

- County courts. The jurisdiction of county courts is local in nature. They try minor civil claims such as small debts.
- Magistrate’s courts. Their jurisdiction is entirely criminal.

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Britain in the 19th Century: Social and Economic Progress

Learning Britain history, we can divide XIX century into two periods. The beginning of the century can be named *Victorian’s epoch*. This period throws light upon the society and the development of industry.

In the XIX century Britain was at its most powerful and self-confident. After the industrial revolution, nineteenth century Britain was the “workshop” of the world. Britain’s empire was political rather than merely commercial. Britain used this empire to control large areas of the world. Outside Europe, Britain wished its trading position to be stronger than anyone else’s.

The Napoleonic War had turned the nation from thoughts of revolution to the need to defeat the French. Britain had sold clothes, guns, and other necessary war supplies to it’s allies’ armies. Now unemployment men from Britain’s army and navy were looking for work. Farmers suffered from cheap imported corn.

There had been a “middle class” in Britain for hundreds of years. It was a small class of merchants, traders and small farmers. In the second half of the XVIII century it had increased with the rise of industrialists and factory owners. The rapid growth of the middle class, which included great differences of wealth, social position and kinds of work, was part of the enormous rise in the population. Britain changed from being a nation of rural people to a nation mainly of urban people. In the political sphere there was fighting between the Whigs and the Tories.

Another period in Britain history can be named *Capitalist ideas*. Britain became a more modern and progressive society. In the end of the century took place qualitative improvements in people's lives, in organization of workers' homes, factory conditions, public health and education. Sport grew very important at that time. Cricket and football had become of great interest to the British public.

The most important idea of the nineteenth century was that everyone had the right to personal freedom, which was the basis of capitalism. These ideas were eagerly accepted by the growing middle class.

Literature was influenced by the new mood of change. In the middle of the century Charles Dickens attacked the rich and powerful for their cruelty towards the weak and unfortunate in society.

By the end of the century it had become clear that Britain was no longer as powerful as it had been. In Europe Germany was now united and had become very strong. Its economic prospects were clearly greater than Britain's. Like the USA it was producing more steel than Britain, and it used this to build strong industries and a strong navy.

Suddenly Britain realised that it no longer ruled the seas quite so assuredly and that others had more powerful armies and more powerful industries.

So, Britain began this century with impetuous industrial growth and social reforms, and ended it at the brink of the First World War.

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Today there are forty-seven universities in Britain. They are divided into four broad categories: the ancient English foundations, the ancient Scottish ones,