FIRST FACTS FIRST

AN INTRODUCTORY GUIDE TO GREAT BRITAIN AND THE USA

Grzegorz A. Kleparski

with contributions from
Bartłomiej
Małgorzata Buczak
Marta Chwalewska
Ewa Gałgan
Tomasz Karpiński
David G. Poynton
Natalia Sarzyńska
Dorota Skulimowska
Jennifer Studenny
Adam Urban
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The idea of writing this book occurred to me a long time ago, namely, during the time of entrance exams to the English Section NKJO-CHEŁM in September 1993. As head of the examining board I realised – to my surprise – that many of the candidates knew very little or – should I say – next to nothing about the countries whose national language they intended to study and master. Very few of the candidates were able to enumerate any names of places that are worth seeing, both in the territory of Great Britain and the USA. To my utmost surprise, two of the candidates examined answered my question What did Shakespeare write? in the following unambiguous though incomplete way: Books. The final decision to write this script was taken during the entrance exams in September 1998 when I realised – to my breath-taking horror – that about 10% of the candidates did not associate the name Monica Lewinsky with any existing object, either animate or inanimate. Likewise, a fair percentage of the candidates proved to be unable to determine – with a good degree of approximation – the number of residents of the USA. Undoubtedly, any attempt to qualify the answer About 20 million as imprecise, verges on a Monty Python sense of humour.

Obviously, there are many similar publications on the Polish book market. However, one of their characteristic features is that the authors use highly complex syntactic structures and low-frequency vocabulary, which are utterly unsuitable for the needs and – first of all – the level of language mastery of those secondary school graduates who intend to take their entrance exams to English Sections or Departments of English in Poland. It is enough to thumb through some of those publications to find such misfits as Charles I, his son, fared even worse despite his much more kingly appearance or – better still – On occasions, scouts and explorers vanished into the immensity of the forests.

Parts 1 and 2 of this script entitled The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and The United States of America present and list the most important facts about Great Britain and the USA, as I see them. Three Appendices and three Essays follow this main part of the book. Part 3 offers several tests under the heading Test Your Culture (Self-Study).

While preparing the materials for this publication, my greatest problem was the selection of facts to be mentioned and outlined. Given the scope of this
work, I made an attempt to select only the most rudimentary facts pertaining to Great Britain and the USA. In choosing the facts to be mentioned and sketched, I was guided by the contents of earlier publications on the subject and – one might say – the principle of individual common sense. Therefore, the selection of facts may represent nothing else than my individual common sense.

This book is a revised and extended version of the book under the title First Facts First that came out in 1999. While preparing this text for printing I took into consideration a number of critical remarks coming from different people. In particular, I am grateful to Ms Enny Cramer (NKJO-Chelm) and Dr Mirosława Ziaja-Buchholtz (WSP-Rzeszów), who suggested a number of corrections and improvements pertaining both to form and content of this script. Also, my thanks go to all those staff members of NKJO-Chelm who kindly contributed to the final part of this publication by producing a number of self-study tests and essays.
THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The English language is now spoken on six continents. It is the primary language of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand and various small island nations in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean.¹ The term English-speaking countries is used for those countries where the majority of the population speaks English as their native language. Apart from these countries there are large areas in the world where English is spoken as a second language. And so, English is also an official language in India, the Philippines and many countries in Africa, including South Africa. In more general terms, English is spoken – as the first or second language – in Commonwealth countries.

The Commonwealth is an association of sovereign states comprising Great Britain and a number of its former colonies which maintain ties of friendship, cooperation and acknowledge the British monarch as the symbolic head of their association. The Queen of England is the formal head in 18 member states, which were earlier British dominions (e.g., in Canada, Australia and New Zealand).

The Commonwealth developed in the first half of the 20th century when Britain granted self-government to her dominions. Since 1945 Britain has given independence to over 50 countries. Founder members of the Commonwealth were Britain, Canada, Newfoundland, Australia and New Zealand. Later, the Commonwealth included a considerable number of African, Asian, South American and Caribbean nations. Member countries of the Commonwealth cooperate to encourage world peace, social understanding, racial equality and economic development. Commonwealth members share a common language, similar system of law and close professional academic and commercial links. Commonwealth heads of government usually meet every two years and other ministerial meetings take place more often.

Nowadays, about 700 million people use the English language as their native language, which means that English is the most widespread language in the world. Besides, English is used not only as a native language but also for practical

¹ In Canada – English is spoken by about 28 million people. In Australia – also known as Commonwealth of Australia – English is spoken by about 18 million people. In New Zealand English is spoken by about 3.5 million people.
purposes all over the world – in administrative matters, business, technology, education, science, sport, aviation, etc. That is why English linguist David Crystal suggested doubling this total to 1,4 billion to include those who speak any kind of English – "correct" or "broken". The English language belongs to the Germanic\(^2\) group of languages. Old English (spoken 8th-11th century) had many inflections to show various grammar forms (e.g., singular and plural, tense, person). The pronunciation was entirely different from that of today. With the passage of time, English – as any other language – underwent the process of change and simplification of grammatical structures. For example, at present many English words can be used as different parts of speech (to kiss/a kiss, to smile/a smile, to drink/a drink, etc.). At the same time, many words changed their meanings. For example, 1000 years ago the English word deer meant "animal", queen meant "woman" and, likewise, wife was used in the sense "woman". In the same way, pronunciation and spelling have changed dramatically. The English language borrowed words from a great number of other European and non-European languages (e.g., French, German, Italian, Greek, Spanish, Japanese and Indian languages). It should be mentioned that English itself has influenced a great number of languages. For example, in present-day Polish there are about 2000 borrowings from English, particularly in the field of SPORT (e.g., hokej, derby, start, faul, finisz), MARITIME (e.g., messa, harpun, kok), ENTERTAINMENT (e.g., dez, punk, dancing), FOOD & DRINK (e.g., hamburger, cheeseburger, grill-party, toaster, drink, grog), and the number of borrowings is constantly increasing. There are five main varieties of English, which differ in pronunciation, spelling and vocabulary, that is, British English\(^3\), American English\(^4\), Australian English\(^5\), Indian English and African English\(^6\).

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\(^2\) The Germanic languages are a group of related languages including English, Dutch, Frisian, German, the Scandinavian languages (Danish, Faroese, Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish but not Finnish), as well as a number of languages that are extinct now such as, for example, Burgundian and Gothic.

\(^3\) Broadly speaking, British English is the English language as used in Great Britain. In this sense, the term covers all varieties, standard and non-standard, in all regions and on all social levels.

\(^4\) American English, as used in the United States of America, differs from British English both in pronunciation, grammar and – most of all – in vocabulary. However, there is so much communication between British and American English that items and features of language pass easily and quickly from one to the other.

\(^5\) Australian English has a very short history, reflecting some 200 years of European settlement. One of the most characteristic features of Australian English is its pronunciation, which is a mixture of British and Irish English.
African English is the English language as used in Africa, from the Mediterranean to the Cape of Good Hope. Very frequently, the term is restricted to Black Africa – especially to ex-British colonies.
PART 1: THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

The Land and the People

The British Isles are a group of islands off the west coast of Europe across the English Channel, the Strait of Dover and the North Sea. The archipelago consists of two main islands (Great Britain and Ireland) and about 5,000 smaller ones (the biggest of which are the Isle of Wight, the Isle of Man, the Hebrides, the Orkneys, the Shetlands and the Channel Islands). The Channel Islands are a group of islands off the north-west coast of France that – since the Norman Conquest – have belonged to Britain. Like the Isle of Man, they are not officially part of the United Kingdom and have a self-governing crown dependency with their own parliaments. They also have their own systems of local administration and their own courts. They are popular with British tourists, because of their mild climate and their favourable tax rates. The official languages of the islands are French and English, although English has virtually supplanted French. The Isle of Man is famous for its Manx cats, which are cats without tails. It has its own Parliament, its own system of local administration and its own courts of law. Britain’s neighbours are the Republic of Ireland to the west and France to the southeast. The territory of Great Britain is about 250,000 square kilometres in size.

The main mountain regions in Great Britain are the Cornish Heights (south-west England), the Cambrians (Wales), the Cumbrian Mountains (in the Lake District) and the Pennines (the Backbone of England). The Highlands of Scotland are the highest mountains in Britain. The highest summit is Ben Nevis, which is 1,343 metres above sea level. Britain’s longest rivers are the Severn (about 180 miles (290 km)), and the Thames (approximately 210 miles

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7 Cornwall is the county at the western tip of the south-western peninsula of England. It is historically a distinct part of Britain, with its own Celtic language (Cornish language – once extinct, but now revived by experts). Cornwall is a popular tourist centre.

8 Cambria is a poetic name for Wales. Originally, it was the Medieval Latin name for Wales.

9 The Pennines are England’s main mountain chain, extending southwards from Northumberland to the middle of Derbyshire. The highest point is Cross Fell (893 m).
(338 km). There are a number of beautiful lake areas in Cumbria and the Highlands of Scotland.

Great Britain enjoys moderate temperatures, even in winter. The moderating influence of the sea on temperatures means that Great Britain usually does not have very severe winters or extremely hot summers. Occasional cold weather in winter occurs when cold winds blow from the continent of Europe. The warmest – up to 25 degrees Centigrade – is the Southwest. The coldest areas are in the Northeast. In recent years, winters have been milder and summers warmer which may be a result of global warming.

The population of Great Britain is about 55 million people. The density, which is about 232 people to one square kilometre, is one of the highest in the world. The population of Great Britain, now mostly urban and suburban, represents a wide diversity of traditions and cultures, including those stemming from four component countries, that is to say England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and from refugees and immigrants who have made Britain their home. Huguenots, Jews and other refugees from Europe, the Irish and, more recently, people from the Caribbean and the South Asian sub-continent have all contributed to the variety of the country’s culture. There are sizeable groups of Chinese, Greeks, Russians, Poles, Serbs, Estonians, Latvians, Armenians, Turkish, Italians and Spaniards. Naturally, the majority of people speak English. Also, there are minority languages, which are of Celtic origin, that is, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic and Irish Gaelic.

A History Sketch

Britain was part of the continent of Europe until about 6000 BC. The Celts arrived on the Islands some 2500-3000 years ago. The Celts are an ethnic, linguistic and cultural group once widespread from Anatolia to Ireland, now mainly in Brittany, Cornwall, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Scotland and Wales. Stereotypically, the Celts are fair-skinned, fair or red-haired, blue-eyed people, though many of them are dark-haired with brown, green or blue eyes and fair

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10 Welsh is the Celtic language of Wales, known to its speakers as Cymraeg. There are few monolingual speakers of Welsh and some 500,000 of the residents of Wales are bilingual.
11 Scottish Gaelic is the Celtic language of the West Highlands and Western Islands of Scotland. In the 1981 census, there were about 80,000 speakers of the Scottish Gaelic language.
12 Irish Gaelic is the national language of the Irish Republic (in addition to English), spoken by some 100,000 and read by some 300,000 people.
complexion. Celtic blood and red-hair are traditionally associated with sharp, erratic and unpredictable temper. Today, their language survives in Welsh and Gaelic enclaves.

England became part of the Roman Empire in 43 AD. The Romans built camps, forts and roads throughout the land. Among others, they built the famous Hadrian’s Wall. Hadrian’s Wall was built by order of the Roman Emperor Hadrian in the 2nd century AD to defend the northern border of England against attacks of Celtic tribes. The wall, which is about 120 km long, crossed England from the river Tyne in the East to the Solway Firth in the West. Long sections of the wall remain today and are a popular tourist attraction. A network of roads connected the Roman towns and forts, which was used by the British for many centuries. The names of Roman towns in Britain often end with -chester, -caster or -cestre (in Latin meaning ”a fortified camp”), for example, Manchester, Winchester and Lancaster.

After the withdrawal of Roman legions in the 5th century the Jutes, the Angles and the Saxons arrived from present-day German and Danish lands. These Anglo-Saxon tribes drove the Celtic tribes into the mountains of Wales and Scotland and fought with the Danes from the 8th to the 11th century. The most famous Saxon king was Alfred the Great (849-899). He prevented the Danes from conquering the whole of England. Likewise, Alfred the Great was a royal patron of learning; he himself translated a great number of works from Latin into English.

The last successful invasion of the British Isles was by French speaking Normans led by William, Duke of Normandy, who became William the Conqueror after defeating Harold, the Saxon King, in the Battle of Hastings in 1066. William the Conqueror established a strong central government and appointed Norman noblemen to high positions. At this time the Norman and Anglo-Saxon languages and customs merged. No influence on English has been equal in its effect to that of the Norman Conquest. A great number of word borrowings were adopted through the conquest of England by the Norman French (e.g., age, brace, cause, cease, chain, chance, change and corpse). Subsequent contacts between the two nations – through the Middle English

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13 Precise dates cannot be given here: According to the Chronicler Bede, the tribes of Jutes, Angles and Saxons invaded Britain in the 5th century. The Angles came from Schleswig and the Saxons from Western Holstein. There is considerable evidence that their home was in the Scandinavian area (probably Jutland).

14 Middle English period was the period of 1100-1450. In particular, during the 14th and 15th century a great number of words were taken from the French language into the English language.
period – provided the most important vocabulary adoptions in the English language.

Magna Carta Libertatum, which recognised the rights and privileges of the barons, the church and freemen, was signed in 1215. This document is still regarded as the basis of English liberties. During the 13th century the English parliamentary system slowly developed. England’s claim to large parts of France led to the Hundred Years’ War (1338-1453) and the defeat of England. A long civil war, known as the War of the Roses, between the House of Lancaster and the House of York lasted from 1455 to 1485 and ended with the establishment of the powerful Tudor House. Religious independence from Rome was secured when the Church of England was separated from Papal authority in 1543 by King Henry VIII. King Henry VIII (1491-1547) rejected the Pope as the head of the Church and had himself declared to be the head of the Church of England. Today, he is often remembered for his six wives. He divorced two of them and had two others executed. The secular head of the Church of England is the sovereign, and its religious head is the Archbishop of Canterbury. The monarch appoints its senior clergy, archbishops and bishops. The Church of Scotland is the official title of the national Presbyterian Church in Scotland. Unlike the Church of England, it is completely free to control its own spiritual matters. The total adult membership of the Church of Scotland is currently over 900,000.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603) Britain became a major sea power. Queen Elizabeth I was shrewd, courageous and did all she could to unify the nation against foreign enemies. Her politics led to the founding of colonies in the New World and the expansion of trade with both Europe and the Orient. In 1588 England defeated the Spanish Armada and this, together with the explorations carried out by Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh, helped establish British supremacy on land and sea. On the other hand, Elizabethan times were times of changing social and economic structure brought about, among others, by reformation. It should be mentioned that this period was one of growing pauperisation of great masses of people.

The unification of England with Scotland started when James VI of Scotland was crowned James I of England in 1603. Queen Elizabeth I had no children and so her closest relative, James VI of Scotland, the son of Mary

15 The aim of each side was to win the throne of England.
16 The Great Armada, also known as the Armada, was the name of the Spanish fleet sent by Philip of Spain, in 1588, against England.
Queen of Scots, became King James I of England and – in this way – the Stuart dynasty began. For the next 100 years England and Scotland remained separate but were ruled by one monarch. The Act of Union in 1707 united Scotland with England.\textsuperscript{17}

Conflicts between Parliament and the Stuart kings led to a tragic Civil War (1642-1649). At that time, the country was divided between the supporters of Charles I, who wanted absolute rule, and the supporters of Parliament, who wanted to limit the King’s powers. Finally, Oliver Cromwell – English general and Puritan statesman – established a republic and King Charles I was executed. The monarchy was restored in 1660 but the Glorious Revolution in 1688 confirmed the sovereignty of the Parliament. During the course of the 18th century parliamentary rule was strengthened and two clearly recognisable political parties emerged: the Whigs (which later developed into the Liberal Party) and the Tories (today’s Conservative Party).

One of the outstanding features of the Industrial Revolution (1750-1850) was the advance in power technology. Previously, the major sources of power available were animate energy and the power of wind and water. Many innovations and – in particular – the invention of the steam engine by James Watt in 1769, a steam locomotive developed in 1814 by George Stephenson, the first public steam railway in 1825, all contributed to great changes in Britain and the world.\textsuperscript{18}

The extension of the right to vote, the formation of trade unions,\textsuperscript{19} the development of public education were the first among the social changes which came with industrialisation and urbanisation in the 19th century. During the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901), Britain’s colonial expansion reached its peak, though Britain’s older dominions, such as Canada and Australia, were gradually granted independence (1867 and 1901, respectively). However, large

\textsuperscript{17} The Act of Union declared the Union of England, Wales and Scotland as a single kingdom under the name of Great Britain.

\textsuperscript{18} The Industrial Revolution was a period of great economic and social change that happened in Britain starting in the second half of the 18th century. Agricultural, home-based trades and industries gradually gave way to factory-based trades with complex machinery. As a result, many people who had previously been employed in agriculture moved to towns and cities. Great Britain was the first country to become industrialised in that way.

\textsuperscript{19} The major association of British trade unions called the Trade Union Congress, founded in 1868, meets each year as an assembly of delegates to discuss common problems. Its main object is to promote the interests of its members and improve the social and economic conditions of working people.
parts of Africa and Asia were added to the Empire during the reign of Queen Victoria.

The United Kingdom entered World War I allied with France and Russia. During this tragic war Great Britain suffered huge casualties and great economic losses. After the war, revolutionary disorder erupted in Ireland which became independent in 1921. The six counties of Ulster, however, remained in the United Kingdom as Northern Ireland. Ireland is the most western country of the British Isles, separated from the mainland of Britain by the St George's Channel and the Irish Sea. The name Ireland can be used to apply to the island as a geographical entity, but today it is normally used to mean the Republic of Ireland, as distinct from Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom.

The country suffered even more damage in World War II, but managed to withstand the German invasion. Winston Churchill (1874-1965), with his famous V-victory sign, was a major political figure during World War II. In 1940 Churchill became both Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. He stimulated the confidence of the British people in their struggle for victory and his radio speeches did much to support the nation’s morale at the time of war. Churchill was a gifted orator and many of his speeches contained memorable phrases such as, for example, *This was their finest hour* and, speaking of fighter pilots in the Battle of Britain, he said *Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.*

Industrial development continued in the post-war period, but Britain lost its leading position to other powers. Among others, the independence movement in the British colonies intensified after World War II, with the result that, beginning with India in 1947, independence was granted to most. Thus, Indian and Pakistani independence was followed by that of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Burma (Myanmar) in 1948. The African colonies started to gain independence in the 1950s. The last significant British colony Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997.

After World War II, the Labour Party nationalised some basic industries and expanded some social security systems: railroads, coal mines, the Bank of England, road transport, harbours and the production of electric power were nationalised. Margaret Thatcher became the leader of the Conservative Party.

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20 Likewise, independence movement became active in India and other British colonies.

21 The Battle of Britain was the battle between British and German aircraft over London and the south of England in the years of World War II, in particular 1940.
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in 1975. In 1979 she was elected as Britain’s first lady **Prime Minister**. Her conservative government increased – starting from the late 1970s – the role of private enterprise. More generally, one could say that M. Thatcher set out to end the tangible symptoms of socialism in Britain.

The main aim of **Thatcherism** – the political and economic policies of M. Thatcher – was to shift the economic emphasis back to private enterprise which was directly opposite to the **Labour Party** quasi socialist policy. During the so-called **Thatchery rule**, Britain denationalised many industries that had been nationalised previously. From the start, her autocratic style earned her the nickname of the **Iron Lady**. After a long period of Conservative rule, in the 1990s the feeling of weariness and impatience with the Conservative Party grew in Great Britain. As a result, the Conservatives lost to the Labour Party led by **Tony Blair** in a general election held in 1997.

Great Britain is a member of a number of major organisations and associations such as the **United Nations** (UN), which was founded in 1945 in San Francisco. It is the world-wide organisation of nations for the maintenance of world peace. Likewise, Great Britain is a member of the **European Union**, the organisation that works towards the economic and political integration of European countries. Also, Great Britain is a member of **NATO** (**North Atlantic Treaty Organisation**). This military organisation was created by treaty in 1949 involving Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Turkey, Germany and Spain joined NATO later. Some ex-communist countries, such as Poland and the Czech Republic are now in the process of joining NATO and uniting with its structures.

**National Economy**

The United Kingdom has a private- and public-enterprise economy that is based on services, especially international trade and manufacturing. Britain’s **natural riches** are mainly coal, tin, oil, gas, limestone, iron, salt, clay, chalk and lead. The **main industries** in Great Britain are steel, metals, vehicles, shipbuilding, shipping, banking, insurance, textiles, chemicals, electronics, aircraft, machinery and distilling. The government controls the production of coal, steel and ships; it also runs the railways and a great part of civil aviation. The United Kingdom’s coal industry, despite its decline since the 1950s, remains one of the largest and most technologically advanced in Europe. British
agriculture employs about 2 per cent of the workforce. Farming – which is dominated by the breeding of sheep and cattle – is highly mechanised, although British farms are not very large. Arable land is limited to less than one-third of the nation’s land area. Chief crops include barley, wheat, sugar beet and potatoes. The currency valid in Britain is the **pound (sterling)** which is divided into 100 pennies. Britain’s main **trading partners** are the USA, Germany, France and the Netherlands.

