

1

The British and the weather

Before you watch

1 **SPEAKING** Work in pairs. Answer the questions.

- 1 Have you ever visited Britain? If so, what was it like? If not, would you like to go?
- 2 Do you know any British people? How would you describe their personalities?
- 3 What do you think foreigners think about people from your country?

Comprehension check

2 **▶** Watch the DVD clip. Choose the correct answers.

- 1 Which of these is a stereotype about British people?
a They are polite.
b They are happy.
c They are generous.
- 2 What do most British people like talking about?
a sport b politics c the weather
- 3 What percentage of people check the weather forecast every day?
a 17% b 57% c 70%

3 **▶** Watch again. Number the types of weather in the order you first see them (1–4).



A rainy ____



B snowy ____



C sunny ____



D windy ____

4 **▶** Watch again. Complete the sentences with the words below. There are two extra words.

embarrassed extreme finish interesting mild phrases start words

- 1 British people are _____ to talk about certain things.
- 2 Some people talk about the weather because it is an _____ subject.
- 3 The weather in Britain is usually _____.
- 4 In Britain, _____ weather is unusual.
- 5 People often _____ conversations by talking about the weather.
- 6 There are hundreds of weather _____ in the English language.

Round up

5 **SPEAKING** Work in groups. Answer the question.

How do you think people in your country are different to British people?

Vocabulary

6 RECYCLE Match the adjectives below with the sentences that they describe.

confused embarrassed relieved shocked upset

- 1 I don't understand what he just said about the meeting. _____
- 2 Oh dear, that's so sad. I think I'm going to cry. _____
- 3 You've found my phone and my keys! Phew! I was really worried I'd lost them. _____
- 4 I can't believe I forgot the words to the song. Everyone in the audience saw me! _____
- 5 Did you see the news? There's a fire at the school! I can't believe it. _____

7 Complete the text with the words below.

awkward controversial emotion stereotype

A different view of the British

Visitors to Britain often say the food is terrible, it rains all the time and the British people never show ¹_____. But this is a ²_____ that many foreign people who live in Britain don't agree with. While British people may seem ³_____ or shy at first, once they become friends, they can be warm and friendly. And don't worry, you can talk about more than the weather, as British people enjoy talking about more ⁴_____ topics like politics and religion with their friends.

Extension

8 Work in groups. Make a presentation that gives advice to foreign people who want to live in your country.

Think about the following:

- how to introduce yourself
- how to make friends
- what to do when you go to someone's house
- what is polite and impolite in your country

9 Give your presentation. Use the key phrases for giving advice.

Giving advice

I think / don't think you should ...
You need to ...
You have to ...
You should ...
That's my advice.

DVD clip summary

The DVD clip is about British people and their favourite topic of conversation: the weather.

Background

Britain has a temperate maritime climate. This means that it is quite mild compared to the rest of Europe, with temperatures rarely dropping below 0 degrees Celsius or getting above 32 degrees. The warmest months are July and August and the coldest months are December and January. In July, the average temperature in London is 20 degrees, and in January, it is 7 degrees. The British climate is also quite wet: on average, it rains on one in every three days.

Before you watch

Exercise 1

- Read the questions with the class and elicit answers from individual students. Encourage the students to guess the answers they do not already know and use their suggestions to start a class discussion.
- **Answers:** Students' own answers

Comprehension check

Exercise 2

- **Pre-watching:** Go through the questions with the students.
-  Play the whole DVD clip. The students choose the correct answers. Check their answers.
- **Answers:** 1 a 2 c 3 c

Exercise 3

- **Pre-watching:** Ask the students to look at the pictures and to try and remember the order that they saw the types of weather in the DVD clip.
-  Play the DVD clip to check the answers.
- **Answers:** A 2 B 4 C 1 D 3

Exercise 4

- **Pre-watching:** Ask the students to try and complete the sentences before they watch the DVD clip again.
- **Weaker classes:** Play the DVD clip first and pause after each answer.
-  Play the DVD clip to check the answers.
- **Answers:** 1 embarrassed 2 interesting 3 mild 4 extreme 5 start 6 phrases

Round up

Exercise 5

- Put the students in groups. Give them a few minutes to discuss the question.
- **Answers:** Students' own answers

Vocabulary

Exercise 6

- Ask the students to read through the sentences first, then match the adjectives with the sentences.
- **Answers:** 1 confused 2 upset 3 relieved 4 embarrassed 5 shocked

Exercise 7

- Ask the students to read through the text first, then complete the sentences. With a **weaker class**, you could elicit the meanings of the words first.
- **Answers:** 1 emotion 2 stereotype 3 awkward 4 controversial

Extension

Exercises 8 and 9

- **Materials needed:** None
- **Preparation:** Put the students in groups of three. Tell them you are a visitor from England and that you don't know anything about how to behave in their country.
- **Language:** Elicit the word *advice*. Then focus on the key phrases. Decide which phrases to use for actions that are a good idea (*should*), and which for actions that are essential (*have to, need to*).
- **Activity:** Ask the students to nominate two presenters and one note-taker in the group. Give the students 8–10 minutes to talk about the questions and make notes. Then ask them to present their ideas to the class and also to you, the pretend visitor from England.
- **Extension:** After all the groups have presented their advice, ask the students to compare the different ideas. For homework, you could ask them to write a guide for foreign visitors for a blog or web page.

The British and the weather

There are lots of stereotypes about British people. All over the world, people think that the British are shy and polite. The stereotype is that they're embarrassed to talk about certain things and don't show much emotion at all.

In fact, stereotypically British people are usually quite quiet, except when they talk about one thing – the British weather.

For some reason almost all British people enjoy talking about the weather. A recent survey found that half of all British people mention the weather every six hours! 70% of British people check the weather forecast every day and they are often still shocked when it predicts rain. Even though it rains a lot!

So, why are British people obsessed with the weather? According to the survey, there are a few different reasons for this. Some people said they talked about the weather because it changed all the time. There is always something new and interesting to talk about. However, others disagreed. They talked about the weather because it's usually mild, so it's an easy topic of conversation.

While Britain sometimes has extreme weather this is very unusual, so the weather is a safe and easy conversation topic. Everybody can join in and nobody will get confused or upset. It is a perfect conversation starter for socially awkward Britons, and many people are often relieved when they can chat about the weather rather than more controversial topics, like politics.

And this weather talk is nothing new. There are hundreds of weather phrases and idioms in the English language, and some of these are very old. So British people often mention the weather – even when they aren't talking about it!