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Vocabulary: *quirks and confusion* 词汇: 离奇和困惑

To an outsider, any culture can seem **quirky**, **confusing**, **peculiar** or just downright **bizarre**. And the UK's got a thing or two that **raises a few eyebrows**. Brits are quite capable of **befuddling** visitors with their **idiosyncrasies**. However, understand the why and things might be less **perplexing**. Here are the reasons for three of Britain's more **puzzling** practices.

In a world where 61% of nations drive on the right, the **unorthodox** Brits drive on the left. Why? "Most people think it goes back to Medieval, maybe even Roman times," explains Stephen Laing, curator of the British Motor Museum. This **unusual** behaviour **makes sense** when you remember that right-handed people wear a sword on their left hip. Travelling on the left allowed you to keep your weapon arm toward your opponent, who would be on your right. This practice persisted until the 18th Century when a law was passed requiring all traffic crossing London Bridge to keep to the left.

Visitors to the UK that have just washed their hands in an old-fashioned sink might be wondering why one tap is solely for hot water, the other exclusively cold. Either can make washing very uncomfortable. So, why this **oddity**? "It relates to a time when hot and cold water were kept separate to prevent contamination," Kevin Wellman, chief executive officer of the Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering says. Drinkable cold water came from a mains supply, but hot water came from attic tanks and was not considered suitable for consumption. So they were kept apart.

Millions of people drink tea worldwide, but the **eccentric** Brits put milk in theirs. Why? This **mystifying** practice relates to the quality of china cup used in the 18th Century when tea was first imported. For the majority of Brits, "the cups available couldn't withstand the heat of the boiling water and would shatter, so milk was added first," Simon Hill, Tea Buyer at Bettys & Taylors of Harrogate tells the Sun newspaper. This cooled the cup enough to withstand the water. And this practical tweak soon became a national habit.

**There's a method to the madness**, they say. As you can see, these quirky Brits have perfectly **coherent** reasons for left-hand driving, two-tap sinks and tea with milk. But until

you **comprehend** them, they can seem **unfathomable**. Even if they still seem strange, at least now you're **in the know**.

## 词汇表

<b>quirky</b>	古怪奇特的
<b>confusing</b>	令人困惑的
<b>peculiar</b>	奇怪的
<b>bizarre</b>	怪诞的
<b>raise (a few) eyebrows</b>	引人惊诧, 使人震惊
<b>befuddle</b>	使...感到迷惑
<b>idiosyncrasy</b>	癖好
<b>perplexing</b>	令人费解的
<b>puzzling</b>	令人不解的
<b>unorthodox</b>	非传统的
<b>unusual</b>	不同寻常的
<b>make sense</b>	说得通
<b>oddy</b>	奇怪现象
<b>eccentric</b>	古怪的
<b>mystifying</b>	让人感到云里雾里的
<b>there's a method to the madness</b>	看似疯狂, 实则有理
<b>coherent</b>	条理清晰的
<b>comprehend</b>	领会、理解
<b>unfathomable</b>	高深莫测的
<b>in the know</b>	知情的

## 测验与练习

### 1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. True or False: *Driving on the left links back to ancient British history.*
2. What did walking or riding on the left allow a person to do?
3. What is the problem with using an old-fashioned British sink?
4. What would happen to the 18th Century cups when they encountered boiling water?
5. Which word used in the article means 'to continue to exist'?

### 2. 请在不参考课文的情况下完成下列练习。选择一个意思合适的单词填入句子的空格处。

1. When he arrived at the funeral in a brightly-coloured coat, it certainly \_\_\_\_\_.

in the know      raised a few eyebrow      there's a method to the madness      comprehended

2. While not the best player, his \_\_\_\_\_ style of play made him popular with the fans.

quirky      befuddled      perplexed      oddity

3. Our computer model predicted 99% of the data. The other 1% should be considered an \_\_\_\_\_.

idiosyncrasy      unorthodox      oddity      eccentric

4. How did I pay £10, give you a £20 and end up with £5? That doesn't \_\_\_\_\_.

confuse      puzzle      mystify      make sense

5. Some of the brightest minds in history have also been more than a little \_\_\_\_\_.

eccentric      idiosyncrasy      peculiarity      comprehensive

## 答案

### 1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. True or False: *Driving on the left links back to ancient British history.*  
**True. "Most people think it goes back to Medieval, maybe even Roman times," explains Stephen Laing, curator of the British Motor museum.**
2. What did walking or riding on the left allow a person to do?  
**Travelling on the left allowed you to keep your weapon arm towards your opponent, who would be on your right.**
3. What is the problem with using an old-fashioned British sink?  
**One tap is solely for hot water, the other exclusively cold. Either can make washing very uncomfortable.**
4. What would happen to the 18th Century cups when they encountered boiling water?  
**They couldn't withstand the heat of boiling water and would shatter.**
5. Which word used in the article means 'to continue to exist'?  
**'Persist'. This practice persisted until the 18th Century when a law was passed requiring all traffic crossing London Bridge to keep to the left.**

### 2. 请在不参考课文的情况下完成下列练习。选择一个意思合适的单词填入句子的空格处。

1. When he arrived at the funeral in a brightly-coloured coat, it certainly **raised a few eyebrows**.
2. While not the best player, his **quirky** style of play made him popular with the fans.
3. Our computer model predicted 99% of the data. The other 1% should be considered an **odddity**.
4. How did I pay £10, give you a £20 and end up with £5? That doesn't **make sense**.
5. Some of the brightest minds in history have also been more than a little **eccentric**.