**Places to See**

Besides London, which is Britain’s No. 1 tourists’ attraction, there are many other fascinating places in Great Britain, such as **Oxford** and **Cambridge** – the two oldest university towns. Oxford lies about 80 kilometres north-west of London. **Oxford University** is one of the two oldest and most famous universities in Britain, the other being **Cambridge University**. Oxford University was founded in the 12th century. There are at present 35 colleges at Oxford University: three for women only, and the rest for both men and women. Among the best-known are **Christ College**, founded in 1546, **Magdalene College**, founded in 1458 and **All Souls College**, founded in 1437.

**Cambridge** is also famous for its university and is a major tourist centre. Cambridge University was founded in the 13th century. There are at present 28 colleges, of which only one is for male students only and two for female students only. The remaining 25 take both men and women. Among the best known colleges are **King’s College**, founded in 1441, **Trinity College**, founded in 1546 and **Magdalene College**, founded in 1542. **Stratford-upon-Avon** is the birthplace of **William Shakespeare**. The town is visited by thousands of tourists every year who want to see **Holy Trinity Church** where Shakespeare was buried, **Anne Hathaway’s Cottage** and the **Shakespeare Memorial Theatre**. The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre opened in 1879 for annual summer seasons of Shakespeare’s plays. It was destroyed by fire in 1926 and the new theatre built in its place in 1932 was renamed the **Royal Shakespeare Theatre**.

The English countryside is full of peaceful harbour-towns with fishing boats, yachts and cottages where the English like to spend their holidays. **Brighton** and **Portsmouth** rank among the most popular sea resorts. The

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22 It has not always been that simple. Before **decanization** in 1971 the pound was divided into 240 pennies and 1 **penny** had a value of 1/12 of a **shilling**.

23 **Brighton** is situated some 80 miles south of London.
The southern part of England is full of historical monuments and romantic sceneries. **Canterbury** is an ancient city with a majestic cathedral. Another old British cathedral town – **Winchester** – was once the capital of England. Near **Salisbury** one can see the historic monument called **Stonehenge**. Stonehenge is a prehistoric megalithic complex regarded as one of the most important monuments of its kind in Europe, and it is very popular among tourists. The great circle of erected stones (many now fallen) is believed to have had some religious or astronomical purpose. The largest of the Stonehenge stones weighs 50 tons. **Bath** is also worthy of tourists’ attention for the remains of several Roman baths. Bath is also famous for its **Bath Festival**, an annual Arts festival with music, theatre and ballet performances, exhibitions, lectures, etc. Going north one passes **Birmingham** which is the second largest city in Britain. There one can see some interesting Victorian architecture and a network of canals, which is evidence of the rich industrial heritage. The north-western part of Great Britain is mainly an industrial area. This was the region where the industrial revolution started and developed – especially with respect to textile and coal-mining industries. It is sometimes called the **Black Country**. In **Manchester** one can visit the **Museum of Science and Industry**. Other big cities here are **Liverpool**, **Leeds** and **Sheffield**. Northern England – **Cumbria** and **Northumbria** – is the land of beautiful nature, many national parks and cultural traditions, e.g., in the city of **Durham** one finds a massive 11th century castle and a monumental cathedral. The **Lake District** – a national park with its beautiful **Windermere Lake** – is the region where such romantic poets as Coleridge and Wordsworth lived.

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24 **Portsmouth** is located some 100 kilometres south-west of London.
25 **Canterbury Cathedral**, built in the 11th-15th centuries, became a place of pilgrimage in medieval times after the murder of **Thomas Becket**, Archbishop of Canterbury.
26 **Winchester** is very well-known for its **Winchester College** – a renowned public school – founded in the 14th century.
27 The region is called the **Black Country** after the black smoke and blackened buildings.
28 **Liverpool** suffered heavy damage during World War II. The city is the birthplace of **The Beatles** – one of the most influential pop groups – who first performed in “the Cavern” in 1959.
29 **Leeds** is the centre of the textile and wool industry.
30 **Sheffield** is the centre of English cutlery industry.
31 **Durham** is famous for **Durham Miners’ Gala** – an annual parade of miners through the streets of Durham held on the second Saturday in July. The leader of the Labour Party traditionally leads the parade.
32 **Windermere** is the largest natural lake in **England**. It is a popular tourist centre with many hotels and facilities for yachting, boating and fishing.
Saxon invaders attacked Wales but the conquest of Wales was completed only at the end of the 13th century. The English King Edward I started the tradition of giving the title of Prince of Wales to the eldest son of the English monarch. Wales – the smallest part of the United Kingdom – has considerable geographic variety, from the picturesque mountains of the north (including Snowdonia), to the mining and industrial regions of the south. Wales is sometimes described as the land of castles. Cardiff, Newport and Swansea are the largest Welsh cities.

Historically and culturally speaking, Scotland is a separate country as it has its own legal and educational systems and currency. Scotland is the land of many special traditions which cannot be found elsewhere in the world – playing the bagpipes, wearing kilts made of tartan, producing quality tweeds, woollen knitwear, Scotch whisky and haggis. The kilt, a heavy pleated woollen skirt, is a part of the traditional dress of Scottish highlanders. The skirt is worn only by men and is a relic of the time when the clan system existed in the Scottish Highlands. Tartan is a special checked design of contrasting colours. By long tradition each Scottish clan has its own distinctive tartan. The clan is like an extended family with the same family name like MacDonald or MacGregor (Mac means "son of"). Whisky is made by distilling fermented cereals, especially malted barley. It is usually consumed mixed with another drink, either alcoholic or non-alcoholic. The popular alternative name is Scotch. It is worth noticing that the spelling whiskey is the usual spelling for whisky made in Ireland or in the USA. Haggis is a traditional Scottish dish made from sheep’s or calf’s edible internal organs, suet, oatmeal and onions.

The largest city in Scotland is Glasgow, an old Victorian town, the cultural centre with its 12th century cathedral, 2 universities and a noted art gallery. Edinburgh – the capital city of Scotland – is dominated by its imposing 12th

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33 The present Prince of Wales is Prince Charles, the eldest son of Queen Elizabeth II.

34 Snowdonia is a national park in northwest Wales which includes Snowdon (1,085 m.), the highest mountain in Wales.

35 One of the tourist attractions of Cardiff is the Cardiff Castle, dating from the 11th century.

36 Swansea is the centre of the tinplate industry.

37 The value of the Scottish pound is the same as that of the English pound but Scottish banknotes have a different design.

38 Glasgow – the third largest city in Great Britain – is an important industrial and commercial city in Scotland.
Among others, it is famous for its annual Edinburgh Festival held in August and September each year. The festival, first held in 1947, has gained international status and has won reputation for its inclusion of experimental or avant-garde events.

The northern part of Scotland is a large and magnificent lake and mountain area. The biggest lake is Loch Lomond which is located north-west of Glasgow. Its attractive location makes it popular with tourists, who like to visit the nature reserve at its most south-eastern corner. Loch Ness – a long lake in northern Scotland – is probably the best known lake in the world because of the Loch Ness Monster. The Loch Ness Monster (Nessie) is supposed to be a large prehistoric creature said to be living in the deep waters of the lake but, as yet, in spite of various „sightings”, no scientific evidence has been provided.

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The Capital of Great Britain: London

London is the capital of the United Kingdom, its largest city and the ninth largest city in the world. The population of London is about 10 million inhabitants. The capital of Great Britain is situated on the river Thames. London was founded as a Roman settlement. The capital of Britain comprises the City of London, known as the City, and 32 boroughs that together are known as the metropolitan county of Greater London. The docks and main industrial sites are in the East End. The West End is famous for its theatres, e.g., the Palladium and shops, e.g., Harrods. There are many historical buildings in London, as well as famous art galleries, museums, concert halls and opera houses. There are several large and attractive public parks within the city. There are four airports in London, the most important of which are Heathrow and Gatwick. Heathrow is Britain’s largest international airport, west of London,
linked with the capital by Underground. It was opened in 1946 and is officially known as **London Airport**.\(^{43}\)

The **Houses of Parliament** were built in the 19th century, after the old building had burnt down. There is a famous clock tower with **Big Ben** and its characteristic bell-ringing sound. It is said that the clock was named after one, rather fat and round member of parliament whose name was Benjamin Hall. Big Ben – the bell – is famous for its accurate timekeeping. Also, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) uses it as its symbol. **Whitehall** is the street where the government offices are located.\(^{44}\) **10 Downing Street** has been the official home of the British Prime Minister since the beginning of the 18th century.\(^{45}\) **Westminster Abbey** is the place where Britain’s Kings and Queens are crowned; England’s greatest poets, artists, statesmen and other famous people are buried here in **Poet’s Corner** (e.g., Chaucer, Newton, Wordsworth, Händel, etc.). **St. Paul’s Cathedral** – one of London’s famous landmarks – is located in the City. St. Paul’s Cathedral is the work of the famous architect **Sir Christopher Wren** and was built in the 17th century. During World War II, it was badly damaged by German V-1 and V-2 bombs. St. Paul’s Cathedral contains a number of famous tombs and memorials, including that of its architect. One of its most popular features is the **Whispering Gallery** which runs right round the inside of the lower section of the dome. If someone who is standing near the wall whispers some words, those words can be heard near the wall on the opposite side, 32 metres away. In 1981, **Prince Charles** and **Lady Diana** (deceased in a car crash in 1997) were married in St. Paul’s Cathedral.

**The City** is the oldest part of London founded by the Romans. Among others, one finds there many banks (the most important of which is the **Bank of England**),\(^{46}\) and a number of administration offices. The **Tower of London** was built in the 11th century. The Tower, which is now a museum, first served as a royal palace and subsequently as a prison and fortress.\(^{47}\) The **Crown Jewels** –

\(^{43}\) **Gatwick** – the second largest international airport in Great Britain – is located some 40 miles south of London.

\(^{44}\) Simultaneously, **Whitehall** is a term used for the British government itself (and especially the Prime Minister).

\(^{45}\) Likewise, **Downing Street** is a term used for the British government.

\(^{46}\) **Bank of England** was founded in 1694 and nationalised in 1946. It issues bank notes and advises the government on financial matters.

\(^{47}\) Among others, **Anne Boleyn** (Henry VIII’s second wife), **Sir Walter Raleigh** (English traveller, writer and poet) and **Guy Fawkes** (the conspirator who tried to kill King James I in 1605), were imprisoned there.
the jewellery that is used by the monarch on state occasions – guarded by the Beefeaters in their traditional Tudor uniforms – are kept there. Tower Bridge – one of the most famous symbols of London – was built in the late 19th century and is still operational; it opens frequently for naval ships and Queen’s yacht. Trafalgar Square was named after Admiral Nelson’s victory over Napoleon in the Battle of Trafalgar. The Battle of Trafalgar was a decisive naval battle of 1805 in the Napoleon Wars, in which the allied French and Spanish fleets were defeated by the British under the command of Admiral Nelson. The battle was fought just off Cape Trafalgar, south-west Spain. At Christmas time a large Christmas tree stands in Trafalgar Square and on New Year’s Eve people gather there at midnight to sing and dance. It is also worth mentioning that Trafalgar Square is very popular with visitors, who come to relax by the fountains. In addition, it is a popular meeting place for political and other demonstrations. The National Gallery, which is situated in Trafalgar Square, houses paintings by nearly all the great continental European artists of the past as well as a large collection of British paintings and sculptures.\(^{48}\)

They say that the British Museum is probably the largest museum in the world. It houses the biggest collection of all kinds of animals, minerals, rocks and applied arts of all countries, periods and styles, e.g., antiquities from ancient Greece, Rome and the Orient, Egyptian mummies, medieval manuscripts and a collection of drawings. The British Museum’s library is said to be one of the largest in the world.\(^ {49}\) Buckingham Palace has been the Queen’s residence in London since Queen Victoria’s reign. One of the biggest London’s attractions is Changing of the Guards. Changing of the Guards happens every day at Buckingham Palace. Many tourists stand outside the Palace to watch the ceremony at 11.30 every morning.

The most famous shopping centres in London are in Piccadilly Circus, Regent Street and Oxford Street.\(^ {50}\) Piccadilly Circus is a well-known road junction in central London where a number of famous streets merge. The junction is famous for its brightly-lit neon advertisements at night. In the centre of the junction stands the memorial popularly known as the Statue of Eros. There are many parks in London, e.g., St. James’s Park, Green Park, Regent’s Park and Hyde Park. The largest and best known of them is Hyde Park. It is

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\(^ {48}\) One of the international features of the National Gallery is that it houses one of the most important collections of Italian paintings outside Italy.

\(^ {49}\) The British Library is the largest public library in Great Britain.

\(^ {50}\) Oxford Street – one of London’s most popular shopping streets – is especially known for its department stores and varied clothing shops.
particularly well known for its Speaker’s Corner where anybody can speak freely and openly on any topic.\textsuperscript{51} The Post Office Tower – being almost 180 metres high – is the highest building in Great Britain.\textsuperscript{52} London is the centre of Britain’s theatre life. The most important companies are the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company. The Royal Albert Hall\textsuperscript{53} and the Queen Elizabeth Hall are the main concert halls. Windsor Castle is the residence of the British sovereignty outside London.\textsuperscript{54} Kew Gardens are the Royal Botanical Gardens with the largest collection of living plants in the world. Greenwich is the seat of the National Maritime Museum, where the Royal Observatory is located.

\textit{British Administration, the Queen and the Government}

Britain is divided into four main parts, that is, England (London as its capital), Wales (Cardiff as its capital), Scotland (Edinburgh as its capital) and Northern Ireland (Belfast as its capital).\textsuperscript{55} Wales was politically linked to England in the 16th century (1536). The English and Scottish crowns were united at the beginning of the 17th century (1603). Ireland became part of this union in 1801 though in 1922 most of Ireland, which was Roman-Catholic, became a separate state. The conflict between the Protestant majority and the Roman Catholic minority is one of the causes of the long lasting civil disturbances in Northern Ireland. Clashes between the British military and police forces and the IRA (Irish Republican Army) continue. All in all,

\textsuperscript{51} On weekends, individuals and representatives of various organisations and causes, which vary from the ordinary to the eccentric, make public speeches from improvised stands.

\textsuperscript{52} At present, the official name of this building is the Telecom Tower. It was built by the Post Office in 1965 to transmit and receive radio, television and telephone communications in and out of London. The tower has two viewing galleries and a revolving restaurant at the top.

\textsuperscript{53} Royal Albert Hall – one of the largest of its kind – has seats for 8,000 people. Here a number of concerts, meetings, ceremonial and sporting events are held.

\textsuperscript{54} William the Conqueror started to build the Castle in the 11th century and it is now one of the most famous royal palaces in Europe.

\textsuperscript{55} Belfast is the capital of Northern Ireland, and in normal times the seat of the government of Northern Ireland. The city, which has a population of nearly 300,000, is an important industrial centre (in particular shipbuilding and the manufacture of aircraft), but has relatively high unemployment.
Northern Ireland is still the region of unrest although recently the situation there has ameliorated greatly.\footnote{Northern Ireland was, before the early 20th century, a part of Ireland. After many English and Scottish people settled there in the 16th century, Northern Ireland became mainly Protestant (two out of three people were Protestant), unlike the rest of Ireland which remained, as before, mainly Roman Catholic. By the terms of an Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921, Northern Ireland was granted its own parliament in which a Protestant government was formed after successive elections. Roman Catholics, who were excluded from political office, grew increasingly resentful to the continuing Protestant domination and, as a result, a vigorous civil rights movement emerged in the late 1960s. The sectarian (Catholic against Protestant) disturbances that followed were exploited by the extremists of both faiths, and in particular by the Provisional IRA (which broke away from the Official IRA in 1970). Consequently, British troops were sent to Northern Ireland in 1969 to help keep the peace. The Northern Ireland government was unable to introduce satisfactory reforms. Consequently, the British government imposed direct rule in 1972. Since then, in spite of the efforts of the British government, the police force in Northern Ireland and the British Army units there, terrorism has continued, with the IRA also taking its campaign of violence to mainland Britain (especially London and British military bases). The continuing unrest has not been helped by the rising unemployment in Northern Ireland. Although terrorism continues, the level of violence is now lower than it was in the 1970s.}

Great Britain is a constitutional monarchy. This means that the head of the state is the Queen, however she can act only on the advice of her ministers. Queen Elizabeth II has been on the British throne since 1953. The Queen’s husband is the Duke of Edinburgh and her four children are Charles – the Prince of Wales, Princess Anna, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward. The main dates relating to Queen Elizabeth II are the following:

- **Date of birth:** 21 April 1926
- **Marriage:** 20 November 1947
- **Accession to British throne:** 6 February 1952
- **Coronation day:** 2 June 1953

The Constitution of the United Kingdom is unwritten and based on custom, tradition, precedence and common law. The supreme law-making body in Great Britain is the Parliament. The British Parliament consists of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The British parliamentary system is one of the oldest in the world. It developed during the 13th century after King John signed the Magna Carta Libertatum in 1215.

The House of Commons has 650 elected and paid Members of Parliament (MPs) of which 523 are from England, 72 from Scotland, 38 from Wales and 17 from Northern Ireland. General elections to choose Members of Parliament are
held every five years. The House of Lords is made up of hereditary and life peers (Lords Temporal), two archbishops and 24 bishops of the Church of England (Lords Spiritual).

The major part of Parliament’s work is controlling and revising the Government’s work. One of the parliamentary tasks is law-making and a proposal of some new law (which is called a bill) must pass through both Houses after which it is sent to the Queen for Royal Assent, that is, an official signing of an act by the monarch, as a result of which it becomes biding law.

The party, which has a majority in the Parliament, forms the Government and the Queen appoints its leader as the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister appoints a team of ministers as the Cabinet who take decisions on major policy. The second largest party forms the official Opposition. The present Prime Minister is the Labour Party leader Tony Blair.

The British national anthem is God Save the Queen, also called – during a kingship – God Save the King. The text of the British anthem runs as follows:

God Save the Queen
God save our gracious Queen,
Long live our noble Queen,
God save the Queen:
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us:
God save the Queen.
O Lord our God arise,
Scatter her enemies,
And make them fall:
Confound their politics,
Frustrate their knavish tricks,
On Thee our hopes we fix:
God save us all.
Thy choicest gifts in store,

57 An interesting thing about peers is that when a peer dies, his closest male relative, usually a son, inherits the title. Occasionally women inherit the title.
58 The Cabinet usually meets once or twice a week in private at 10 Downing Street, while the Parliament is sitting.
59 It is not known who wrote the text of the anthem but it may have been established in the present form some time in the 18th century.
On her be pleased to pour;
Long may she reign:
May she defend our laws,
And ever give us cause
To sing with heart and voice
God save the Queen.

The British national flag is sometimes called the **Union Jack**. Its history goes back to the beginning of the 19th century and the flag symbolises the Union of England, Scotland and Ireland. The origin of the name is uncertain. Each country has its cross in the flag.  

England has **St. George’s Cross** (white with a red cross),
Scotland has **St. Andrew’s Cross** (blue with white diagonal cross),
Ireland has **St. Patrick’s Cross** (white with red diagonal cross).

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60 Each country has a national sign. The English emblem is a **red rose**. The Welsh emblem is a **leek** or a **daffodil**. The Scottish emblem is a **thistle** and the Irish sign is a **shamrock**.

61 An alternative term used for **kindergarten** is **nursery school**, especially a private one.
funded colleges. The English universities may be divided into three main groups:

1) **Oxford and Cambridge** (collectively called Oxbridge) are the oldest and the most famous (Oxford was founded in the 12th century and Cambridge in the 13th century).

2) **Redbrick Universities** were founded in the 19th century (e.g., University of London, University of Manchester). These schools provide technological training in industrial areas and economics.

3) **The newest universities** – opened after 1960 (e.g., University of Sussex, University of York and University of Kent).

University courses usually last 3-4 years. The first degree is either **BA** (Bachelor of Arts)\(^62\) or **BSc** (Bachelor of Science). Students with BA or BSc degrees are called graduates. They can study further to get higher degrees, that is, **MA** (Master of Arts) or **MSc** (Master of Science).\(^63\) The degree of **PhD** (Doctor of Philosophy) is given only for a doctoral thesis which is considered to contribute originally to human knowledge.

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**The Giants of British Literature**

The oldest literary monument of the Anglo-Saxon period is the 8th century Germanic legend *Beowulf*. This heroic poem is about the strong and courageous pagan hero. The end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of Renaissance in literature is marked by *Canterbury Tales* written by Geoffrey Chaucer (1345?-1400). It is a brilliant portrait of 30 pilgrims who are on their pilgrimage and each tells his/her story (e.g., "The Man of Law’s Tale", "The Prioress's Tale” and "The Knight’s Tale"). In this way Chaucer portrays a vivid picture of the 14th century society. **Sir Thomas More** (1478-1535) wrote *Utopia*, a vision of an imaginary island with a perfectly organised quasi-communistic society. More’s *Utopia* describes a city-state in which the institutions and policies are governed only by reason. Among the topics discussed by More are state-controlled education, religious pluralism, divorce, euthanasia and women’s rights.

