**Краткие тексты по страноведению для обучения связному высказыванию**

**ENGLAND IN BRIEF**

**London**

The capital of the United Kingdom is London. Over eight million people live in London. It is one of the largest cities in Europe. It stands on the Thames river. Millions of tourists visit this city every year.

They like going sightseeing. Everybody would like to see the House of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral, the National

Gallery, Trafalgar Square, the British Museum, the Tower and others. The Tower is an old castle. Now it is a museum. Trafalgar Square is the geographical centre of London. The famous clock of London is Big Ben. Six streets meet in Picadilly Circus. The famous park of London is Hyde Park. London is one of the most beautiful cities of the world.

**More Things to See in London**

Hide Park is the largest park in London. It was once a royal hunting forest. There are restaurants and bars at each end of the lake.

The Tower of London is the oldest building. They built it in the eleventh century.

There is the Natural History Museum in Kensington. There is a great collection of animals and plants. There is a quarter of million butterflies and a blue whale in the collection of this museum.

Madame Tussauds is a museum too. It has many waxworks. They are models of famous people.

**Big Ben**

In England they call Big Ben the big clock on the tower. It is the biggest clock bell in Britain. It weighs 13.5 tons.

The clock tower is 318 feet high. People go 374 steps to reach the top. The face of the clock is 23 feet wide. The minute hand is 14 feet long. The hour hand is 9 feet long.

They called Big Ben after Sir Benjamin Hall. Sir Benjamin Hall was a big man. First it was a joke. But now we know the clock by that name.

**The Great Fire of London**

It happened many years ago in London. The streets of London were dirty and narrow. On the second of September 1665 the fire started in one of the shops.

At first people didn't think about the fire seriously. But that summer in England was very hot and dry. There was not much water in the city. And there was a strong wind. The fire burned for five days. Many people left without their houses. Many houses stood in ruins. The fire destroyed the greater part of London. The famous architect Sir Christopher Wren took part in rebuilding the city. Now London is one of the most beautiful cities of the world.

**Admiral Nelson**

Admiral Nelson (Horatio Nelson, 1758-1805) is a British hero. He was a famous admiral. When he was a child he was small and not strong. But he loved the sea very much. In his childhood he spent much time on the river. And he became a sailor.

When he was 21 he became a captain. In battles he lost his arm and eye. In the battle at Trafalgar the British fleet destroyed many French

and Spanish ships and won. It was the greatest hard victory in British history. Nelson was wounded and died in this battle.

There is a monument to Nelson in Trafalgar Square in the centre of London.

**The British Museum**

There are many museums in London. The British Museum is the most important and popular. It is a great grey building. It is one of the greatest libraries in the world. There are about seven million books is it. The reading Room of the British Museum is a circle.

Many famous people worked in the British Museum. It is also a great Natural History Museum. The Museum has a wonderful an gallery. There are many collections of sculptures, ceramics, drawings and painting in it. Many people visit this museum every day.

**English Schoolchildren**

School begins at nine o'clock. English schoolchildren come to school by bus, on bicycles or they walk. They wear their school uniform.

There are some breaks during a school day. They drink their milk at eleven o'clock every day. One o'clock is time for lunch. School lunches cost only a shilling. Pupils eat meat, potatoes, vegetables and pudding.

At two o'clock the girls begin to type, sew and cook. The boys do metalwork or woodwork. Three o'clock is time for games. They play hockey, tennis, football and cricket.

School is over at four o'clock. And schoolchildren go home to do their homework.

**London Buses**

Buses in London are of different colours. The red buses go in London. The green ones usually go from London to the country.

People don't stand in London buses. Buses in London are often double-deckers. In the centre of London buses don't move very fast. It is cheaper to go by bus. People like to travel by bus.

The bus-stop sign is red. In England they drive on the left side of the road.

**Sherlock Holmes**

Conan Doyle is a famous English writer. He wrote about Sherlock Holmes. This hero first appeared in his book in 1882. Sherlock Holmes lived in London in Baker Street. Doctor Watson was his friend.

Sherlock Holmes was a very clever detective. He found many criminals. His famous words are, "Elementary, my dear Watson..."

Many people like to use these words. People like to read books about Sherlock Holmes and like to see films about him.

**April Fool's Day**

The first of April is April Fool's Day. On this day people usually play harmless jokes on friends and family members. This custom came from France.

Children like April Fool's jokes very much. They often put salt in the sugar bowl. They like to set the clock back an hour. Sometimes they say to their friends, "Oh, I can see some holes in your coat!" But they mean button-holes. It is fun for children to call to the Zoo and ask to speak to Mr. Lion, for example. English children like to play jokes.

**Robin Hood**

Many years ago there lived a man in England. His name was Robin Hood. He always helped the poor people of England. And the poor people loved him.

