October and November, but they are usually short-lived. Continental winds from the east sometimes reach the British Isles in summer as a warm, dry air-stream, but they are more frequently experienced in winter when they cross the north sea and bring cold, continental-type weather to eastern and inland districts of Great Britain.

Relief is the most important factor controlling the distribution of temperature and precipitation within Britain. The actual temperatures experienced in the hilly and mountainous parts are considerably lower than those in the lowlands. The effect of relief on precipitation is even more striking. Average annual rainfall in Britain is about 1,100 mm. But the geographical distribution of rainfall is largely determined by topography. The mountainous areas of the west and north have more rainfall than the lowlands of the south and east. The western Scottish Highlands, the Lake District (the Cumbrian mountains), Welsh uplands and parts of Devon and Cornwall in the south-west receive more than 2,000 mm of rainfall each year.

In contrast, the eastern lowlands, lying in a rain-shadow area, are much drier and usually receive little precipitation. Much of eastern and south-eastern England (including London) receive less than 700 mm each year, and snow falls on only 15 to 18 days on the average.

Rainfall is fairly well distributed throughout the year, although March to June are the driest months and October to January are the wettest.

Ireland is in the rather a different category, for here the rain-bearing winds have not been deprived of their moisture, and much of the Irish plain receives up to 1,200 mm of rainfall per year, usually in the form of steady and prolonged drizzle. Snow, on the other hand, is rare, owing to the warming effects of the Gulf Stream. The combined influences of the sea and prevailing winds are equally evident in the general pattern of rainfall over the country.

Because of the North Atlantic Drift and predominantly maritime air masses that reach the British Isles from the west, the range in temperature throughout the year is never very great. The annual mean temperature in England and Wales is about 10°C, in Scotland and Northern Ireland about 9°C. July and August are the warmest months of the year, and January and February the coldest.

The mean winter temperature in the north is 30C, the mean summer temperature 12oC. The corresponding figures for the south are 5oC and 16oC. The mean January temperature for London is 4oC, and the mean July temperature 17oC.

During a normal summer the temperature may occasionally rise above 30oC in the south. Minimum temperatures of -10oC may occur on a still clear winter's night in inland areas.

The distribution of sunshine shows a general decrease from south to north - the south has much longer periods of sunshine than the north.

It is frequently said that Great Britain does not experience climate, but only weather. This statement suggests that there is such a day-to-day variation in temperature, rainfall, wind direction, wind speed and sunshine that the "average weather conditions", there is usually no very great variation from year to year or between corresponding seasons of different years.

No place in Britain is more than 120 km from the sea. But although the British are crowded very closely in a very small country, there is one respect in which they are very fortunate. This is their climate. Perhaps, this is a surprising statement because almost everyone has heard how annoying the weather usually is in England. Because of the frequent clouds and the moisture that hangs in the air even on fairly clear days, England has less sunshine than most countries, and the sunlight is weaker than in other places where the air is dry and clear. What is worse, sunshine rarely lasts long enough for a person to have time to enjoy it. The weather changes constantly. No ordinary person can guess from one day to another which season he will find himself in when he wakes in the morning. Moreover, a day in January may be as warm as a warm day in July and a day in July may be as cold as the coldest in January.

But although the English weather is more unreliable than any weather in the world, the English climate - average weather - is a good one. English winters are seldom very cold and the summers are seldom hot. Men ride to work on bicycles all through the year. Along the south coast English gardens even contain occasional palm trees.

The most remarkable feature of English weather, the London fog, has an exaggerated reputation. What makes fog thick in big industrial areas is not so much the moisture in the air as the soot from millions of coal fires. Such smogs (smoke + fog) are not frequent today. Since 1965 as a result of changes in fuel usage and the introduction of clean air legislation, they have become less severe. It is quite natural that in fine, still weather there is occasionally haze in summer and mist and fog in winter.

The amount of rainfall in Britain is exaggerated, too. Britain seems to have a great deal of rain because there are so many showers. But usually very little rain falls at a time. Often the rain is hardly more than floating mist in which you can hardly get wet. Although a period of as long as three weeks without rain is exceptional in Britain.

It is no wonder that, living in such an unbearable climate with so many rules and with still more exceptions, the Englishmen talk about their weather, whatever it may be, and their climate, too. This statement is often made by the English to describe the meteorological conditions of their country.

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The most unpleasant aspect of English weather is fog and smog. This is extremely bad in big cities and especially in London.



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