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\(^{62}\) **Bachelor of Arts** is a degree obtained by the student at a university or polytechnic on successfully completing a course of studies. However, at Oxbridge, as well as at some of the newer universities, the **BA** degree is given in either non-science or science subjects.

\(^{63}\) The short form used for **Master of Arts** is **master**.
William Shakespeare (1564-1616) is generally acknowledged to have been Britain’s finest playwright and one of her most accomplished poets. Shakespeare’s birthplace – Stratford-(up)on-Avon – is one of the most popular tourist attractions. Every year it is visited by hundreds of thousands of tourists from all over the world. His poems, especially his Sonnets, show his extraordinary powers of expression and his depth of emotional understanding. In his works Shakespeare uses many different literary styles to express a wide range of emotions. Shakespeare’s plays are usually described as comedies, tragedies and histories. To a considerable degree, this is an over-simplification as many of them do not fall neatly into any category. Below, the classification of Shakespeare’s plays is quoted after The Hutchinson Encyclopaedia (the dates in brackets give approximate years when the plays were written and performed):


2) **Histories**: Richard III (1592-93), Richard II (1595-97), King John (1596-97), Henry IV (1597-98), Henry V (1599).

3) **Roman Plays**: Julius Caesar (1599-1600), *Anthony and Cleopatra* (1607-08), Coriolanus (1607-08).

4) **The Great Comedies**: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1595-96), *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-97), Much Ado About Nothing (1598-99), *As You Like It* (1599-1600), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1600-01), Twelfth Night (1601-02).

5) **The Great Tragedies**: *Hamlet* (1601), Othello (1604), King Lear (1605-06), Macbeth (1605-06), Timon of Athens (1607-08).

6) **The ”Dark” Comedies**: Troilus and Cressida (1601-02), *All’s Well That Ends Well* (1602-03), Measure for Measure (1604-05).

7) **Late Plays**: Pericles (1608-09), Cymbeline (1609-10), *The Winter’s Tale* (1610-11), The Tempest (1611-12), Henry VIII (1612-13).

Because the English language has changed so much since Shakespeare’s time, many people – including pupils who are obliged to read his works for examination purposes – find them rather difficult to understand. Recently, there have been several attempts to present his plays in a more accessible way, either
by modernising the language or by printing the original text with cartoon illustrations.\footnote{This seems to be a token of an all-pervading tendency in Anglo-Saxon culture today.}

John Milton (1608-1674) is the main figure of the 17th century literature. He was one of the first who stated in his work that a king who was a tyrant and not worthy of ruling should be legally punished. His masterpiece is *Paradise Lost*.\footnote{*Paradise Lost* was written when Milton had already gone blind. Milton’s two other best-known works are *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes.*} *Paradise Lost* is an epic poem, which tells the story of Satan’s rebellion against God, his expulsion from heaven and the temptation and expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.

In the 18th century, with the development of the society, economy and journalism, novel and drama developed. Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) was a sharp critic who wrote satirical pamphlets on English society. His most popular work is *Gulliver’s Travels* in which the author criticises politics in England, kingdoms, corruption, armies, bad politicians, etc. Some critics say that – at its heart – it is a sharp critique of human nature.

Daniel Defoe (1660?-1731) was a politician, traveller and journalist. His most famous work is *Robinson Crusoe*, which is a unique blending of autobiography with an insistent scrutiny of the nature of man as a social creature. His equally well-known *Moll Flanders* is a realistic picture of the life and adventures of a London prostitute. Henry Fielding (1707-1754) – a journalist, lawyer and playwright – wrote, among others, a realistic novel *Tom Jones, History of a Foundling*. There are many characters on the basis of which Fielding describes the life in 18th century England. With its great comic gusto, a vast gallery of characters and scenes of both high and low life in London and the provinces is portrayed. This novel has always been the most popular of his works.

Towards the end of the 18th century and during the first third of the 19th century Romanticism appears in literature with its emphasis upon emotions and passions rather than on an intellectual attitude. The *Gothic novel* was one of the main streams in English literature of this period. Exotic and cruel Middle Ages, haunted castles and other places of horror were described by such authors as Horace Walpole (The Castle of Otranto) and Ann Radcliffe (*The Mysteries of Udolpho*). Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) is the founder of the historical novel who drew themes for his novels such as, for example, *Ivanhoe* and *Kenilworth*, from old folk ballads and medieval romances.
The romantic period is known especially for its poetry. The pre-romantic period is represented by William Blake (1757-1827). Blake was an English poet, painter and visionary mystic whose series of lyrical and epic poems, beginning with *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, form one of the most original and independent bodies of work in the Western cultural tradition. The best English romantic poets are William Wordsworth (1770-1850), Samuel Coleridge (1772-1834), Lord George Gordon Byron (1788-1824), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) and John Keats (1795-1821).

The first two, that is Wordsworth and Coleridge, published *Lyrical Ballads*. Apart from that, Coleridge is the author of *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*, a beautiful ballad about the mariner who shoots an albatross for which the whole ship is cursed. The mariner is the only one who survives and his penalty is to travel from land to land with his suffering soul. Byron and Shelley represent the so-called revolutionary romanticism. In short, their unhappy and lonely heroes fight for freedom and their fight ends in vain. Lord Byron’s main work is *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*. The hero of this novel travels all over Europe and makes comments on the hypocritical society and unfairness in life. Shelley’s greatest work is *Prometheus Unbound*, based on an old Greek legend about Prometheus who steals fire from Olympus to give it to people.

The Victorian Age produced great novels criticising the various evils of the society. To the best authors of this period belong Emily Brontë (1818-1848), with her *Wuthering Heights*, and her sister Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855), who dealt with moral and psychological problems. *Wuthering Heights* shows terrifying divisions in nature and human behaviour: love that creates and destroys and characters that are fierce and pitiable at the same time. Another English novelist Charles Dickens (1812-1870) described the life of poor people in England in the 19th century. He combines comical and serious situations accusing both the aristocracy and the middle class of acting heartlessly towards common people. The titles of his major novels are *David Copperfield*, *The Pickwick Papers*, *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist*. William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863) wrote novels against snobbery and hypocrisy. His main

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66 Victorian is the term used to refer to the times of Queen Victoria (reigned 1837-1901) – the longest ruling monarch in the history of Britain, who was considered – somewhat mistakenly – narrow-minded, hypocritical and humourless.

67 Charles Dickens is popularly regarded as one of the greatest English novelists. Many of his characters, with their unusual names, have entered popular folklore. Among them are miser – Scrooge, the orphan Oliver Twist, the drunken midwife Sarah Gamp, who always carried an umbrella (and so gamp is now a colloquial word in English for an umbrella).
Vanity Fair is a historical survey of the transformations of English life in the 19th century.

The main authors of the first half of the 20th century are Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) and David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930), who represent the naturalistic trend in literature. Hardy understood very well the hard life of common people and criticised the hypocrisy and brutal egoism of those who were well off (e.g., in his Tess of the d’Urbervilles). In his scandalising novel Sons and Lovers, Lawrence analyses sexual relations between a man and a woman. The central character, Paul Morel, is identified as Lawrence. The whole narrative turns Lawrence’s own life history into a powerful psychoanalytic study of a young man’s attraction toward his mother and its consequences on his relationships with other women.

Robert Lewis Stevenson (1850-1884) wrote romantic adventure stories such as Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and – a children’s delight – Treasure Island. Oscar Wilde (1856-1900) wrote, among others, The Picture of Dorian Gray, an excellent drama in which he discusses the deeper levels of human character. Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1907 as the first British author. He wrote short stories about India, the sea, the jungle and its animals (e.g., The Jungle Book, The Second Jungle Book).

John Galsworthy (1867-1933) – a Nobel Prize winner in 1932 – was a critical novelist, dramatist and short story writer who described the decay of the Victorian upper middle class in The Forsyte Saga. A television serial of the Forsyte Saga achieved immense popularity in Great Britain in the late 1960s and later in many other countries, especially the United States of America. Joseph Conrad (Korzeniowski) (1857-1924) wrote about the sea and exotic countries that he knew from his own experience (e.g., Lord Jim, Nostromo). His Lord Jim analyses the ambiguous problem of lost honour and guilt, expiation and heroism. Herbert George Wells (1866-1946) introduced a new form of scientific romance, a kind of Utopian fiction. His books such as, for example, The Time Machine and The War of the Worlds gave birth to modern science-fiction literature.

Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) represents the intellectual stream in literature. In his Point Counter Point Huxley shows uncertainty and aimlessness of intellectuals after World War I. His Brave New World is a satire on beliefs in a mechanical world. In this novel, Huxley shows a society
of the near future, in which technology keeps human beings in bodily comfort without want or pain, but also without freedom, beauty and creativity.68

During the 1920s and 1930s some authors tried to explore the inner aspects of human life and, in particular, consciousness and subconsciousness. And so, for example, Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) creates her heroes from the imaginative impression which they evoke in certain moments and her characters are viewed from several different angles (e.g., To the Lighthouse, Mrs. Dalloway).

James Joyce (1882-1941) wrote experimental prose and is particularly remembered for his "stream of consciousness". His Dubliners is a collection of short stories and his masterpiece Ulysses presents the main character who wanders around Dublin in the course of one day and formulates his observations. Joyce employed extraordinary formal and linguistic inventiveness. Graham Greene (1904-1991) wrote literary studies of crime, sex and morality in such works as The Power and Glory and The Quiet American.

The most outstanding poet of this period is the 1948 Nobel Prize Winner T.S. Elliot (1888-1965). In his poetry he shows the chaos and sterility of the modern world, the emptiness of life where everything has already lost or is losing its meaning (e.g., The Waste Land). George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) – the Nobel Prize Winner in 1925 – is the most famous personality in the sphere of drama of this period. In his plays, such as Mrs. Warren’s Profession and Pygmalion, Shaw criticises the false morals and turns the theatre into an arena for debate on the principal problems of his day: the question of political organisation, the morality of armaments and war, the function of class and of the professions, the validity of the family and of marriage and the issue of female emancipation.

John Wain (1925-1994) belongs to a group of authors referred to as Angry Young Men, who expressed disillusionment and emptiness of intellectuals after World War II. They were angry and dissatisfied with the establishment, criticised snobs and those in power (e.g., Hurry on Down, The Young Visitors). William Golding (1911-1993) – a Nobel Prize Winner in 1983 – is remembered for his Lord of the Flies, The Spire and The Inheritors. Golding attracted a cult of followers, especially among the young people of the post-World War II generation. Iris Murdoch (1919-1999) is a British novelist and philosopher noted for her psychological novels that contain philosophical and comical

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68 An echo of the same view found its artistic expression in the film Modern Times (1936), in which Charlie Chaplin depicted the depersonalising effect of the mass-production assembly line.
elements. She is particularly famous for her delicate humour. In such works as *Under the Net*, she tries to reveal moral attitudes and evaluations of human happiness.

**Dylan Thomas** (1914-1953) is one of the best 20th century poets. He expresses his desire to return to his lost childhood and his sexual lust (e.g., *Collected Poems*). **J.R.R. Tolkien** (1892-1973) based the plots of his fairy-tale novels on his profound knowledge of old German and Celtic myths (e.g., *The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings*). **George Orwell** (1903-1950) is the author of excellent novels criticising totalitarian society (e.g., *Animal Farm, Nineteen Eighty-Four*). He made extensive use of the technique of allegory, such as an animal society, in order to focus attention on deformities of human society. **Agatha Christie** (1890-1976) is one of the most widely read British authors in the world. Altogether, she wrote about 70 novels, 20 dramas, 15 short-story books and collections of poems. Her most important works are *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd, Ten Little Niggers* and *Sleeping Murder*. **Samuel Beckett** (1906-1990), a Nobel Prize Winner in 1969, is important both for his drama and prose. In his most important and best-known work *Waiting for Godot* the author focuses on the study of human character and behaviour. Some of Beckett’s themes and techniques can be seen in the drama of **Harold Pinter** (1930). Pinter achieved international fame as one of the most complex and challenging post-World War II dramatists. In such works as *The Birthday Party, The Caretaker* and *No Man’s Land*, Pinter characteristically concentrates on two or three people manoeuvring for sexual or social superiority in a claustrophobic room.

**Life in Great Britain**

One of the things that strike visitors on their arrival in Great Britain is that the British drive their cars on the left side of the street and overtake on the right side of the street. In Britain, as in many other countries, **Value Added Tax (VAT)** is charged on most goods and services at a rate of about 15 per cent of the basic cost and this is added to the price at the time of payment. When one buys goods in Great Britain one pays in **pounds (sterling)**. Bank notes are issued to

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69 In Great Britain, **VAT** is not charged on books, newspapers and magazines, public transport fares, postal services and food bought in a shop for cooking at home.
the value of 50, 20, 10 and 5 pounds (quid).\textsuperscript{70} Coins are issued to the value of 1 pound, 50p, 20p, 10p, 5p, 2p and 1p.\textsuperscript{71}

It is frequently and rightly stressed that the British are very polite and have good manners. One of the first rules that English children must learn is \textit{Don't forget your Ps and Qs}, which means that one should not forget to say \textit{please} and \textit{thank you}. Likewise, adults never seem to tire of saying \textit{Thank you}, \textit{I'm sorry}, \textit{Excuse me} or \textit{I beg your pardon}. The British do not shake hands\textsuperscript{72} or kiss to say hello as much as, for example, Italians or Russians on the Continent. In general, the British seem to be much more reserved than any other European nation.

For the British the normal working week is arranged as a five-day week and has about 39-40 hours for manual workers and 37-38 for non-manual workers. Factory workers usually start working at 8 a.m., while offices, shops and schools start at 9 a.m. Wage earners (blue-collar workers) are paid weekly, while salary earners (white-collar workers) are paid once a month.\textsuperscript{73}

On weekends, both blue-collar workers and white-collar workers like to go out. Many of them spend their free time in pubs. The word pub is short for public house. In Great Britain, as well as in the regions of British influence, pub is an establishment providing alcoholic liquors to be consumed on the premises. The pub is a typically British institution, a kind of mixture of a bar and a social club. Entertainment at pubs has changed recently. Nowadays, there are still the traditional pub games, such as darts, dominoes and pool, but many pubs have installed karaoke machines which enable customers to sing along with the latest pop music. There are thousands of pubs in Britain and nearly all sell pub lunches. In the majority of pubs the most popular drink is beer. An important custom in British pubs is buying a round.\textsuperscript{74} One of the confusing things about pubs was – until recently – their opening and closing times. English pubs used to

\textsuperscript{70} Quid is a colloquial term for the pound (sterling). The word does not take an \textit{–s} in the plural so we say five pounds but five quid.

\textsuperscript{71} 1/2 p coin was used until early 1990’s. Now, it is no longer a legal tender in Great Britain.

\textsuperscript{72} In Britain people usually shake hands when they meet a person for the first time. The story goes that the custom of shaking hands started in the past when knights shook hands to show that they did not have a sword.

\textsuperscript{73} The names blue-collar worker and white-collar worker come from the colour of overalls worn by industrial workers and the white shirts worn by those who do clerical work.

\textsuperscript{74} In a group, one person buys all the others a drink. This is a round. Then one by one all other people buy rounds, too.
open at 10.30 in the morning and close at 2.30 in the afternoon. They would open again at 5.30 and close at 11.00.75

An average Englishman likes to live in his own house. About 60 per cent of houses in Britain are owned by people who live in them. The houses in Britain usually have 4-6 rooms, two floors, a small front and back garden and are either terraced, semi-detached or detached.76 In a typical English (pre-1970s) house, on the ground floor you will find a hall, a kitchen and a living room with a fireplace. On the first floor there are parents’ and children’s bedrooms and a bathroom.

The National Health Service (NHS) is largely free medical treatment for everyone paying taxes and living in Britain. People can choose their family doctors, i.e., their GP (General Practitioner). In case of emergency they can call an ambulance by dialling 999.77 Health centres and NHS hospitals are run by local authorities. Religious or charity organisations run a small number of hospitals. Social Welfare includes other benefits, such as retirement pensions (men over 65 and women over 60), sickness benefits, invalidity pensions, injury benefits, unemployment benefits (for people without a job but seeking some employment, it is paid for a maximum of one year), widow benefits, maternity benefits (maternity grant when a child is born) and family allowances.

There are over 100 daily and Sunday newspapers, about 2000 weekly papers and a great number of periodical publications. The oldest newspaper is The Times. Other famous newspapers are The Daily Mirror, The Daily Express, The Daily Mail, The Daily Telegraph, The Guardian, The Financial Times, The Sunday Telegraph and The Observer. All newspapers may be divided into two categories, that is, quality papers and popular papers. Quality newspapers are those that aim at the educated reader. Such newspapers contain detailed news coverage and commentaries, authoritative editorials and a wide range of topical features written by experts in the field (e.g., The Daily Telegraph, The Financial Times). Popular papers are those

75 On Sunday, the opening hours were different – the pubs opened one and a half hours later and closed half an hour earlier. To make it even more confusing, in Scotland, Wales and Ireland the opening and closing times were completely different.

76 A semi-detached house is a house attached on one side only to another, usually a very similar house. Obviously, a house of this kind is less expensive than a detached house, but still offers comfort and – what the English value most – a good standard of privacy.

77 In contrast to other countries such as Poland, the English have only one emergency number 999 to be dialled if the fire brigade, the police or an ambulance is needed.
newspapers whose format and content are designed for the undemanding reader. Most popular papers such as, for example, *The Daily Express, The Daily Star, The Sun*, have brief and direct news reports and a large number of photographs. Emphasis is put on personal stories (especially sensational). A colloquial name for popular papers and similar periodicals that seek sensationalism by means of gossip columns, detailed reports of disasters and scandals, erotic features and photographs is *gutter press*.

The British TV service was the world’s first public TV service introduced in 1936. The British Broadcasting Corporation (*BBC*)\(^78\) operates national TV channels and a number of national and local radio stations. Its overseas service – The BBC World Service – transmits in English and a number of foreign languages.\(^79\)

The British invented and codified the rules of many sports and games which are now played all over the world. These include *football*,\(^80\) *rugby, hockey, golf* and *boxing*.\(^81\) Major sporting events in Britain are also major events on the international sports calendar, e.g., *Wimbledon* that is one of the world’s greatest international tennis tournaments. Likewise, horse racing has a very long history in Britain and, in the past, it was called the *Sport of Kings*, because only the wealthy could afford to keep horses and organise such races on a regular basis.

A large number of the British people participate actively in sports which require physical effort but which are practised with the main objective to keep fit, not to compete. This includes rock climbing, swimming, horse riding and windsurfing. Generally speaking, health and fitness are very important to the British people. *Jogging, aerobic, bodybuilding* and other sporting activities are practised by millions of people. Likewise, watching sports has always been very popular. Almost proverbially, British men – in particular – love to spectate the football or rugby matches on a Saturday afternoon. Great Britain was a pioneer in facilities for sports for disabled people; the world’s first sports stadium for the

\(^78\) BBC English is a term for traditionally correct English, especially as spoken by BBC announcers and news readers.

\(^79\) BBC World Service offers a 24-hour service of English radio programmes broadcast to overseas countries.

\(^80\) The Football League – formed in 1888 – is the main organisation that controls the principal professional football matches in Great Britain.

\(^81\) Boxing is another popular game with a long history; organised boxing began in England in the 18\(^{th}\) century. One of the most colourful figures in boxing history was Daniel Mendoza who lived in the second half of the 18\(^{th}\) century. It was the Marquis of Queensberry who drew up the first set of rules and did much to change crude prize-fighting into sport.
disabled was opened at Stoke Mandeville Hospital in 1969. Government assistance to the development of sport is channelled through independent sports councils which award grants to individual sport clubs and sport organisations. Increasing numbers of national sports receive financial sponsorship from commercial organisations.

**National Holidays and Traditions in Great Britain**

On February 14th, **St. Valentine’s Day**, people hand gifts and/or send greeting cards to people they like and admire. **Easter** is celebrated as in the rest of Western Europe. Among others, this festival is associated with the eating of **Easter eggs**. On this occasion, presents, apart from chocolate eggs and greeting cards, are rarely exchanged. On **May Day**, the theme of fertility is celebrated with the dancing around a **Maypole**, that is, a tall pole fixed upright in the ground. Each dancer holds a ribbon attached to the top of the pole. **Halloween** is celebrated on the 31st of October, the eve of **All Saints’ Day**. This day is usually associated with costume or fancy-dress parties at which people wear masks and dress as ghosts, witches or as Dracula/Frankenstein’s vampire/monster. On the night of Halloween, children visit houses and ask the residents if they want a **trick or treat**. If the people in the house give the children some money or sweets then the children will not play a ‟trick” on them.83

November 5th is **Guy Fawkes’ Night** when the unsuccessful plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament in 1605 was attempted. It is commemorated with bonfires, fireworks and the burning of ‟guys”, that is, effigies of Guy Fawkes, whose **Gunpowder Plot** was discovered and Guy was hanged along with other conspirators.84 Today, on this occasion people build wood fires in their gardens. On top of each bonfire they place a figure of **Guy**.85

The Sunday closest to November 11th is **Remembrance Day**, which is a holiday to commemorate those who lost their lives in the two world wars. Throughout the United Kingdom plastic poppies are sold and people donate a

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82 May Day is traditionally celebrated on the 1st of May. On this day, fetes and other outdoor events are held.