The rich people of England didn't like Robin Hood because he took money from the rich people and gave it to the poor people. The sheriff of a big town wanted to catch Robin Hood and to kill him.

Robin Hood was a very good shot (стрелок). He took part in the contest. A lot of people came to the contest. Robin Hood and his men had always green coats. The sheriff looked for green coats. But he didn't see them. There was nobody in green. The sheriff was very angry. He couldn't catch Robin, because Robin Hood and his men were in red.

**Jerome K. Jerome (1859-1927)**

Jerome K. Jerome is a well-known English writer. He was born in a poor family. His father died when the boy was twelve. Jerome did not finish school. He went to work to help his family.

He tried different professions. And then began to write articles for newspapers. He wrote some plays for the theatre and short stories. In 1886 Jerome K. Jerome wrote his novel "Three Men in a Boat". This novel was published and became famous.

**Francis Drake (1540-1596)**

Francis Drake was a famous English sea-captain. He was born in Plymouth - one of the largest seaports of England. The boy spent much time near the sea. He looked at the ships and listened to the stories of the sailors. At fifteen he became a sailor. Francis did his work well. At twenty-five he began to help the captain of the ship.

English ships in the Atlantic Ocean often attacked Spanish ships and took the gold. Francis became one of the pirate captains. Those English pirate captains gave much gold to their country. With the Spanish gold England built many good strong ships.

James Cook (1728-1779)

James Cook was a great English sailor. He discovered many new lands. James Cook was born in a small village near the sea. At thirteen he left school. And began to help his father on the farm.

At seventeen he decided to be a sailor. He got work on a ship and learned his profession. Then he began to learn astronomy.

He crossed the Atlantic Ocean. And in 1768 Captain Cook sailed to the Pacific Ocean. For many years the sailors did not see land. Captain Cook found a strait between two islands (Cook Strait).

In April 1771 the sailors saw land. It was Australia. Captain Cook put up the English flag there.

English Holidays

England has some public holidays. They call them Bank Holidays. The offices and banks are closed on Monday and nobody works in them.

On Bank Holidays Londoners like to go out of the city. They ha\ e a rest in the open air. They go to the seaside or to one of the big parks- Many families take a basket and put their lunch in it. They like sitting on the grass under a tree. Good weather is very important.

Londoners like to visit a fair. There are a lot of interesting thing? for children at these fairs. Many little shops work for them.

Some people try to have all over their dresses and suits as many pearl buttons as possible. The people who have the most beautiful costumes become Pearly King and Queen.

English Traditions

Every country has its traditions. In England they are very important in the life of the people.

On Sundays they don't open theatres and shops. People don't get letters and newspapers.

The very interesting place of English homes is the fire-place. They like to sit round the fire in the evening.

In old England there was a tradition to celebrate May Day. It was the first Sunday of May. People put up a maypole. They decorated it with flowers and ribbons. Then they sang songs, danced around it and played games.

English Meals

There are four meals a day in an English home. They are breakfast, lunch, tea and dinner. They have breakfast about eight o'clock. They eat porridge with milk or salt, eggs, bread and butter. Some people like to drink tea, coffee or juice.

One o'clock is the time for lunch. They have soup or fruit juice, potatoes with meat or poultry. Then a pudding comes and coffee, juice or lemonade. Water is usually on the table.

Tea is between four or five o'clock. They usually have tea, milk, bread and butter, cakes and jam.

Dinner is about seven o'clock. They have soup, fish and meat with vegetables, potatoes, green beans, carrots and cabbage. Then comes sweet pudding, fruit salad, ice-cream or cheese, black or white coffee.

But sometimes they have dinner in the middle of the day. And in the evening they have supper.

**Towns and Suburbs**

People in Britain don't like to live in the centre of a town. They would like to live in suburbs. And most people don't live in flats. They usually live in a house with a garden. There are trees and flowers in the garden.

There are offices and shops in town centres. They are furniture shops, clothes shops and shoe shops. But there are some small shops in suburbs too.

**A Day at the Seaside**

People of Britain like to have a rest at the seaside. Britain is an island. Many people go to the sea only two hours. They go to Brighton and Blackpool. They go by train or by car. When the weather is fine people sit near the water. The children play in sand. Some people are very brave. They can swim in the sea. But the water in the sea is often very cold.

**About Football**

Football was born in England. The English like to play football very much. Many years ago the football field was the land between two villages. The game was very dangerous. People often killed each other. One of the kings (Henry VIII) forbade football in England.

Boys in the United States began playing football in the 1860s. American football was quite different. It was a rough game. Rugby is a kind of football. There is an oval ball in rugby. And there are fifteen players. They can carry a ball in their hands.

Football is the most popular game in the world. Many people like watching football on television and at the stadiums.