83 The trick or treat custom was imported to Great Britain from America in the early 1980s.

84 On the 5th of November 1605 Roman Catholics planned to assassinate **King James I** at the State Opening of Parliament by exploding barrels of gunpowder in the vaults of the Houses of Parliament.

85 The figure of Guy is made from straw, old clothes and newspapers.
sum of money collected by the poppy-sellers and later give it to cemetery organisations to maintain the graves of the fallen soldiers.\textsuperscript{86} Christmas\textsuperscript{87} is marked by lights and brightly illuminated streets, carols and children awaiting the arrival of Father Christmas.\textsuperscript{88} They hang up their stockings at the foot of beds and wait for their presents.

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{The chief part of the Remembrance Day is the laying of wreaths at the Cenotaph – a war memorial in London – by members of the Royal Family in the presence of statesmen and politicians, including the Prime Minister.}
\footnote{For the Polish learner it may be interesting to learn that English Christmas dinner – a midday meal eaten on Christmas Day – usually includes roast turkey, Christmas pudding as well as mince pies, accompanied by wine.}
\footnote{The alternative name for Father Christmas is Santa Claus.}
\end{footnotesize}
PART 2: THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Land and the People

The United States of America is a country consisting of 50 states. Its capital is Washington, D.C. The United States of America is a large country, which covers an area of about 9.6 million square kilometres, making it the fourth largest country in the world in size (after Russia, Canada and China). Its neighbours are Canada in the north and Mexico in the south. The main mountain chains in the United States of America are the Rocky Mountains, the Coastal Mountains and the Appalachian Mountains. The highest mountain in the USA is Mount McKinley in Alaska which is 6,198 metres above sea level.

A major characteristic of the United States is probably its great variety. The United States of America is a land of physical and other contrasts, including the weather. One could even say that this is a country without a climate because it has every possible climate. The southern parts of Florida, California and the state of Hawaii, have warm temperatures all year round. Temperatures change from the arctic cold in northern Alaska to the subtropical warmth of Hawaii and the Gulf Coast States. On the western coast temperature changes very little between summer and winter. The north-central states have a different climate in summer and winter. The land varies from heavy forests covering 2 million hectares to barren deserts, from high-peaked mountains to valleys and deep canyons. The best-known valley is Death Valley in California which is 225 kilometres long and is 86 metres below sea level at its lowest point, and the best-known canyon is Grand Canyon in Arizona, which is 1600 metres deep.

The United States of America is a land of beautiful rivers, lakes and forests. The state of Minnesota, for example, is known as the land of 10,000 lakes. The largest rivers are the Mississippi and the Missouri. The USA shares lakes Superior, Huron, Erie and Ontario with Canada. It is worth mentioning that Lake Superior is the second largest lake in the world (after the Caspian Sea).

There are many national parks in the USA, especially in the Rocky Mountains Region, with beautiful and preserved natural areas e.g., Glacier

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89 The Mississippi River runs about 6,000 kilometres from Canada into the Gulf of Mexico – the world’s third longest river after the Nile and the Amazon.
National Park, Yellowstone National Park, Rocky Mountains National Park and Grand Canyon National Park.

The fertile land along the Atlantic coast in the Southeast attracted America's early settlers. Today, American farmers plant wheat, corn, and rice and breed cattle. California and Florida are famous for their vegetable and fruit production and the rainy north-western states are known for their apples, pears, berries and vegetables. Underground, there is a wealth of minerals, such as oil, natural gas, gold, silver, phosphates, lead and iron. The production value of crude oil is about 84 thousand million US dollars annually.

The population of the United States of America is about 270 million people. There are more than 100 major ethnic groups in this country today. The United States of America is sometimes called the melting pot because people of all possible origins and races have made America their home. It is believed that the first people to arrive – from Siberia, more than 10,000 years ago – were the American Indians. At present there are about 80 per cent white people, 12 per cent black people and about 1.5 million American Indians and Eskimos. Immigration peaked in the period from 1880 to 1920 when tens of millions of immigrants entered the country. Black Americans, who today are referred to as African Americans, number about 31 million, constitute the largest single ethnic minority in the country. Some reports say that by the year 2000, over 10 per cent of American citizens will be of Latin American origin. A large number of new immigrants come from Asia.

In the past the USA was a nation of farmers. The country has become increasingly urban since the late 19th century. The number of households in America is estimated to be about 100 million. Americans live in a variety of housing that includes single detached houses (about 65 per cent). They also live in apartments, townhouses and mobile homes. About 3.5 per cent of all Americans live in government-supplied or subsidised housing. Americans are very mobile as a nation. Over a five years period, one family in ten moves to a new state.

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90 The American Indians form an ethnic group only in a very general sense. The so-called Native Americans include different tribes that are widely separated in language, culture and adaptation.

91 Only in the year 1907, 1.3 million people came to the United States of America. Now it is estimated that about 300,000 people are permitted to enter the country every year.

92 Hispanics, who number about 23 million and live primarily in the Southwest, are the next largest ethnic minority group in the USA. The Hispanic community is extremely varied and includes, among others, Puerto Ricans and Cuban-Americans.
The main language spoken in the United States of America is **American English** but various ethnic minorities speak their original languages (Chinese, Yiddish, Spanish, Polish, etc.). American English differs from British English in vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling. Of all differences, the most interesting ones are those of vocabulary. Among others, this is due to the fact that American English borrowed a number of words from **Amerindian** languages, that is Indian languages spoken on the territory of the USA (e.g., *moccasin, skunk, totem, wigwam*), as well as from later immigrant languages (e.g., African *goober, voodoo, zombie*; German *noodle, sauerkraut, snorkel*). The most significant spelling differences which can be detected in present-day American English and **British English** are: 1) American *-or* versus British *-our* (e.g., *honor/honour*), 2) American *-z* versus British *-s* (e.g., *emphasize/emphasise*), 3) American *-er* versus *-re* (e.g., *theater/theatre*), 4) American *-se* versus *-ce* (e.g., *defense/defence*).

**A History Sketch**

What is now the United States was originally settlements by tribes of people who came from Asia and whose descendants became known as American Indians. Until the late 15th century native Indians were the only inhabitants. The Spaniards established the first colonies in North America in the 16th century; in 1492 a great demand for spices, textiles and also a navigation error brought **Christopher Columbus** to the Caribbean Sea instead of bringing him to Asia. In the early 1500s Spaniards moved north from Mexico into what is now the south-east and west United States of America.

The first English colony was founded in Virginia at Jamestown in 1607. In 1620 a ship named the **Mayflower** brought 102 English men, women and children to the north-eastern region (Massachusetts) where they founded a colony called Plymouth. They were **Puritans** – members of a religious denomination the aim of which was to reform the **Church of England**. They called themselves the **Pilgrim Fathers** and wanted to build a colony based on their own religious ideals.\(^93\) In October 1621 they celebrated the good harvest and held a feast with a lot of food (including wild turkey). They called this day their day of **Thanksgiving**.

\(^93\) The **Mayflower** colonists were a group of Separatists who had fled to Holland from England to practice their religion without official interference. Economic hardship and a desire to establish an identity free of Dutch influence prompted them to seek refuge in America.
During the 17th century many colonists, mostly British but also French, German, Dutch and Irish settled in the country, mainly along the eastern coast. These settlers were seeking land, wealth and religious or personal freedom. Their settlements became the 13 colonies under British rule. The French and Indian War of 1754 brought British control to all the territory east of the Mississippi river except New Orleans which was French and Florida which was Spanish. African slaves were first brought to Virginia in 1619. The English colonists were developing profitable plantations where tobacco, sugar and cotton were grown. As the number of slaves required to work the fields increased, trading in slaves became even more profitable than exporting crops. In 1681 there were about 2,000 slaves in Virginia, but by the mid-19th century, the population of slaves was more than 4,000,000. It is estimated that more than 600,000 slaves died while being imported on ships to America.

The Fight for Independence

After the conclusion of the French and Indian War, the British government decided to make its North American colonies pay more of the costs of governing and defending them. Britain imposed a series of new taxes on the colonies which aroused violent opposition. Colonial Americans refused to pay the taxes and so British soldiers were sent to Boston. In 1773 a group of patriots, dressed as Indians, threw a cargo of British tea into the Boston Harbour. This historical and historic event is known as the Boston Tea Party.

The War of Independence started in 1775. The Continental Congress began to work as a national government and, on July 4th 1776, they agreed on the Declaration of Independence written, among others, by Thomas Jefferson. The Declaration defended the American revolution against the British and declared that all men are created equal and have a natural right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The War of Independence lasted until 1783 when Britain signed the peace treaty and recognised the USA. The new Constitution was adopted in 1787.  

94 One secret of the Constitution’s longevity lies in the flexible ambiguity its authors built into it. The authors of the Constitution avoided the temptation to solve every foreseeable problem on paper; instead they arranged that the Constitution should be adaptable to changes in circumstance.
The American Civil War

After the American War for Independence the territory of the country was expanded through the purchase of land and treaties (e.g., in 1803 Jefferson made the Louisiana Purchase which meant that he bought the entire central part of the present United States from France). Also, military conflicts with Mexico led to the expansion of California and Arizona. Alaska was bought from Russia in 1867.

In this era of expansion social reforms became important, especially the abolition of slavery. The Civil War between the North and the South started after Abraham Lincoln was elected President in 1860. The four-year war between the federal government of the United States of America (the North) and 11 Southern states (the South) which wanted to secede from the Union lasted from 1861 to 1865. Southern States protested against Lincoln’s anti-slavery views and actions in addition to other conflicts over the issues of trade and states’ rights. Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, which granted freedom to all slaves. During the civil war the Confederates (the South) won some victories but later, after the Battle of Gettysburg, and mainly thanks to generals Grant and Sherman, the Union forces (the North) won in 1865. President Lincoln was assassinated in April 1865. The war had two main good results, namely, it put an end to slavery and it also decided – once and for all – that America was a single and indivisible nation. The war also marked the new economic and political growth of the rapidly industrialising, increasingly urbanised states of the North.

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95 This enormous territory was bought from the French for the sum of $15 million.
96 Alaska – the vast region – was bought for a mere $7.2 million. In spite of this many Americans considered the purchase a total waste of money.
97 The United States of America barred the legal importation of slaves in 1808, although thousands continued to be smuggled in before the Civil War. The average price of slaves in 1790 was between $300 and $350 while in 1860 it was already $1,500 (compare the following prices of certain goods at that time: a horse – $35, a Winchester rifle $20, a Colt-Peacemaker Pistol $12).
98 But it was not until the ratification of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 and the 14th Amendment to the Constitution (1868) that the 1857 decision of Chief Justice Roger Taney that no Negro could be a citizen was erased.
99 Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) was one of the four American Presidents that were assassinated. The other three were James A. Garfield (1831-1881), William McKinley (1843-1901) and John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917-1963).
Industrial growth of the USA started after the Civil War. Major business centred on coal mining, oil, railways and the manufacturing of steel goods. Urbanisation was a major trend, especially in the northern parts of the country. During this period the USA became the world’s leading industrial power. The first American military mobilisation on foreign soil was in 1917 when the US military forces entered World War I against Germany and helped France and England.\footnote{American president Woodrow Wilson helped negotiate a peace treaty in 1918.}

The Roaring Twenties brought vast economic growth until the Great Depression took place after the crash of the New York Stock Exchange in 1929. In the next decade unemployment was high and poverty was widespread. The Depression lasted until the beginning of World War II. The USA declared war against Japan in 1941. It was president Harry Truman who ordered atomic bombs to be dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki which ended World War II.\footnote{The first atomic bomb exploded on the 16th of July 1945 in a desert south of Los Alamos, New Mexico. The second bomb was dropped 3 weeks later over Hiroshima with devastating results – 260,000 Japanese killed and 6,280 buildings destroyed. On the 9th of August Nagasaki was also hit ending World War II.}

The Cold War period after World War II was a period of increasing mistrust between the USA and the Soviet Union.\footnote{The term Cold War was first used by the American presidential adviser Bernard Baruch during a congressional debate in 1947.} The Cold War was fought on political, economic and propaganda fronts. There were several open war conflicts after World War II, for example, the Korean War\footnote{We may say that with the outbreak of the Korean War (1950-1953), the Cold War became a shooting war when President Truman ordered American air and naval forces in the area to join in resisting the Communists.} and the Vietnam War. In spite of this, for the United States of America, the post World War II period was a time of economic expansion. The country continued as a world leader in scientific, medical and technological achievements. Though the Soviet Union was the first to put a man into space, the USA had the first man to walk on the Moon on July 20th, 1969.

The 1960s was a period of tremendous social change and unrest. Among others, American Blacks demanded an end to racial discrimination through the
civil rights movement. Civil rights black leader Martin Luther King was assassinated in 1968. The assassinations of president John F. Kennedy in 1963 and Robert Kennedy (presidential candidate) in 1968 shocked the world.

The United States became involved in the Vietnam War (1955-75) in an effort to prevent communists (commies)\(^\text{105}\) from taking over South Vietnam. This prolonged and unsuccessful war ended in a withdrawal of the United States from the conflict in 1975 and the fall of South Vietnam to the communists.\(^\text{106}\) The Vietnam War brought great internal unrest, all through the 1970s with political corruption – the Watergate Scandal – and the resulting resignation of president Richard Nixon, the first American president who was forced to resign.\(^\text{107}\) Economic issues dominated the 1980s, which began with high unemployment, high inflation, international tension and slow economic growth.\(^\text{108}\) By the middle of this decade the recession ended and the USA continues – to this day – to have one of the highest standards of living in the world. The present President of the United States of America Bill Clinton has been in office since 1992, in spite of his recent alleged improper relations\(^\text{109}\) with a number of women (Monica Lewinsky, among others), and earlier campaigns against his personal life.

**American Economy**

The United States of America has developed a largely free-enterprise economy with services and manufacturing being the primary components of the gross national product. The USA is currently the world’s greatest economic power. The nation’s wealth is partly a reflection on its rich natural resources. Also, the USA owes its economic position to highly developed industry. The

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\(^{104}\) Oswald Lee Harvey was the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy.

\(^{105}\) Commie is a dated disapproving slang word for communist.

\(^{106}\) The USA legacy of the Vietnam War (1965-1975) was 56,000 deaths, $ 150-billion war debt and an indelible scar on the American conscience.

\(^{107}\) In a nutshell, after agents of Richard Nixon’s re-election committee were arrested while trying to burglarise Democratic Party headquarters at Washington’s Watergate complex, the attempted cover-up was eventually revealed to have involved the President himself.

\(^{108}\) At that time, agricultural exports declined, many farmers could not pay their loans and mortgages and therefore many of them lost their farms and equipment.

\(^{109}\) The term used by American TV and press commentators.
agricultural sector produces nearly one-half of the world’s corn; nearly one-fifth of its beef, pork, poultry and lamb.

The main industrial items in the United States of America are manufacturing steel, car industry, electronics, machinery and mining. It is estimated that America has more natural resources than almost any other country in the world. Some of these resources, like the huge amounts of silver in Nevada, were used up a long time ago. But there is aluminium in Arkansas, copper in Arizona and the oil fields in Texas and Alaska. Also, the USA is rich in the following mineral resources: coal, lead, uranium, gold, iron and mercury.

Nearly half of the country is farmland, however only about 20 per cent is arable. At the same time, one could say that the United States of America is a country without one kind of agriculture because it has every kind of agriculture. The main agricultural products are corn, soybeans, wheat, cotton, tobacco, cattle breeding, fruit and vegetables.

Places to See

Besides Washington D.C. – the capital of the USA – and New York City – the largest city in the USA – there are many places worth seeing, such as, a number of wonderful national parks and large urban areas. On the western coast the best-known state is California which is sometimes called the Golden State after the gold that was found there. Here one can see such urban centres as Los Angeles and San Francisco. Los Angeles, known also as LA, is the second largest city in the United States of America.

In Los Angeles one finds the famous Hollywood and a number of luxurious residential quarters (e.g., Santa Monica, Beverly Hills). Each year in April the American Film Academy awards Oscars for the best film and the

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110 **Black gold**, as oil is sometimes called, has made more millionaires than yellow gold ever did although some of the forty-niners, as the gold rush miners were called, made much money. The California gold diggers were called forty-niners because the California gold rush started in 1849.

111 California is the place to go if you want to find a new religion, an unusual leach-doctor or new ideas. It is also, many Americans believe, the place to get rich quick.

112 **Hollywood**, a district of Los Angeles is the major centre of American motion-picture and television industry. Also, Los Angeles is an important educational centre (e.g., University of California, University of Southern California, and California State University).

113 Beverly Hills is a residential quarter famous for its film star residents.
best film actors of the year.\textsuperscript{114} In Los Angeles one finds an important space research centre and car industry.\textsuperscript{115} San Francisco\textsuperscript{116} is one of the cleanest and most picturesque cities with many hills and flowers and a mixture of nationalities. It has several quarters and its Chinatown is the largest Chinese settlement outside Asia.\textsuperscript{117} San Francisco is famous for its cable car system going through its streets. Berkeley University – one of the best-known American universities – is located there.

In the southern part of the United States of America there are a number of important urban centres. New Orleans is the city where jazz\textsuperscript{118} was born and where the Mississippi flows into the Gulf of Mexico. Houston in Texas has the NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) centre and the Johnson Space Centre. Florida is mainly a tourist area with long beaches. North of Miami one finds Cape Canaveral where spaceships, such as the famous Discovery are launched.\textsuperscript{119}

The biggest urban and industrial centre in the East is Philadelphia which is one of the oldest cities in the USA and – in the past – the capital of the country. Philadelphia was once a centre of the machinery and chemical industries and at present it is one of the largest healthcare and research centres. Chicago lies on the banks of Lake Michigan.\textsuperscript{120} In 1974 the highest

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{114} The Oscar is the most sought-after award in the movie industry, annually presented since 1929 by the Academy of Motion Pictures and Sciences. Winners are chosen by secret ballots cast by the Academy’s more than 2,800 members.
\item \textsuperscript{115} It is sometimes claimed that in Los Angeles more businesses start and fail than anywhere else in the United States.
\item \textsuperscript{116} San Francisco was once nicknamed Frisco. San Francisco started as a Spanish pueblo of Yerba Buena at the end of the 18th century. Like Los Angeles, San Francisco suffered heavy earthquakes (e.g., heavy earthquake damage in 1989).
\item \textsuperscript{117} The original Chinese immigrants were attracted by the California Gold Rush. In 1882 American Congress barred further Chinese immigration. This discriminatory law remained in effect till the USA and China became wartime allies.
\item \textsuperscript{118} The roots of jazz go back to Charles "Buddy the King" Bolden, a New Orleans barber and cornetist, who used to play his music (not yet at that time called jazz) at outdoor dances. Jass – a slang word used originally in the sense “sexual intercourse” – was applied to the new kind of music by disgruntled musicians who could neither play nor understand it.
\item \textsuperscript{119} The first U.S. manned flight into outer space occurred on May 5, 1961, when Alan B. Shepard, Jr., was launched from the installation in his Project Mercury capsule, and the first lunar-landing flight, manned by Neil Armstrong, Edwin Aldrin and Michael Collins, was launched from the cape on July 16th, 1969.
\item \textsuperscript{120} To a Polish reader it may be interesting to know that Chicago has the greatest concentration of Polish people outside Poland.
\end{itemize}

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skyscraper in the USA – Sears Tower (438 m high) – was built there.\textsuperscript{121} Chicago is the centre of banking, insurance and cattle trade as well as steel and iron industries. It is an important transport centre (O’Hare Airport is the busiest airport in the USA). Detroit is the centre of the car industry where Pontiac, Chevrolet, Ford, Chrysler are produced.

\textit{New York}

\textbf{New York City} is located at the mouth of the Hudson River. New York City is the largest urban agglomeration in the United States. It occupies Manhattan and Staten Island, the western end of Long Island, a portion of the mainland, and various islands in New York Harbour and Long Island Sound. The number of inhabitants varies and depends whether the whole metropolitan area is counted (about 18 million inhabitants in 1990), or only the central area (about 7.5 million inhabitants in 1990).\textsuperscript{122} It belongs to the largest cities in the world (after Sao Paulo, Mexico City, Tokyo and Bombay). It is sometimes called the \textbf{Big Apple}. New York has five major parts: \textbf{Manhattan},\textsuperscript{123} \textbf{Queens},\textsuperscript{124} \textbf{the Bronx},\textsuperscript{125} \textbf{Staten Island}\textsuperscript{126} and \textbf{Brooklyn}.\textsuperscript{127} The black quarter – \textbf{Harlem}\textsuperscript{128} – is in the northern part of Manhattan.

The original inhabitants were Indians, of which one is reminded by the name of the oldest part – Manhattan Island. The original name of New York

\textsuperscript{121} Ever since 1885, with the completion in Chicago of the 10-story \textbf{Home Life Insurance Building}, American architecture has reached for the sky. Other American well-known skyscrapers are the \textbf{Empire State Building} (New York) and the \textbf{World Trade Center} (New York).
\textsuperscript{122} Metropolitan area includes suburbs that are defined as residential areas within commuting distance of large cities. Most people who live in the suburbs own their homes and commute to work in the city or they work in nearby offices.
\textsuperscript{123} Originally – back in the early 17\textsuperscript{th} century – \textbf{Manhattan} was an Indian village. A Dutch West India Company purchased the island from the Indians for $ 24 worth of trinkets.
\textsuperscript{124} \textbf{Queens} is the largest of the five main districts.
\textsuperscript{125} \textbf{Bronx} is the only New York borough (district) on the mainland.
\textsuperscript{126} \textbf{Staten Island} is connected with \textbf{Brooklyn} by the world-famous \textbf{Verrazano-Narrows Bridge} that has a span of almost 1,300 metres.
\textsuperscript{127} \textbf{Brooklyn} is a residential district of New York.
\textsuperscript{128} Before \textbf{Harlem} became a \textbf{black quarter} at the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century and, following this, a scene of high unemployment, overcrowding and physical decline, it was a fashionable residential district.
City was New Amsterdam. In 1644 the British captured the city from the Dutch and renamed it New York. Because of its favourable location it soon became an important trading port. The southern part of Manhattan Island used to have a wall against Indians, the current Wall Street, the centre of financial life, banking houses such as, for example, J.P. Morgan, giant financial companies such as Merrill Lynch and – first of all – the most important stock-exchange in the world. It is said that Wall Street is a place where the sun never shines. This does not mean, of course, that it has a different climate from the rest of New York City. It simply means that the buildings in New York’s financial centre are so high that the street is always in the shade. The city was built on a modern plan of streets and avenues which follow a geometric shape and most of which are numbered. Streets run east-west and avenues north-south (e.g., Fifth Avenue is one of the main shopping centres). Only a few of the streets and avenues – usually the oldest – have proper names, e.g., Wall Street or Broadway which is the centre of cultural life. New York is the nation’s cultural centre and many trends in fashion, theatre, television and music originate from here.

Two rivers, the East River and the Hudson River, surround the island of Manhattan. In southern Manhattan we find the liveliest parts of New York, such as, Chinatown and Soho. East Village is an international cultural area with many ethnic restaurants, funky boutiques, rock and jazz clubs. Many musical groups started their career there. Greenwich Village is the home of artists, writers and students.

New York is famous for its Manhattan skyline – a large number of skyscrapers in a small area. Skyscrapers were built there because of lack of space and the high price of land on the island. The first skyscrapers were built at the beginning of the 20th century. The skyscrapers are an interesting sociological phenomenon as each building is a small city in and of itself – they offer residential quarters, office space, parking lots, restaurants, shopping facilities, fitness centres, swimming pools and the like. The World Trade Centre is New York’s highest skyscraper. There is also the United Nations building located by the East River.

The Wall Street Journal was originally a strictly financial paper. However, in recent times the paper broadened from financial paper to one with general news interest.

The World Trade Center is 417 metres high, has 110 storeys and more than 100,000 people come and go there every day.
One of the few relatively quiet places is Central Park where famous rock concerts take place. There are many other attractive places where visitors like to go, for example, Ellis Island, Coney Island and Liberty Island with the Statue of Liberty – a gift from France to the people of the USA – commemorating long friendship between the two nations. The Statue of Liberty stands near the port of New York City and it was one of the first sights for many immigrants coming to the USA. It is considered to be the symbol of hope and freedom.

New York City is an important industrial city and business centre (machinery, electronics, chemistry, food and textiles). It is also the largest port in the USA. There are 4 airports, the biggest of which are J.F. Kennedy Airport and La Guardia. There are about 30 universities of which Columbia University is probably the best known. There are many cultural institutions and galleries (e.g., American Craft Museum, Metropolitan Museum).

US Government, Constitution and Administration

The USA, with the President as the head of state, is a federation of 50 states with 48 on the continent, Alaska in the north and Hawaii in the Mid-Pacific. The American Constitution went into effect in March 1787. The Bill of Rights consisting of the first ten amendments to the Constitution was added in 1791 and other 17 additional amendments have been added over the years. However, the political system created by the Constitution is basically the same today as it was at the end of the 18th century. The Constitution opens with a statement that the government of the country is created by We, the people, and that its purpose is to promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty for the people. This document guarantees, among others, freedom of religion, free
speech, free press, the right of citizens to bear arms and the right to a fair trial.

In the USA power is divided into three branches, i.e., legislative, executive and judicial. The **legislative branch** is made up of elected representatives. The main body is called the **Congress** – its seat is in the **Capitol**. The Congress is divided into two parts: the **House of Representatives** and the **Senate**. The House of Representatives consists of 435 members who are elected by residents of each state and serve for two years. The Senate has 100 members – 2 members from each state who serve six years. The main tasks of the Congress is to make federal laws, declare war and deal with foreign treaties. Members of the Congress can be re-elected indefinitely.

The **judicial branch** is made up of 49 Federal District Courts, 11 Federal Courts of Appeal and the Supreme Court. The **executive branch** is represented by the **President** and 14 executive departments. The President together with his **Vice-President** are chosen in nation-wide elections every 4 years. Presidential powers are enormous – he proposes bills and he can veto or refuse a bill. Apart from this he is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, makes treaties, and appoints federal judges and ambassadors. The President can only be re-elected once.

The head of each department is appointed by the President and is responsible to him. In the USA, the main departments are the departments of State, Treasury, Defense, Justice, Agriculture, Commerce, Labour, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, Energy and Education. The government of the United States of America is of course more than the President and the Congress. Altogether, the governmental administration employs over 18,000 people.

The following American presidents rank among the most important in the history of the nation:

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135 The **Capitol**, the proud symbol of self-government, dominates the city of **Washington, D.C.** It was George Washington who laid the cornerstone in 1793. The Capitol was once called by Nathaniel Hawthorne **the centre and heart of America**.

136 Although some major bills originate in the White House, all bills must be approved, disapproved or amended by both Houses and nothing can become law until it has been passed by a majority in each House and signed by the President.

137 Senators exert an important influence on foreign policy because of their power to ratify or reject treaties. Also, they have a right to confirm or reject presidential appointments.

138 The **Supreme Court** stands at the top of the Nation’s Federal judiciary system and sets precedents as to the constitutionality of laws and of lower courts’ decisions.
1. **George Washington**, the first President was particularly courteous, honest and – most historians agree – neither a military nor a political genius.

3. **Thomas Jefferson**, was a scholar, writer scientist and inventor. Of his many achievements, two were prominent: his authorship of the **Declaration of Independence** and his purchase of Louisiana from France.

16. **Abraham Lincoln**, was a lawyer, superb orator and a believer in persuasion. His main achievement was the abolition of slavery.

26. **Theodore Roosevelt**, was a scholar and scientist as well as politician. In foreign affairs he was an expansionist.

28. **Woodrow Wilson**, was a man of academic background and an advocate of a new world order.

32. **Franklin D. Roosevelt**, was the president whose four-term Presidency was an American turning point. He battled the **Depression** and helped the world to get rid of Nazi-Fascist barbarism.

33. **Harry Truman**, was the president who guided his country into the atomic age and helped rehabilitate Europe after World War II.

34. **Dwight Eisenhower**, was the **Supreme Allied Commander** during World War II.

35. **John F. Kennedy**, was the youngest man and the first Roman **Catholic** elected president. His wit, grace and intelligence inspired enthusiasm and a sense of renewal.

37. **Richard Nixon**, was ambitious, managerial, suspicious and strongly anti-Communist. His domestic **Watergate** scandal forced him to resign in the face of impeachment.

40. **Ronald Reagan**, was more determined to compete vigorously with the USSR – called "an evil empire" – than any other American president. During his presidency the United States managed to contain or overthrow many totalitarian regimes without getting itself involved in new "Vietnams".

42. **Bill Clinton**, is the President of the USA today. I hope that history will assess his presidency adequately.

**Political Parties**
The two main parties, that is, the Republican Party and the Democratic Party are national parties.\(^{139}\) Obviously, there are other minor political groups and parties. The Democratic Party is generally more liberal; it believes that the government should provide wide social and economic programmes for the poor, the unemployed, students, etc. The Republican Party puts more emphasis on private enterprise and individual initiative. Presidential elections are held every four years; all members of the House of Representatives are elected every two years.\(^{140}\) One third of the members of the Senate are elected every two years, while the rest is elected every 6 years.

\textit{The Capital of the United States of America: Washington, D.C.}

Washington D.C. was specifically built as the capital of the country and the seat of the government. In this city, one finds the most important buildings of the USA, such as, the White House – the residence of the American President, the Capitol – the seat of the Congress and the Pentagon – the centre of American military forces.\(^{141}\)

There is no heavy industry in Washington which is why the city seems so clean and nice. No building can be higher than the Capitol and, therefore, there are no skyscrapers in Washington. There is the famous Georgetown University and many monuments that have been erected to commemorate the outstanding American presidents (e.g., the Washington Monument and Jefferson Memorial).

\textit{The American Flag and Anthem}

The American national anthem is called the Star-Spangled Banner. The text of the anthem consists of three stanzas:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Oh say, can you see by the dawn's early light,}
\textit{What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?}
\end{quote}

\(^{139}\) Historically speaking, these two political parties have always dominated the political scene of the USA.

\(^{140}\) For example, in 1992 presidential elections Democratic Party leader and the present President of the USA received 43 per cent of the popular vote.

\(^{141}\) The Pentagon is a huge, five-sided building that houses the American Department of Defense, the place where the decisions to carry out military actions and buy new military equipment are made.
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,
Over the ramparts we watched,
Were so gallantly streaming,
And the rocket’s red glare,
Bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night,
That our flag was still there,
Oh say, does the Star-Spangled Banner
Yet wave
O’er the land of the free,
And the home of the brave.

The American flag consists of two parts – one smaller blue oblong with 50 white stars symbolising 50 American states and one larger oblong consisting of 6 white and 7 red stripes symbolising the original 13 states which used to be the British colonies. The flag is sometimes called Old Glory or Stars and Stripes.142

The Pillars of American Literature

Let us point to some of most outstanding authors and works in American literature. It is worth mentioning that until the beginning of the 19th century American literature had been mainly about the conditions of the settlement in the New World. The Puritan notion of God can be seen in every phase of early American daily life and it gave rise to early poetry. Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672) published a volume of fine poems – chiefly religious meditations – in the middle of the 17th century. Edward Taylor (1645-1729) – one of the earliest American metaphysical poets – used original imagery in focusing on his interior life.

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) was a printer and publisher and a model figure of American Enlightenment. He was an author, inventor, scientist and a statesman during the fight for independence. Franklin’s Autobiography displays wisdom and wit along with satire and a good deal of advice on everyday matters.

142 The text of the Pledge to the Flag sounds as follows: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.
It was Franklin who used the now widely known notion of the **American Dream** for the first time.

With the arrival of independence, the national energy was channelled into the development of American culture. Before the **War of Independence** colonists had – to a great extent – imported plays and novels from Europe. The first American plays were mostly romantic melodramas about the War of Independence. Many women wrote sentimental love stories modelled upon British novelists.

While the Romantic Movement arose in Europe as the expression of the revolt against political and religious authority, American **Romanticism** was connected with nationalism of the colonists who were proud of the American intellectual tradition that created their country. Thus, **Washington Irving** (1783-1859) wrote on American topics – the history of New York, essays on American life, American nature and a large biography of George Washington. One of his well-known books is *The Sketch Book*. Another representative of American Romanticism **James Fenimore Cooper** (1789-1851), described American wilderness and wrote Indian novels of adventure (e.g., *The Last of the Mohicans*). **Walt Whitman** (1819-1892) was a poet of democracy, freedom and sexual love. His most famous collection of poems is *Leaves of Grass*.

**Edgar Allan Poe** (1809-1849) was both a poet and short story writer, critical essayist, the founder of science-fiction and the detective story. His best poem is *The Raven*. Poe wrote wonderful short stories such as *The Black Cat*, *The Golden Bug*, *Ligeia*, *The Fall of the House of Ushers*, *The Murder in the Rue Morgue*. **Ralph Waldo Emerson** (1803-1882) was the leading philosopher in the **transcendentalist movement**. The movement was based on the doctrine of free will, individual conscience and the sense of right. The transcendentalists lived together in a **Utopian Community** which they

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143 **J.F. Cooper** created a distinctively American type of hero – an uneducated man, close to nature who survives on his honesty and common sense.

144 In 1848 **W. Whitman** took a trip to the city of New Orleans. While travelling to New Orleans Whitman gained a new vision of America and began writing his poetry that would embody this vision. The characteristic features of his poetry are long irregular lines and free structure. Whitman was accused of egotism, but in fact he concentrated on himself simply because he saw himself as a prototype of the **American**.

145 **Poe's** suspenseful and – very frequently – terrifying short stories explore human psychology.
established at **Brook Farm** in Concord, New Hampshire (Emerson, Thoreau and Hawthorne lived there).

**Nathaniel Hawthorne** (1804-1864) was a great novelist and short-story writer, who was a master of the allegorical and symbolic tale. He is considered to be one of the greatest fiction writers in American literature, and is best known for *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851). *The Scarlet Letter* tells the story of two lovers kept apart by the ironies of fate, their own mingled strengths and weaknesses, and the Puritan community's interpretation of moral law, until at last death unites them under a single headstone. The book made Hawthorne famous and it was eventually recognised as one of the greatest American novels.

**Herman Melville** (1819-1891) was the greatest symbolist who spent much of his life on the seas. His experience at sea provided the basis for almost all his novels. His most famous novel is *Moby Dick*, a symbolic story of Captain Ahab who strives against his own fate.146 **Mark Twain** (1835-1910) is one of the greatest American novelists who himself worked as a steamboat pilot on the Mississippi river.147 He became famous as a humorist and storyteller. His novel *The Gilded Age* gave the name to the whole period after the Civil War. This book is a bitter satire on one period of the get-rich-quick years in the second half of the 19th century. His best books — *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* — are based on his own experience along the Mississippi. In most general terms, these books present a picture of boyhood.148

While prose fiction in the USA was developing very fast at that time, poetry seemed to recede. One of the unrecognised poets was **Emily Dickinson** (1830-1886), who wrote short reflective poems which appear to be traditional love poems and religious meditations but, in fact, they reveal religious scepticism and modern psychological shrewdness. Another poet of the time **Sidney Lanier** (1842-1881) mourned the Old South's suffering during the Civil War.149

The quick development that characterised the United States of America at the end of the 19th century in industry, trade and manufacturing gave rise to

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146 Ironically, those of Melville's books that were not accepted by readers during his lifetime are the ones that are most admired today. *Moby Dick* is considered an American masterpiece.

147 *Mark twain* is a river-man's phrase meaning two-fathoms-deep.

148 In short, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) is a story of a boy running away from home and steering a raft down the Mississippi River. The story covers the entire spectrum of humanity and his voyage down the river becomes a metaphor for the journey through life. This novel is frequently called "the greatest novel in American literature".

149 Lanier's poetry is very similar to that of Edgar Allan Poe.
many problems. Realistic and naturalistic authors described the ugliness of life, where money-making dominates, destroys human character and puts aside all human values. Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945) had a proletarian childhood before he became a reporter, editor and novelist. In his naturalist novels he showed the ugly sides of American life. His masterpiece is An American Tragedy, whose main hero is a negative character, the victim of the society and the social system. His book Sister Carrie was considered shocking because it described young urban women who were forced to sell their bodies. Upton Sinclair (1878-1968) in his best novel The Jungle wrote about working conditions in a Chicago slaughter-house and the living conditions of immigrants whose labour was cheap and whose life was humiliating. Jack London (1876-1916) became very popular due to his description of adventurous life at the time of the gold rush (e.g., The Call of the Wild). His masterpiece Martin Eden is a novel about a man who wants to be successful and lift himself to a higher and better society.

After World War I a group of writers known as the Lost Generation entered the stream of American literature. They were influenced by the war disillusionment as many of them were in service in the Army (e.g., E. Hemingway). The best writers of that period were Ernest Hemingway (1898-1961) and Francis Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940). Ernest Hemingway was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1954 for his famous book The Old Man and the Sea, which is about human strength for fighting both external natural forces and the bad sides of character. His book A Farewell to Arms – a love story of an American lieutenant and an English nurse – is one of the best novels about World War I. His famous book For Whom the Bell Tolls is a psychological picture of war in an episode from the Spanish Civil War. Francis Scott Fitzgerald is connected with the Jazz Age of the 1920s. He wrote many stories about wealthy people for whom everything is easy because of possession of money (e.g., Tales of the Jazz Age). The Great Gatsby is his best novel about a very rich man who earns all his money by smuggling. Sinclair Lewis (1885-1951) was the first American writer to win the Nobel Prize in literature in 1930 (Main Street, Arrowsmith, Babbit). In his books he painted vivid caricatures and mocked the traditional American dream. To both urban Americans and Europeans, Lewis seemed to sum up what small town America was about.

150 In his writing Hemingway adopted a moral code in which he exalted basic values such as strength, courage and honesty. Also, in the form of his writing he cut out all unnecessary words and complex sentence structure, concentrating on concrete objects and actions.
William Faulkner (1897-1962), another Nobel Prize winner (1949), wrote a cycle of novels dealing with all the possible problems of the South (e.g., *Light in August, As I Lay Dying*). He saw the South as a decayed culture and his characters are often grotesque and eccentric. John Steinbeck (1902-1968) won the Nobel Prize in 1962. He tried to uncover the reasons of social injustice. Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* describes the times of the Depression. This novel is a picture of a poor family which is exploited by the fruit-growers in California. His other famous works are *Tortilla Flat, Of Mice and Men, The Wayward Bus, East of Eden* and *Travels with Charley*. Historical fiction became very popular during the time of the Depression. The most successful of these books was *Gone with the Wind*, a 1936 best-seller about the Civil War by a southern woman Margaret Mitchell (1900-1949).

Jerome David Salinger (1919) expressed the feelings of the post-war generation in *The Catcher in the Rye* which is about Holden Caulfield, a sincere and pure boy who is disgusted by the insincerity of the people around him. Also, Salinger wrote short stories. Saul Bellow (1915) – the Nobel Prize winner in 1976 – belongs to the best American contemporary novelists. His novels are psychological studies of people who try to maintain themselves in this cruel world (e.g., *Dangling Man, Seize the Day*). In his novels, Bellow not only focuses on Jewish characters and social questions but also brings a Jewish sense of humour to literature. His prose often employs elements of *Yiddish*.\(^{151}\) John Updike (1932) is one of the most successful American novelists and poets. In his novels Updike describes American everyday life in a family and its search for pure human relations and the meaning of life. For example, in his *Rabbit* cycle he presents the American lifestyle.

William Saroyan (1908-1981) wrote short stories, novels and dramas full of humanity, love of children and valuable human relations (e.g., *The Human Comedy, Papa you are Crazy, The Daring Young Man on a Flying Trapeze*). Ray Bradbury (1920) is an outstanding author of science fiction literature (e.g., *Martian Chronicles, Fahrenheit 451*). Another giant of American modern literature, Kurt Vonnegut jr. (1922), considers himself a "total pessimist". His work is against the mechanical world in which everything humane is lost (e.g., *Cat's Cradle, Slaughterhouse-Five, Breakfast of Champions*).

20th century poetry is famous for a group of poets and artists – called Beat Group (or Beat Generation) – which came together around 1956 in San Francisco. The term Beat Group referred both to the rhythm and jazz music and

\(^{151}\) *Yiddish* is the language of European Jews which has helped to preserve Jewish culture.
to their sense that society was worn-out (beat), as well as to their interest in new forms of experience. They practised new ways of free life and a new use of language. They were disgusted with the corrupt, commercial and conventional world around them. Among the best known poets of this era belong Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997), William Burroughs (1914-1997) and Jack Kerouac (1926-1969).

The most outstanding personalities in 20th century American drama are Eugene O’Neill (1888-1953), Tennessee Williams (1914-1983) and Edward Albee (1928). Eugene O’Neill – a Nobel Prize Winner in 1936 – tried to analyse the bad sides of human character and the difficult conditions people in this world have (e.g., *Desire under the Elms, The Emperor Jones*). Tennessee Williams shows in his plays people’s crude, selfish, violent and cruel motives of behaviour as well as their deep desire to love and be loved. (e.g., *A Streetcar Named Desire, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*). Edward Albee is one of the leading experimental playwrights. His aim is to entertain, amuse by attacking the narrow-mindedness, hypocrisy and conformity of people (e.g., *The Zoo Story, Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf*).

The feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s enabled many American women writers such as, Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) and Adrienne Rich (1929) to reveal some of their joy about being a woman. Many novelists (e.g., Joan Didion and Erica Jong) were conscious social critics with a feminist perspective. With time, however, women wrote less in protest and more in affirmation – particularly black women writers such as, Gloria Naylor (1950) and Alice Walker (1944), who portrayed strong black women as the source of continuity and the preservers of values in the Black culture. In 1987 Toni Morrison (1931) – an American writer noted for her examination of black experience (particularly the black female experience) – received the Nobel Prize as the first black woman in the history of American literature. Her main work *Beloved* is a postmodern vision of the history of slavery in the United States of America.

*Life in the United States of America*

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152 Such as drugs, alcohol and Eastern mysticism.

153 *Ginsberg's Howl* set for them a tone of social protest and visionary ecstasy.

154 Kerouac’s novel *On the Road* celebrated the lifestyle of the Beat Generation.
The majority of Americans work in some service profession: in business, schools, hospitals, etc. About 1/4 of the jobs are in manufacturing and construction. Only 5 per cent of jobs are in agriculture, fishing and mining. Americans are a nation of urban dwellers. Over 80 per cent of the population live either in cities or in huge suburban areas. At present, there are more than two hundred of these metropolitan regions.

The majority of Americans – about 85 per cent – are neither rich nor poor. They belong to an economic category called the middle class. The American middle class are well-known for their relatively easy way of spending money. When abroad, they often stay in the best hotels and go to the most expensive stores. Similarly – at home – they are used to the best of everything. An average American household has two bathrooms, a separate bedroom for each child, a garage and a number of TV sets.  

Money is not a taboo subject in the United States of America. This is mainly due to the fact that Americans work hard for their wealth and they enjoy both getting richer and spending money (in a conspicuous way). The American currency is the dollar (buck) – a paper banknote of dark green colour. Dollars are issued to the worth of $1, $5, $10, $20, $50, $100, $1000 ($1000 banknote is in circulation only in banks). The words In God We Trust are stamped on the coins: half dollar – 50 cents, 1 quarter – 25 cents, 1 dime – 10 cents, 1 nickel – 5 cents, 1 penny – 1 cent.

There are many government programmes – both federal and state – which help those who are in need; the Social Security programme is the largest and it is financed by the tax paid by all working people. By 1980 about 12 per cent of all American children came from families whose only income came from welfare programmes. There are certain city areas where over a half of the young people are unemployed.

Over the past two centuries the means of communication have both changed and grown immensely. Now, at the end of the 20th century, the systems of cables and satellites are expanding. The American television system works on four major networks: CBS, NBC, ABC and PBS. Altogether, viewers can watch programmes broadcast by about 1100 stations. Television has an enormous effect on Americans and advertisers both very well understand the power of television

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155 It is easily observable that Americans tend to spend a lot of time in their bathrooms. Therefore, they are sometimes referred to as the bathroom society.

156 Americans have always loved stories about those who were poor but worked hard and reached the top. In general, they find it rather hard to accept that there is no hope, no work to do and the necessity to stay at the bottom.
and take advantage of it. It is said that the average American watches TV 30 hours a week.\textsuperscript{157}

There are over 9,000 newspapers and close to 11,000 magazines and journals. Among the most important American newspapers one could enumerate \textit{The Wall Street Journal}, \textit{Daily News}, \textit{USA Today}, \textit{The Washington Post}, \textit{Los Angeles Times}, \textit{The New York Times}, \textit{The Chicago Tribune} and \textit{The San Francisco Chronicle}. The important magazines with a long tradition are \textit{Time}, \textit{Newsweek}, \textit{US News and World Report}, \textit{The New Yorker} and \textit{Ebony}.

Like in many places in the world sport is very popular. Some of the disciplines practised in the USA have their origins in America such as, for example, \textit{baseball} and \textit{American football}.\textsuperscript{158} Apart from local and national sports teams there is a long tradition of school sports clubs, both at high schools and colleges. \textit{Show business} is a good way to describe big American sport events. Wealthy businessmen tend to run sport events with the same business sense as they run their own business companies.

More generally, being healthy and keeping oneself in good shape – \textit{fitness} – is a part of the general way of life. Many Americans exercise for good health or undergo some fitness programme. In the United States of America you find special stores selling clothes, books and cassettes for physical exercise. One can meet joggers in the park and find at least one health or fitness club in every town.\textsuperscript{159}

Americans have always believed in education, but in an especially American way. The schools’ first task was and – to a large extent – still is to turn millions of foreign children into Americans. Since the children came from dozens of different countries, American schools had to (and frequently have to, today), teach them English, teach them to love their country and to learn how to live in it. Most American parents still care less for book-learning than for a practical education that will help their children to find a job in the future. Many middle-class citizens who want their children to be well educated, send them off to private schools. Simultaneously, there is a growing difference between \textit{public schools}, which are often low-standard, violence-ridden and \textit{private schools}, which are usually much better but costly.

\textsuperscript{157} Many people admit that the quality of TV programmes could be better. American TV stations are full of soap operas, crime series and cheap melodramas.

\textsuperscript{158} W.Ch. Camp (1859–1925) – a natural athlete – was the father of \textit{American football}.

\textsuperscript{159} It is interesting that in the mid-1980s, Americans were spending a billion dollars a year on exercise equipment. Americans spend over 150 million dollars a year on tracksuits.
National Holidays in the United States of America

Thanksgiving Day is celebrated every fourth Thursday in November. This holiday is the oldest one as it was celebrated by the first settlers who came to America in 1620. It is a family holiday; the whole family gathers together and enjoys a traditional dinner – roast turkey, apple or pumpkin pie, etc. The first Thanksgiving was celebrated in 1621 by the Pilgrim Fathers.

Martin Luther King Day is celebrated on the third Monday in January. Martin Luther King – assassinated in 1968 – was a black clergyman who fought for the civil rights of his people. President’s Day – formerly celebrated as the birthday of the first American President – is celebrated on the third Monday in February. Since the 1970s it is the day to honour all the past American presidents. Memorial Day is celebrated on the fourth Monday in May and, on this occasion, Americans honour the dead of all wars.

Independence Day, celebrated on July, 4th is the birthday of the USA. Labor Day – the first Monday in September – is a holiday to honour the nation’s working people. Columbus Day – the second Monday in October – commemorates Columbus arriving in the New World. Veteran’s Day – celebrated on November, 11th – is to honour those Americans who served in World War I. At Easter many homes organise Easter egg hunts; children look for dyed, hard-boiled eggs hidden around the house. The President himself has an annual Easter egg hunt on the lawn around the White House. Valentine’s Day – celebrated on February, 14th – is a lover’s feast. On Halloween – the last day of October – children dress in funny or ghostly costumes and knock at neighbourhood doors shouting trick or treat! Christmas in the USA is highly commercialised.

Apparently, religion seems to be a very important part of life in the United States of America. Over 90 per cent Americans say they believe in God. Over 40 per cent go to church or synagogue at least once a week. Christianity, of course, is not the only religion in the United States of America. There are increasing numbers of Muslims and Buddhists. There are also about six million Jews. America also has many unusual religions such as, for example, Indian gurus, faith healers and many “saints” with strange ideas.

American Food and Drink
Unlike the British who – my impression is – neither eat too much nor seem to like conspicuous food consumption, the Americans are a nation of food-devourers. About 25 per cent of Americans are **obese** and 40 per cent are overweight. The characteristic American foodstuffs are, among others, **doughnuts, hamburgers, hot dogs, peanut butter, popcorn and potato chips** (in Britain called **potato crisps**). Drinkwise, the United States of America is the country of origin of **carbonated water** and **Coca-Cola**.

Dutch and German settlers introduced doughnuts to America. Coffee and especially doughnuts have become a national institution (chain stores sell them plain, sugared, frosted, honey-dipped or jam-filled). Modern **hamburgers** were first served in 1904 but Americans really began eating them in big quantities in the 1920s.160 The story of the **hot-dog** goes back to a Frankfurter **Charles Feltman**, a German immigrant who opened a stand in New York and sold grilled sausages on warmed rolls. Nowadays, Americans consume more than 12 billion hot-dogs a year. Another feature of the American kitchen is **peanut butter**. Accidentally, by running roasted peanuts through the kitchen grinder a certain doctor developed peanut butter in 1890 as an easily digestible form of protein.

The story of **carbonated water** (known also as **soda**), goes back to an English chemist, **Joseph Priestly**, the discoverer of oxygen. In America, carbonated water was first bottled in 1807. America’s best-known soft drink **Coca-Cola**, was first concocted in 1886. By the late 1970s, more than 150 million Coca-Cola bottles and cans a day were being sold in countries all over the world.

**The Heroes of American Folklore**

**Billy the Kid** (1859-1881) was a short-tempered man born in New York City who boasted that he had shot 21 men, “not including Indians”, as he used to say. When he was 21, he was gunned down, after a daring jailbreak. By some **John Brown** (1800-1859) was considered to be an angry fanatic and a madman and, by others, a martyr. John Brown led attacks on advocates of slavery. His 1859 raid on Harpers Ferry was intended to start a slave revolt.

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160 The history of **hamburger** dates back to medieval Europe. A Tartar dish of shredded raw beef seasoned with salt and onion juice was brought from Russia to Germany by early German sailors. The lightly broiled German chopped-beef cake, with pickles and pumpernickel on the side, was introduced to the Americans in the early 1800s by German immigrants in America.
He was captured and hanged as a traitor. After his death he became the subject of a famous song and his name became a Union-rallying cry. **Buffalo Bill** (1846-1917) was a nick-name of William F. Cody, a famous Army scout and Indian fighter who shot more than 4,000 bison in less than 18 months to provide meat for those who were constructing the Kansas Pacific Railroad. He was nick-named Buffalo Bill after winning a buffalo-killing contest. **Jesse James** (1847-1882) was a notorious bank and train robber who claimed that respectable enemies hounded him into a life of crime. He was a leader of a gang that operated in the mid-western part of the USA for about 15 years. He was shot in the back by one of the former gang members, for a reward. **Superman** – also known as the champion of the oppressed – has been flying through the air on his way to fight evil and injustice since 1938, when he first appeared in Action Comics.

**The American Inventions that Changed the World**

**Thomas Alva Edison** once remarked that genius is one per cent inspiration and ninety-nine per cent perspiration. Certainly neither inspiration nor industry were lacking in this inventor, who held over 1000 patents – by all means – an all-time record. In 1876 Edison established his "invention factory", which was the first industrial research laboratory. Within a year he invented the first telephone transmitter. Also, it would be hard to imagine life today without the phonograph, the light bulb or motion pictures which we owe to him. Edison’s invention, in 1877, of a talking machine that could record, store and reproduce human speech was revolutionary. Edison’s movie camera resulted from his attempt to do for the eye what the phonograph had done for the ear. He took a series of photographs, which he projected on a screen in rapid succession to give the illusion of motion. He tested his first motion picture in his laboratory in 1889.

Prototypes of the automobile engine were made in France as far back as 1862 and Gottlieb Daimler of Germany designed an effective engine in the 1880’s. In 1893 in Massachusetts, Charles E. and J. Frank Duryea operated the first gasoline-powered car in the United States of America. Already in 1901 **Ransom E. Olds** assembled more than 425 Oldsmobiles and by 1914 **Henry Ford** was producing the famous Model T.

From earliest times men dreamt of flying. In the 18th century man finally got to the air in gas-filled balloons. In the 19th century others tried to ride kites and primitive gliders. But the problem was to travel through the air with full
control of direction, speed and altitude. To Wilbur and Orville Wright, however, the credit must go not only for the first controlled flight of a heavier-than-air machine but for the first construction of a practical aeroplane. The two brothers were – from boyhood – fascinated with the idea of flying and built many model gliders, which they tested in a home-made wind tunnel. Convinced that powered flight was possible, the Wright brothers designed gasoline engines and devised reliable ways of controlling a plane. In December 1903, the Wright brothers’ plane made the first flight that changed the world.

Vulcanisation, the process that may be defined as the treating of rubber with sulphur under heat to give it strength and elasticity, proved important to the world we live in. In 1839 Charles Goodyear accidentally dropped a mixture of sulphur and rubber onto a hot stove. He noted that the spilled mixture had hardened like leather, and he thought that sulphur and heat were the vital elements that he and many others had been looking for. Before, he tried mixing rubber with salt, sugar, castor oil, pepper and innumerable other substances until he stumbled onto the right one. It eventually led to the opening of giant factories all over the world adapted to the turning out of vulcanised rubber goods such as car tyres.161

Mechanical calculators go back to 1642, when a French mathematician invented an adding machine that used wheels and other mechanical parts. The first purely electronic computer was built for the American Army in 1946 at the University of Pennsylvania. It filled a large room, and it could not store great amounts of information. Today computers no larger than a briefcase can do essentially the same job.

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161 Until that time man had found many uses for natural rubber. For example, in 1823 in Scotland, Charles Macintosh had made a raincoat of rubberised cloth which, in Britain’s temperate climate, proved a commercial success.
GREAT BRITAIN

All Soul's College: All Soul’s College, Oxford is the only educational institution that has never had students. The college has always consisted of fellows.

British Army: the last mules employed in the British army transport corps were demobbed in 1975.

John Dryden: John’s Dryden’s brother-in-law was one of the many late 17th century and 18th century dramatists who rewrote Shakespeare’s plays. For example, in his version of *Romeo and Juliet*, the ”star-crossed lovers” live happily ever after.

Submarine: The response of the British Admiralty to the invention of the submarine in the early 17th century was that it was ”a damn silly, trifling novelty that will never catch on”.

David Lloyd George: During the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference David Lloyd George, then British Prime Minister, offered some helpful advice to the Italian Government on restoring its economy: he suggested they increase their banana crop. One point he overlooked was that Italy does not grow bananas.

Crown Jewels: The large ruby that is set in the Imperial State Crown, worn by English sovereigns on great occasions of state was worn by Henry V at the battle of Agincourt in 1415.

Dice: Gambling dens in 18th century England employed one man with the sole responsibility of swallowing the dice if ever there was a raid.

Isle of Sark: The prison on the Isle of Sark, in the Channel Islands, holds a maximum number of two prisoners.

The Queen: The Queen is forbidden to enter the House of Commons. The last monarch to do so was Charles I and we know what happened to him.

George III: During the reign of George III, the British Army used 6,500 tonnes of hair powder every year.
Henry VIII: The doctors treating Henry VIII diagnosed that the king had contracted venereal disease from Cardinal Wolsey who had apparently been rash enough to whisper in sovereign’s ear.

Henry VIII: As a young man Henry VIII was a celebrated hammer-thrower.

Big Ben: Benjamin Hall, the 18th century politician weighed 158 kilograms, which explains why the bell named after him is called Big Ben.

Queen Victoria: It is said that Queen Victoria wore a new pair of bloomers every day.

Admiral Nelson: The famous Nelson suffered from severe seasickness throughout most of his lifetime.

Great Stink of London: 1858 was the year of the Great Stink of London. The combination of an unusually low rainfall with a very hot summer caused the river Thames to reek awfully and the windows of the House of Commons were hung with curtains drenched in chloride of lime to counteract the smell.

Queen Victoria: Queen Victoria never permitted the Royal Train to travel faster than 30 miles an hour. On one occasion when she found out that it had touched 40 miles an hour, she ordered the driver to be whipped and dismissed.

George IV: While he was Prince Regent, George IV used to maintain a pale elegant appearance by being frequently bled.

Oxford: It is said that the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford is the oldest museum in the world. It dates from 1679.

Great Fire of London: Despite the widespread destruction by the Great Fire of London in 1666 there were only six reported deaths.

William the Conqueror: William the Conqueror is said to have been able to fire an arrow while sitting in a saddle from a bow which most men were unable to draw when they were standing upright on the ground.

Windsor Castle: Windsor Castle is the largest inhabited castle in the world.

Lord Byron: Lord Byron learnt Cockney slang from an Italian cardinal who had never left Italy in his life.

Winston Churchill: Winston Churchill was the first British Prime Minister to wear a uniform in office.

Fool’s Day: The first of April is called April Fool’s Day in England, Fish Day in France, Doll Day in Japan and Boob Day in Spain.
Sturgeon in Britain: Any sturgeon caught in British waters is the property of the queen and caviar from the fish finds its way into the royal larder.

Pubs: The Red Lion is the most common pub name in Britain.

Left-handed Monarchs: there have only been three left-handed monarchs on the English throne: James I, Queen Victoria and George IV.

Queen Victoria: Queen Victoria, the longest reigning British queen, lived four days longer than the longest reigning British king, George III.

Gentleman Jackson: Lord Byron’s boxing instructor, Gentleman Jackson, could sign his name with a 36 kilogram weight balanced on his arm.

Salisbury Cathedral: The spire of Salisbury Cathedral leans nearly 60 centimetres away from the perpendicular.

Queen Elizabeth I: Queen Elizabeth I was the only British Sovereign between William I and Elizabeth II who did not effectively possess any land outside England and Wales.

Charles Dickens: Charles Dickens always wrote facing north, Rudyard Kipling wrote with black ink and Marcel Proust worked in bed in a soundproof room.

John Keats: John Keats worked as a dresser in Guy’s Hospital, London.

Shakespeare: Shakespeare mentioned America by name on one occasion in the Comedy of Errors, III:2.

Elizabeth II: Elizabeth II was the only British monarch to have been born in a private house, with a street number.

Britain and the Sea: No point in Britain is more than 120 kilometres from the sea.

London: London was the first city in the world to have a population that exceeded one million. This figure was passed at the turn of the 19th century.

THE USA


Water: The daily outflow of the Amazon would be enough to supply the USA with two hundred times its daily municipal water requirement.

Domestic Animals: A law in the state of Ohio requires domestic animals that are out after dark to wear taillights.

Volleyball: Volleyball is the most popular sport played in American nudist camps.
Jeans: The earliest jeans manufactured by Levi Strauss cost under $7 for a dozen pairs.

Henry Ford: The American motorcar giant Henry Ford once tried to buy the Eiffel Tower and have it shipped to the USA.

Father Christmas: The earliest pictures of Father Christmas, Saint Nicholas, depicted him as a bishop complete with mitre and crook. The jolly old man dressed in red was a creation of 19th century America.

Bikini: The first bikini appeared in the world four days after the American atomic test at Bikini Atoll in the Pacific. The creator of the new bathing suit, Louis Reard, chose the name to express the idea of “the ultimate” and the model who wore the first bikini reputedly received 50,000 fan letters.

Yellowstone: The Old Faithful geyser in Yellowstone National Park shoots boiling water into the air every hour.

Minnesota: In the state of Minnesota it is against the law to hang male and female underwear on the same washing-line.

Sears Tower: The world’s highest waterfall, the Angel Falls in Venezuela, is twice as high as the world’s tallest building, the Sears Tower in Chicago.

Secretary of State: The US Secretary of State made the unfortunate error of inviting the Swiss Navy to send a flotilla of its ships to the opening of the Panama Canal.

Indiana: A law in the mid-west state of Indiana prohibits people from travelling on a bus within four hours of eating garlic.

New Orleans: Every corpse in New Orleans has to be buried in a mausoleum because the ground is too damp for normal interment.

Manhattan: In the native Indian language Manhattan means “the place of drunkenness”.

Indians: American Indians used to smoke through their noses. They had special pipes that fitted into their nostrils.

Columbus: The only way that Columbus ever signed his name was Cristobal Colon.

Columbus: Nearly one hundred of the crew that sailed with Columbus to the New World were convicts who had been specially released for the voyage.

Indians: Divorce among the Indian Pachsi tribe was a fairly simple process. All the husband had to do was break a straw and the marriage was dissolved.

Mayflower: On her second voyage to the New World the Mayflower carried a cargo of slaves.
Empire State Building: The Empire State Building in New York City was built specifically to withstand a sway of 30 centimetres from the perpendicular.

Whisky: If a drop of whisky is squirted onto its back, a scorpion will sting itself to death.

California: The largest living plant, the redwood tree in California weighs over nine times as much as the largest animal that has ever lived, the Blue Whale.

President Lincoln: President Lincoln was offered elephants by the ruler of Siam to strengthen the Union armies during the American Civil War.

The Twentieth President: The twentieth president of the USA, James A. Garfield, was able to write in Latin with one hand while simultaneously writing in Greek with the other.

Oscar: The Oscars awarded by the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences during the Second World War were made out of wood to conserve metal.

Cactus: The enormous Sahara cactus, which grows in the Southwest of the USA and in Mexico, is known to be able to survive for three years without water.

Theodore Roosevelt: Teddy Bears were given their name after the American president Theodore Roosevelt who kept a small bear as a pet.

George Washington: George Washington often carried a portable sundial instead of a watch, to tell him the time.

Hot Dog: If all the hot dogs made in the USA every year were joined together, they would stretch from the earth to the moon 2.5 times.

Population: The population of the colonies in what is now the USA amounted to 350 in the year 1610.

Lake Ontario: The volume of Lake Ontario is 4,500 times greater than the volume of Lake Windermere, the largest lake in England.

New York: In New York it is against the law to leave a shop dummy standing naked in a shop window.

John F. Kennedy: President John F. Kennedy used to read four newspapers in twenty minutes.

Panama Canal: The Panama Canal is the only place on earth where one can watch the sun rise over the Pacific and set in the Atlantic. This is due to the bend in the isthmus through which the canal was cut.

Death Penalty: Burning at a stake was still a legal method of execution in many areas of the USA until the early 1800’s.
**Tobacco:** In the early days of the colony of Virginia, conspiring to damage or destroy tobacco plant was an offence that carried the death penalty.

**South Dakota:** A temperature change of 27.2 degrees Centigrade took place in Spearfish, South Dakota one morning in 1943, in the space of only two minutes.

**Tax deductible:** Money paid as a ransom to a kidnapper is tax deductible in the USA.

**Yale University:** Based on estimates that the library of Yale University, USA doubles in size every sixteen years, it has been calculated that by the year 2000 the library will house a total of 2,000,000,000 volumes that would stretch from the North Pole to the Equator.
APPENDIX 2: SELECTED ENGLISH PROVERBS

Actions speak louder than words: People can say many things, because talking is easy, but what really matters is what one does, not what one says.

All good things come to an end: No pleasure lasts for ever.

All’s fair in love and war: All tactics are allowed, fair or unfair, when fighting for someone or against someone.

All’s well that ends well: If the final result is good, previous failures are forgotten, as the end result is most important.

All roads lead to Rome: There are many ways of reaching the same aim or obtaining the same results.

All that glitters is not gold: Appearances can be deceptive. One should not judge the value of things by their pleasing appearance.

As you make your bed, so you must lie in it: Each person must bear the consequences of his own actions and take full responsibility for them, even if the consequences are unpleasant or harmful to him.

A bad workman always blames his tools: One tries to cover up one's lack of skill or to excuse one's failure by putting the blame on the tools at one's disposal. For example: if one cannot drive well, one may blame the engine, the gears or the brakes of the car, but not one's own ability to control the car.

Barking dogs seldom bite: People who often lose their temper and shout in a loud voice are not really to be feared because they are usually harmless.

Beggars can't/mustn't be choosers: When we are not in a position to choose we should be thankful for any offer which is made to us, even if it is not exactly what we would like.

Better late than never: It is better to do something, even if it should have been done earlier, than not to do it at all.

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush: It is better to be content with what we have or can easily get, than to reject it in the hope of getting something better, as this may never happen.

Clothes do not make the man: Inner qualities, not outward appearance, show the true nature of a person.
To cross the stream where it is shallowest: Find the simplest way of doing things; don't make difficulties for yourself.

Do as you would be done by: Treat others, as you would wish them to treat you. If you treat someone unfairly, you must expect that person to treat you unfairly, too.

Don't count your chickens before they hatch/are hatched: Do not be sure of success until all difficulties have been overcome.

Don't have too many irons in the fire: It is better to concentrate on one thing and do it properly than to attempt too many things at the same time.

An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth: This saying from the Old Testament justifies revenge, saying that a wrongdoing can be avenged by treating the wrongdoer in the same way.

Fine words butter no parsnips: Fine words are no substitute for effective actions.

First come, first served: The man who has arrived, finished, etc. first has the best chance of success.

Forbidden fruit is sweetest: The things which we cannot have are the things we want the most; forbidden things are the most attractive and exciting.

Help a lame dog over a stile: One should give help to anyone who is in difficulties.

Honesty is the best policy: Dishonesty may seem more profitable for a short time, but in the long run honesty brings more advantages.

If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing well: once you decide to do something try to do it well.

It's a long lane that has no turning: Bad or unpleasant things cannot last forever, they are sure to improve with time.

Don't make a mountain out of a molehill: Don't treat unimportant things as if they were important.

Don't put all your eggs in one basket: It is risky to concentrate all one's hopes, chances, money, etc. on only one thing, for if this one thing is lost, there will be nothing left.

Don't put the cart before the horse: We should deal with things in the right order and should not start from the wrong end.

The early bird catches the worm: Only early or prompt action will bring success. If we want something, we should not wait until it may be too late.
Every dog has his/its day: Every person will have success or good fortune some time.

It’s easy to be wise after the event: It is easy to say what should have been done to avoid failure after the failure has happened.

It's no use crying over spilt milk: If one cannot change a bad result, disappointment, etc. then there is no use making oneself unhappy about it.

It never rains but it pours: Misfortunes rarely come alone, but tend to come together or follow each other.

Learn to walk before you run: One must learn how to do things gradually as knowledge cannot be gained all at once.

Let sleeping dogs lie: Do not stir up unnecessary trouble; leave things alone that you know will cause trouble.

Look before you leap: Do not act without considering the possible consequences of the action. Hasty actions may be regretted later.

Make hay while the sun shines: Make use of favourable opportunities when they present themselves.

Money talks: People with money are more likely to have influence in certain things than people without money.

More haste, less speed: The more one cries to hurry, the more time one loses, because one is nervous or makes mistakes.

Necessity is the mother of invention: If one needs something badly enough, one becomes very inventive in finding out ways of getting it.

Never look a gift horse in the mouth: Never criticise or express displeasure at a gift; be thankful that you have it.

No gain without pain: Nothing can be gained without a certain amount of discomfort, effort or compromise.

One good turn deserves another: If a person has received help from someone, it is fair to help him in return.

One swallow doesn't make a summer: One fact does not prove something, as it may be an exception to the rule.

Out of sight, out of mind: Absent friends are soon forgotten, as one tends to forget about people if there is no direct contact with them.

Practice makes perfect: Only practice and perseverance will bring success.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating: One can only prove something by putting it into action or use.
The road to hell is paved with good intentions: People often have good intentions but fail to put them into practice. It is not enough to intend to do something; it is the doing itself that is the most important.

A rolling stone gathers no moss: A person who constantly changes his work or his home cannot expect to make much money, gain lasting friendship, be relied on, etc.

Rome was not built in a day: An important task needs perseverance and patience. It cannot be completed in a short time.

Still waters run deep: A person may say little, but he may think a lot and thus have unrecognised abilities.

A stitch in time saves nine: Prompt action will prevent a lot of trouble later.

Strike while the iron is hot: Make the most of present opportunities.

Too many cooks spoil the broth: If too many people try to do the same thing at the same time, the task will be done badly.

Where one door shuts another opens: If one opportunity is lost, another will present itself some time.

When the cat's away the mice will play: When a person in authority is not present, the others will take advantage and do things they cannot do when he is there.

Where there's a will there's a way: If a person wants something badly enough, he will find a way of getting it.

The wish is father to the thought: People believe things because they want them to be true; what is merely a wish can soon become a firm opinion.

A word is enough to the wise: A clever or wise person can understand what is meant by a hint alone; long explanations are not necessary for him.

A word spoken is past recalling: Once something has been said, it cannot be taken back, however much it may be regretted.

You can't have your cake and eat it: You can only choose one of two alternatives, not both.

You can't run with the hare and hunt with the hounds: One cannot be loyal to two opposing sides at the same time, in order to gain advantages from both.

You can't teach an old dog new tricks: Old people do not like to be confronted with changes and innovations.

You may lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink: You can persuade a person or guide him only to a certain extent, because the final step can only be taken by the person himself.
You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours: A policy of mutual help or promotion: If one person furthers the interests of another, the other will also further his interests in return.
# APPENDIX 3: WEIGHTS AND MEASURES TABLE

## UNITS OF WEIGHT

British & American

1 **OUNCE** (oz) = 28.35 grams (g)
1 **POUND** (lb) = 0.454 kilogram (kg)
1 **STONE** (st) = 6.356 kilograms (kg)
1 **HUNDREDWEIGHT** (cwt ) = 50.8 kilograms (kg)
1 **TON** (t) = 1.016 tonnes (t)

## UNITS OF LENGTH

British & American

1 **INCH** (in) = 2.45 centimetres (cm)
1 **FOOT** (ft) = 30.48 centimetres (cm)
1 **YARD** (yd) = 0.914 metre (m)
1 **MILE** (m) = 1.609 kilometres (km)

## UNITS OF CAPACITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British</th>
<th>American</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 <strong>PINT</strong> (pt) = 0.568 litre</td>
<td>= 0.47 litres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 <strong>QUART</strong> (qt) = 1.136 litres</td>
<td>= 0.94 litres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 <strong>GALLON</strong> (gall) = 4.546 litres</td>
<td>= 3.78 litres</td>
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ESSAY 1: FIRST IMPRESSIONS - TWENTY FIVE YEARS AGO
(by David G. Poynton, Lublin)

When I was asked to write my first impressions of Poland it did not seem a difficult task. But having now been associated with this country for many years (?) I presently consider myself – more Polish than English. Nevertheless one must begin somewhere so, why not from the beginning.

When I first came to Poland many years ago, I arrived by plane late Xmas Eve evening without knowing any Polish culture or anything connected with your strong traditions. Upon departure from the plane I came face to face with minus thirty-five degrees and communism – for me – a vast amount of unfriendly military personnel all with machine guns, ensuring that all those leaving the plane boarded the bus. (Just before leaving England my father had said “good-bye” to me, thinking I would never return from behind the “Iron Curtain” and at that moment, standing at the top of the stairs I recalled his farewell words).

Having arrived at the terminal building I remembered my tour operator’s words, ”don’t forget to collect your money”. Not knowing a word of Polish I approached a rather large lady sitting behind a glass window marked “Cash Transfer”. After showing my passport and ticket she handed over a bungle of notes, to which I remember thinking – toy-town money. Something that later I would have a problem spending, due to the hospitality of those I met.

The amount of snow and that traffic was moving without any difficulty! Something unthinkable in England where in case of any snowfall everything stops, including local transport. Likewise, the lack of colour was also very noticeable everywhere. Especially the lack of advertisement boards which we have far too many in England. Electric lights, neon signs, street lighting and road signs, all seemed dull compared with home. All the buildings seemed gigantic – blocks of grey flats, one upon the other. I recall not seeing a red brick building anywhere.

PEWEX – Dollar Shops – something I had never heard of, where you could buy almost anything from a bar of chocolate to a new car. The cost of every day items was to me ridiculously low but the cost of some luxury items compared with the salaries was staggering. Nevertheless, people managed, how? I do not know. Milk and newspapers were not delivered to the door, people got up at
unreasonable hours just to visit the shop and buy essential things for breakfast, unlike in England – where you would be lucky to find any shop open before eight in the morning. All-in-all, my first impressions were that Poles had to struggle with every day obstacles much harder than we had to do and yet they preserved good humour and high spirits – perhaps with the help of some very strong fire water, too strong for me.

**Nowadays observations**

**Driving habits** fit the Polish character very well. Bloody minded, no patience and erratic, hardly ever bothering to indicate until the last minute because they know exactly where they are going. Even overtaking is done in the same way. Quick manoeuvre without thinking about others or looking behind.

Normal overtaking on any road can be quite daunting, but in the cities and towns "a free for all", applies. Many drivers overtake on both sides, weave in and out at speeds far greater than those on the open road.

Pedestrians crossing the road take their lives in their hands, drivers are quite upset if they must stop. Not to mention certain public service vehicles, like that of a taxi, which stop for nothing, sometimes not even for passengers.

Even filling a car with petrol at a local filling station is quite different. On occasions, the filling station closes when a delivery of fuel arrives. All the drivers/customers must wait until the friendly pump assistant is ready to open the station once again.

A greeting in the morning is a common courtesy. In England it is a quick nod or some quick acknowledgement, usually "Good morning, how are you today?" followed with an equal reply, "Fine, thanks and you?" Here in Poland it goes further, most males shake hands. Even youngsters begin this habit every early. Should the man see a female he bows his head at the same time removing his hat, again a sign of good manners. What is comical to me is that on some occasions people are in a hurry – so they just rapidly bow (can you imagine a chicken feeding, well, this is what I imagine at times) but to be fair when you ask a Polish person "how are you?" you must be prepared for at least twenty minutes conversation about everything and anything.

**Queues** and queuing is something I do not like. Moreover, anyone jumping the queue is blacklisted as far as I am concerned. Here in Poland the lines of people have diminished but still on some occasions they do return much to my annoyance. Poles, especially the middle-aged women, are well built to tackle
these daily obstacles. Mentioning appearance, I find that most girls have an eastern look with their high-cheek bones, large, penetrating eyes and long hair. Women seem to take great care of their appearance from early morning to late night, whether they are at work or at home.

**The Country** – rich beyond belief in many ways, wilderness not contaminated by man, pure natural areas of environment. Vast areas of woodland – forests and woods open to the public and for the public. Not so in England where most of the wooded areas are owned and controlled by the monarchy. Not overcrowded by numerous nationalities and where racism is not noticeably present. With some exceptions though – for instance some people in Poland still use words like Negro and Nigger, which are considered impolite to others.

**Education** seems to play a great role amongst young Polish people – there is a constant urge for higher achievement: university degree, extra qualifications, foreign languages, especially English. The ”push” starts very early with parents choosing the best schools for their children, sending them on/to extra curriculum courses, paying high fees for private tutorials sometimes well above their means.
ESSAY 2: GENERALISATIONS (by Jennifer Studenny, Lublin)

If asked the question: What are the differences between the United States and Poland? I would have to start to explain by saying that in the great scheme of things in relation to the problems that we face in our world today, that the differences are minuscule and unimportant. Culturally, there are many other countries that differ much more from mine than Poland.

However, there are some things that I notice in my day to day life that I find "different", maybe even annoying at times. But, if I turn a blind eye, they may rapidly disappear and cause no concern to me. Unfortunately, I am not the type of person who passively sits by, and on more than one occasion have become "distressed" (for lack of a better word) with the society surrounding me.

It is impossible to write in black and white what I believe to be the differences. For what I find different in Poland may even occur in a different part of my own country (being the size it is). I can’t say that I have seen the entire USA, and am not an authority on what is appropriate in other parts of my country. I only know what is appropriate in my own. Again, having said that, one must remember that I grew up in the beautiful countryside of Pennsylvania, went through a great school with superior teachers, and furthered my education at a university sheltered from city life. So my perception is much more of a Puritan than, let’s say, someone from the inner city. Moreover, what I see in Poland is from the Lublin area, a city growing to a half a million people and, I am sure, much different from Warsaw and Cracow because of its size and commerce.

So you see, before I can even start to show you my perception of the differences between my country, the United States, and Poland, it must be clear that this is only my perception. The ideas I have on a day to day basis – which effects my life, as a white Polish-American Catholic female teacher. I am sure much different from the perception of, let’s say, a black American male student. (It would be interesting to hear what such a person would say about Poland, would it not!).

I get up in the morning and go to the shop. The women who work there always seem to have one problem or another and most often do not say "hello" or "thank you" at the cash register, but this is nothing. Insincere humor I can take or leave. But when they don't have correct change and minus it from me instead of them I have to wonder: Who is the client? Instead of needing my
money, they seem to think they have the commodity that is needed, and if you want it, you must deal with them.

Not having enough change seems to be a repeating pattern not only in shops, but once I was in a taxi and found myself with nothing less than a fifty zloty note. The taxi driver told me I had to pay him the next day by finding him at his taxi stand. What? I explained that I would not waste time trying to find him with correct change if he couldn’t take care of the problem at the moment. We found an open shop (remember: everything closes early here in Lublin), and I, not him, had to get out and exchange my money in the shop, run back to the taxi, pay him, and say ”goodnight”. Excuse me!? He should pay me for this excess nervous tension. Usually I have great contact with taxi drivers even if they all ask me, ”What are you doing here?”, like they think their country has the plague or something (Well, you know what they say about the grass being greener on the other side of the fence).

Oh! And what about post offices? Isn’t that pure hell? Even after learning Polish I still dread going to the post office. Can you imagine what it was like for me when I didn’t speak a word of Polish? Enough said.

And tell me about lines? How is it possible for anyone to know whose turn it is if people don’t line up in an orderly fashion? And why do people always push against me? Are they so afraid of losing their place that they have to guard their turn – the tension is so hard you can cut it with a knife.

The major number one difference between the USA and Poland is **personal space.** You must not break the personal space of an American or you are asking for trouble. Personal space is the invisible wall that surrounds a person or their property. Stand too close, and it is insulting. Touch and you’re asking for it!

I pity the person who rubs up against my back in the post office line. I usually fly around with a scowl on my face (Because I think they are getting fresh with me, or may be trying to rob me). Of course the poor old man has no idea why I am upset with him. I suppose he is just anxious to take his turn. Maybe he doesn’t understand that just being a centimeter closer to the window doesn’t make it any faster for his turn to come.

The second most important difference, if not equally important to the first is **eye contact** which, I believe, is taught from an early age. When I was growing up, maybe about four or five years old, my mother constantly instilled in me the importance not to stare and point. Well, in Poland they don’t point, but staring must be cultivated as if preparing for the Olympics. Everyone stares (not just a fleeting look or with a wink at a young beautiful girl – No –
the full Monty). Eyes wide! Mouth open! And even when you return their gaze
it takes another 10 seconds for them to stop. I usually smile at the little ones
when they stare so long, and they usually smile back and giggle. But the
grown-ups change their expression to one of shock and hurry off.

Staring brings me to Road Rage. Something that will, in no doubt, be very
popular if ever guns are legalized (or who needs guns, maybe they will just
use their cars).

Tell me why is it so important to stare at the person in the car next to you?
Or if they do something wrong why is it necessary to shake your fist and call
names? Does the situation change? No! It just makes you unhappy – and if you
did that in the States, the other person would get out of their car and shoot you
through the head. Road Rage is not to be laughed at. Think about it! You don’t
know who the other person is, or their state of mind. And anyway – if the
person is an asshole do you really want to meet him?

Now, I can’t comment on driving technique. The only real difference
(which is changing rapidly) is the balance between “good cars” and “tin cans.”
In the U.S. the standard of cars is such, that traffic flows rather smoothly
between the faster lanes, for those who drive faster (the limit of course) and
the slower lanes, for my father who doesn’t believe in rushing things (“We
will all get there the same time come New Year’s!”). In Poland the “good cars”
whip by the “tin cans” weaving in and out. It’s like vegetable soup. An
accident waiting to happen. Of course many people are now able to afford a
safer car and the balance is turning.

I remember my first time in Poland. It was the February of 1992. My first
sight was all those little cars and those big black birds that are not afraid of
people (I think they are some type of crow). When my father (an American of
Polish decent who lived all his young life in Europe), came to visit he said,
”Aren’t those black birds strange? They have lived in Europe with so many
people that they are not afraid anymore.”

“What do you mean?” I said.

”Europe is so industrial and so many people live on top of each other,
even the birds have become domesticated. It’s not like the USA where there is
so much space and breathing room. Yes, of course we have New York and Los
Angeles, but in between we have vast expansions of land. In Europe there are
people, people, people. They don’t have animals running around like we do.
They find it exotic to wake up, look out the window and see fifty white-tail
deer eating apples under the trees. We find it normal.”

”Yes dad, but we live like “Northern Exposure” (Przystanek Alaska).
One important factor I must relate is that Europe has no clean air or water. If you have ever tasted clean water or breathed fresh air, you would know that there is nowhere in Europe that has it. But the sad thing is that, if you don’t experience a pollution free zone, you will never know what you are missing. Without knowing how can you ever fight against this pollution that chokes us silently.

My first time I bought water, I thought it funny. How is it possible that water is for sale? (Of course all the world’s cities have bottled water for sale, but I still think it strange). Where I come from, if you order normal water in a restaurant it is free and it even has ice in it. In Poland you have to pay for the ice! Again I fall into complacency, accepting it without a fight. After seven years of living in Poland, I have accepted that water is the same as Coca-Cola. Have I forgotten my own water and air?

All of Europe is polluted but I would like to see Polish people taking a greater interest in the causes of pollution in their country. The trucks and buses that belch smoke should not be allowed! Thank God, now newer buses are replacing the old and we don’t see as many as before.

Am I being too negative? I don’t think so. After all, I have lived in Poland now for about seven years. I enjoy it here. If I didn’t, I wouldn’t stay, would I? The positive aspects of Polish life are equally interesting to discuss. There is something to be said for the romanticism of Polish men. Feminists may not like being put on a pedestal but for me, I have paid for too many dinners in my time and have tasted modern decorum enough. Don’t get me wrong! I say nothing of not being treated equal. We all should be given the same rights (that is common sense), but all I ask for is a little old fashioned gentile politeness. Open the door for me, kiss my hand when we meet, for me this is an extravagance that once tasted can never be returned – and Polish men have it! (But for how long can they keep it?) I fear that in striving to be "cool" the youth of Poland may loose something that can never be re-taught with vigor.

I can refer to my husband as an example of the "desirable Polish man." I chose my husband for his intelligence of the world around him, his table manners and his witty conversation. If I could make a rash generalization, I believe Polish men to be well educated on a wide variety of topics. In the U.S., I can’t remember meeting anyone in a bar and discussing the world’s affairs (or any topic for that matter). And the saying we have in the States... "All the good ones are taken" seemed to apply to me.

Dressing: Americans are casual. There is no debate. However, it is a rash generalization that we all wear pink sweat suits and rollers in our hair when we
go shopping. Some of us do, and to hell with others who think us sloppy. However, we are probably the greatest consumers of fashion magazines and clothing. To enter the American market in these fields can secure your future. For someone like me who takes painstaking pride in the way of dressing, Poland is a great fashion show. Women want to look their best and enjoy choosing that one perfect new shirt or shoe. Oh how I love it! Everyone looks so appealing, so "well dressed."

How many times have I gone out to dinner in the States wearing a trouser suit and high heels only to be asked, "Why are you all dressed up?" and "What is the occasion? We are only going to Ruby Tuesday’s!" My friend would wear jeans and a T-shirt (which is completely acceptable as well. After all, it is not a gala ball with Tom Cruise).

Men also have a certain style – just look at their shoes. In the U.S., I know no one who doesn’t wear sneakers everyday, to every occasion (except when wearing a suit of course – but even then they might!)

If you asked me why do I stay here and I must give one reason it would be the lack of pressure. Lack of job pressure, lack of pressure from the bussel of fast-paced life that we have in the United States. What a relaxed and laid back society! If you don’t want to do it today, do it tomorrow. If you have a meeting, so what if you are late, they don’t expect you to be on time anyway. Such a mentality is accepted as the norm and may cause serious annoyance to a newcomer, as it did with me, but soon the air takes over and you find yourself falling into complacency! We in the U.S. have been trained never to be late. To be even fifteen minutes early for a meeting. "It is better for you to wait than someone wait for you.” But can you imagine that if you are fifteen minutes early and they are fifteen minutes late, that’s thirty minutes of waiting! I learned fast!

Definitely the stress is not as we have it in the U.S., where everyone tries to be better, more beautiful, and stronger than the other. While in Poland solidarity takes over, "Together we stand, divided we fall!" And if we fall, we all fall. And if we stand, we help the next person to stand and give away our own that we worked so hard for. This is directly how my students of English act when cheating on tests (which they do with such frequency). Cheating on tests is grounds for expulsion where I come from. My students don’t seem to be put off by this. What an irony.

An irony, since people (mostly the older generation) in Poland have the idea that if I don’t have it you shouldn’t either = the jealousy factor is high
here. While in the States, wow, you have it, I want it too = the envy factor is predominant and accepted (even cultivated).

For example: My personal Polish friends who have a good career or thriving business always have a heavy heart that people are not happy for them, but rather calculating or finding fault with their lifestyle. Maybe they are doing something illegal? Where did they get the money to start the business? They probably don’t pay taxes?

We, in the States, look upon success as something obtainable. Sooner or later, we will have our lucky break. There is no no, only let me try. You are so lucky! Show me how to do it too! Someday I will have the same!

People in Poland seem to have an inferiority complex or are simply negative in general. How many times have I gone into a shop and asked for something and the lady says ”nie” or ”nie ma” without batting an eye. Without looking behind her, or without making an effort to check for sure. But if you press them they might discover that they do have it after all!

Maybe in the U.S. the assistants are too helpful. Maybe to the point of annoyance: ”We don’t have this but we have this” or ”you may wait for that, it will be next week”, or ”I could send it to you or telephone when it is in?”

I personally can’t decide which way I like better. For sure, I like going into a restaurant in Poland and being able to sit there all day if I want without buying anything. Also I like the fact that I can go shopping and try on everything without feeling guilty if I don’t buy anything. Sometimes I don’t think they care if they sell anything at all. In the States we are very time and money oriented.

We, in the United States, are very time and money oriented, but we are also very positive, which I like very much. Even if something is bothering us, we say we are fine. I think it is part of our culture to say that we are happy and to show we are happier than the next person is. We ask, ”How are you?” And answer using positive examples of that day’s experience. ”Fine, I went to the movies today.” And the response, again, even more positive ”Oh, was it good? I would like to see it!”

It seems to me that usually something depressing happens when a certain age group of the Polish society briefly converses. I remember one conversation while on a trolley bus:

”Piotrek! I haven’t seen you in ten years! How are you?”

”Oh, my back aches, my wife left me and my son drinks too much. And you?”
"I fell out of bed this morning and my dog got run over by a car. This is my stop. Nice speaking to you!"

I sat amazed. Even if I were bleeding out of my eyes I would say I am fine.

These are my general perceptions of the world around me. I have left many things out, and many things I don’t want to talk about. It is certain that it is easier to criticize and point out the negative features of something than the positive. But considering the positives and how they outweigh the negatives makes for a wonderful experience here in Poland – and a bright future as well.

These points are only for debate. If you will, one person’s remarks on a topic so broad that it could be discussed indefinitely. Whose experiences are those of chance, locality and company. To turn a corner, or turn one’s head would completely change the outcome of many experiences I have had. However, it is important to remember these nuances. Which are, after all, what makes life interesting.
First of all, you should not ignore the fact that my concept of British culture is very shallow and based on two short visits to the homeland of Shakespeare and Churchill. What struck me most in the manner of English people was their indifference to anybody and anything.

No matter whether it was a shop assistant or a teacher in the school of English I attended, he or she seemed not to be caring much about anything but the job he or she was supposed to be doing. I hear people saying that the picture sketched above is an old and simplistic stereotype. We all seem to store somewhere in our minds the image of a cool, reserved, if behaving beyond reproach Briton. I could be repeating an old cliché but, as a matter of fact, English people are what they are commonly thought to be.

I remember strolling through the maze of London streets with an incredible feeling of being completely alone. It appeared to me that loneliness is a part and parcel of an urban lifestyle of the British. I believe that London certainly is the most dehumanised city in the world, owing to its huge population most often locked in their detached and semidetached houses.

Contrary to this, in Poland, especially in smaller towns, you are uninterruptedly watched, followed and – worst of all – assessed. People evaluate your clothing, income, the manner of speech, they try to read personal problems out of your face and when the inspection is completed they let themselves smirk in a sinister way. I suspect that sooner or later such a behaviour in London tube would be legally banned. Frankly speaking, I committed this misdemeanour on English soil hundreds of times. I do not feel guilty because it is my privilege and liking to watch and observe what is around me no matter whether I am here or there or.... anywhere.
PART 3: TEST YOUR CULTURE (SELF-STUDY)
(published from camera-ready texts supplied by the authors)

TEST 1 (by Małgorzata Buczak, Lublin)

Choose the correct answer.

1) *Magna Carta Libertatum*, i.e. the Great Chart of Liberties was signed up in:
a) 1666  
b) 1879  
c) 1215  
d) 1066

2) Which of the following English kings was mad?
a) Henry VIII  
b) Alfred the Great  
c) John the Lackland  
d) George III

3) The stones used in the construction of *Stonehenge* were transported from:
a) Wales  
b) Scotland  
c) Hungary  
d) France

4) *Beowulf* was written by:
a) Chaucer  
b) an anonymous writer  
c) Shakespeare  
d) Milton

5) *Gerry Adams* is:
a) the leader of Ulster Freedom Fighters  
b) the leader of the Conservative Party  
c) the leader of Sinn Féin  
d) the leader of the IRA
6) .......... are extinct Celtic languages:
   a) Irish, Manx and Breton
   b) Welsh, Breton and Cornish
   c) Cornish and Manx
   d) Breton, Cornish and Scottish Gaelic

7) **Celtic languages:**
   a) belong to the Germanic group of languages
   b) belong to the Slavonic group of languages
   c) form a separate language group
   d) belong to Sino-Tibetan group of languages

8) **Cenotaph** is:
   a) a monument in London
   b) a monument in Edinburgh
   c) a famous chain of shops in Great Britain
   d) a square in Manchester

9) The city in Great Britain, which was most heavily bombed during the Second World War is:
   a) London
   b) Coventry
   c) Blackpool
   d) Brighton

10) When was **Margaret Thatcher** elected Great Britain’s Prime Minister?
    a) 1886
    b) 1987
    c) 1979
    d) 1991

11) The name of the monster killed by **Beowulf** was:
    a) Grendel
    b) Aelric
    c) Cú Chulainn
    d) Hrothgar

12) Who wrote **The Dubliners**?
    a) W.B. Yeats
    b) James Joyce
c) William Blake
d) Oscar Wilde

13) **Avebury** is:
a) a stone circle
b) a tomb
c) a stone alley
d) a cemetery

14) **Glastonbury** is famous for:
a) an annual rock festival held there
b) the most spectacular military tattoo
c) a baroque palace built there by a French duchess
d) a cricket field

15) **William Turner** was:
a) a painter
b) a composer
c) a playwright
d) a politician

16) **Glenda Jackson** played:
a) king Henry VIII
b) queen Elizabeth I
c) queen Elizabeth II
d) queen Victoria

17) **Excalibur** was:
a) king Arthur’s horse
b) king Arthur’s sword
c) king Arthur’s best friend
d) king Arthur’s worst fiend

18) **Coventry** is associated with:
a) Guinevere
b) Merlin
c) Lady Godiva
d) Boadicea

19) **Dublin** lies on the river:
a) Thames
b) Shannon  
c) Liffey  
d) Avon

20) The remains of **Roman baths** can be found in:  
a) Bath  
b) Southern Dakota  
c) London  
d) Norwich

21) **Sporran** is:  
a) a flat leather bag worn by the Scots  
b) a flat cap worn by the Irish  
c) a species of a plant found in the Outer Hebrides  
d) a traditional Welsh song

22) **Herm, Sark, Guernsey** and **Jersey** belong to:  
a) the Channel Islands  
b) the Orkneys  
c) the Aran Islands  
d) the Shetlands

23) **Guinness** is a:  
a) lager  
b) whiskey  
c) porter  
d) bitter

24) **Eisteddfod** is:  
a) a traditional Welsh festival  
b) the name of the Archdruid  
c) a place in Wales  
d) the title given to the best Welsh poet of the year

25) **Severn Bridge** connects:  
a) Southern and Northern London  
b) Bristol and Newport  
c) Aberystwyth and Lampeter  
d) London and Watford

26) **Boots** is:
a) a chain of drug stores  

b) a chain of exclusive shoe shops  

c) the name of police troops in Northern Ireland  

d) the collective name for East Londoners  

27) **Macbeth**’s best friend’s name was:  

a) Tony Banks  

b) Banko  

c) Ariel  

d) Prospero  

28) **Miami** is located in:  

a) Florida  

b) Southern Wales  

c) Alaska  

d) Northern Ireland  

29) The first US **manned flight into outer space** occurred in:  

a) 1888  

b) 1950  

c) 1961  

d) 1988  

30) **Harlem** is:  

a) a black quarter in New York  

b) a Chinese quarter in London  

c) one of the Channel Islands  

d) a famous restaurant in Dublin  

**TEST 2 (by Marta Chwalewska, Lublin)**

Choose the correct answer. If you believe that none of the answers given in points a), b), c) or d) is right, give your own in the space provided in point e):

1) **The Emerald Isle** is:  

a) a poetic name for Ireland  

b) an island off the coast of the United States of America  

c) an island off the coast of Australia  

d) a poetic name for Australia
2) **Thanksgiving Day** is celebrated to:
   a) honour American soldiers killed in the Second World War
   b) honour George Washington
   c) commemorate the first harvest of Plymouth Colony in 1621
   d) honour the American worker
   e) ..............................................................

3) **The Poets’ Corner** is:
   a) a corner of Hyde Park for open-air speaking and debate
   b) a place where young people can recite their poetry
   c) a famous department store selling collections of poetry
   d) an area of Westminster Abbey where several famous poets and writers are buried
   e) ..............................................................

4) If you were sick while in London, you would probably consult:
   a) an MP
   b) a GP
   c) a BA
   d) the PM
   e) ................................................................

5) If you earned 35 **quid** a week, how much would that be:
   a) $ 35
   b) 35p
   c) 35 ct
   d) Ł 35
   e) ..............................................................

6) The first English colony in America was set up in:
   a) Massachusetts
   b) Virginia
   c) North Carolina
   d) California
   e) ..............................................................

7) **Fleet Street** is:
   a) a street where many government ministries are situated
   b) a place of entertainment
c) a place where ships are built in Dublin
d) the home of many national daily newspapers in London
e) .................................................................

8) The world’s tallest building is:
a) The Empire State Building in New York
b) Sears Tower in Chicago
c) The Chrysler Building in New York
d) The World Trade Centre in New York
e) .................................................................

9) When you graduate from the Teachers’ Training College in Chelm, you will be:
a) an MSc
b) an MA
c) a PhD
d) a GP
e) .................................................................

10) If you want to visit the capital of New York State, you have to go to:
a) New York City
b) Washington DC
c) Chicago
d) Albany
e) .................................................................

11) If you wanted to buy 1 kilo of oranges in London, you would ask for:
a) about 2 pounds of oranges
b) 3 pounds of oranges
c) 5 pounds of oranges
d) 1.5 pound of oranges
e) .................................................................

12) The Queen has her residence in:
a) 10 Downing Street
b) Westminster
c) Whitehall
d) The White House
e) .................................................................

13) If someone speaks with a Cockney accent, it means that he comes from:
a) the East End of London
b) Los Angeles
c) Australia
d) New York
e) .................................................................

14) ….. are counties of the United Kingdom.
a) Devon, Cornwall, Yorkshire, Somerset
b) Devon, Manchester, Kent, Yorkshire
c) Devon, Cornwall, Yorkshire, Bristol
d) Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Nottingham
e) .................................................................

15) Alcatraz was:
a) a military prison in Ireland
b) a tower where dangerous criminals were kept
c) an exhibition room
d) a top security prison in America
e) .................................................................

16) ….. were four of the eleven southern states that seceded from the Union before the American Civil War.
a) Alabama, Louisiana, South Carolina, Georgia
b) Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Pennsylvania,
c) Alabama, Louisiana, North Carolina, Nova Scotia
d) Alabama, Louisiana, Ontario, North Carolina
e) .................................................................

17) The first Disneyland was opened in:
a) Florida
b) California
c) Miami
d) Paris
e) .................................................................

18) Ask not what your country can do for you – Ask what you can do for your country. These words were first spoken by:
a) Abraham Lincoln
b) George Washington
c) Margaret Thatcher
d) John Kennedy
19) The famous pop group **The Doors** was formed in:
a) San Francisco  
b) Liverpool  
c) Glasgow  
d) Bristol  
e) .............................................................

20) **Ralph W. Emerson** was the leading representative of:
a) transcendentalism  
b) postmodernism  
c) American abolitionism and, when he was old, racism, too  
d) isolationism  
e) .............................................................

21) If a cigarette-selling machine takes only **25-cent pieces**, it means that it takes:
a) quid  
b) nickels  
c) pennies  
d) quarters  
e) .............................................................

22) The term **backbenchers** refers to:
a) less important members of the Parliament  
b) members of the opposition party  
c) journalists  
d) spectators  
e) .............................................................

23) The **Mayflower** is the name of a/the:
a) theatre in Stratford on Avon  
b) military operation  
c) ship that brought the Pilgrim Fathers from Southampton to what is known today as Massachusetts at the beginning of the 17th century  
d) musical  
e) .............................................................

24) If you call a person **Reverend H. Clark**, it means that he is:
a) a naval officer
b) a knight
c) a recognised artist
d) a member of the House of Commons
e) .................................................................

25) **John Steinbeck** is the author of:
a) *The Grapes of Wrath*
b) *A Farewell to Arms*
c) *For Whom the Bell Tolls*
d) *The Great Gatsby*
e) .................................................................

26) The **oldest university** in the United States is:
a) Oxbridge
b) Yale
c) Eton
d) Harvard
e) .................................................................

27) If you want to see **Grand Canyon**, you have to go to:
a) Arizona
b) California
c) Ontario
d) Texas
e) .................................................................

28) The **Chamber of Horrors** is:
a) an exhibition room in Madame Tussaud’s containing models of famous criminals
b) a place where many criminals were executed
c) a place where Britain’s most famous murder trials take place
d) a detective story
e) .................................................................

**TEST 3 (by Ewa Gałgan, Świdnik)**

Choose the correct answer. If you believe that none of the answers given in points a), b), c) or d) is right, give your own in the space provided in point e):
1) It is not true that the Old English language:
   a) was spoken 200 years ago
   b) was spoken in the 8th-11th centuries
   c) belongs to the Germanic family of languages
   d) underwent simplification with the passage of time
   e) ........................................................................

2) Before 1000 AD the British Isles were invaded by:
   a) Romans and Danes
   b) Celts and Saxons
   c) Jutes and Angles
   d) all of the above
   e) ........................................................................

3) William the Conqueror conquered:
   a) the part of the Holy Land containing Jerusalem
   b) northern France, Spain and a part of Portugal
   c) England after the battle of Hastings in 1066
   d) a large part of present-day Mexico and Florida
   e) ........................................................................

4) Ben Nevis is:
   a) a Welsh national hero
   b) a hero of American folklore
   c) the inventor of the laser
   d) the highest mountain in Britain
   e) ........................................................................

5) The USA is called the melting pot because:
   a) people of various origins and races mix together there
   b) it is the most important producer of steel in the world
   c) it used to be the biggest exporter of lard
   d) the hottest place on Earth, Death Valley, is there
   e) ........................................................................

6) The most famous American airports are:
   a) J. F. Kennedy, La Guardia and O’Hare
   b) Houston, J. F. Kennedy and Harlem
   c) Roosevelt, Nixon and J. F. Kennedy
   d) Los Angeles, San Francisco and Atlanta
7) **Bill Clinton:**
   a) is the 42nd president of the USA
   b) abolished slavery in Virginia in 1993
   c) was Harry Truman’s security adviser
   d) is the first Roman Catholic president
   e) .................................................................

8) **The Pentagon** is:
   a) the new headquarters of the CIA
   b) the oldest theatre in South London
   c) the centre of American military forces
   d) a restaurant owned by Sylvester Stallone
   e) .................................................................

9) **Hong Kong:**
   a) organised the Boston Tea Party
   b) is a film about a huge gorilla
   c) used to be an American colony
   d) was returned to China in 1997
   e) .................................................................

10) **The Iron Lady** was the nickname given to:
    a) Shakespeare’s wife, famous for her physical strength
    b) Margaret Thatcher, due to her style of leadership
    c) a skeleton in an iron mask found in Stonehenge
    d) the female horse of William the Conqueror
    e) .................................................................

11) **The Pilgrim Fathers:**
    a) were described by Chaucer in *Canterbury Tales*
    b) fought with William the Conqueror in the Holy Land
    c) were the founders of the Church of England
    d) arrived on the American shore on the Mayflower
    e) .................................................................

12) The scandal that forced president **Richard Nixon** to resign was named:
    a) Dangling Man
    b) White House
    c) Watergate

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13) The main American television networks are:
   a) NHL, NBA, NBB and NBC
   b) CBS, NBC, ABC and CNN
   c) CBS, CIA, FBI and USSR
   d) USA Today and Daily News
   e) .................................................................

14) Which is not guaranteed by the American Constitution?
   a) freedom of religion
   b) the right to buy alcohol
   c) free speech and press
   d) the right to bear arms
   e) .................................................................

15) The Church of England was founded by:
   a) King Henry VIII, who rejected the Pope as the head of the Church
   b) Oliver Cromwell, who wanted to be the only political and spiritual leader
   c) Shakespeare, for whom it was the only way to get a divorce
   d) the Pilgrim Fathers, for reasons which are still disputed by scholars
   e) .................................................................

16) Which island is also a state?
   a) Roosevelt Island
   b) Rhode Island
   c) Staten Island
   d) Isle of Man
   e) .................................................................

17) Wales is known for:
   a) its picturesque mountains in the north
   b) a breed of cats which have no tails
   c) bagpipes, tartan, kilts, and whisky
   d) the lake of Loch Ness and its Monster
   e) .................................................................

18) New York is sometimes called:
   a) the Pizza
   b) the Big Ben
   c) the Capitol
19) **J.R.R. Tolkien** wrote:
   a) *Songs of Experience*
   b) *The Lord of the Rings*
   c) *Wuthering Heights*
   d) *Great Expectations*
   e) ............................................................

20) **The Constitution** of the UK:
   a) is unwritten, and based on custom and law
   b) begins with the words *We the people*
   c) begins with the words *God save us all*
   d) is entitled *Magna Carta Liberatum*
   e) ............................................................

21) **Snowdonia**:
   a) was a brave Celtic princess who fought for the freedom of her people
   b) is a British national park with Snowdon, the highest mountain in Wales
   c) is the coldest place in Alaska, USA, where snow never melts
   d) is a kind of ice cream popular with American artists in the 1920’s
   e) ............................................................

22) **Scotland** has its own currency:
   a) which is called the Scottish haggis and is worth half an English pound
   b) but the value of the Scottish pound is the same as that of the English one
   c) which is worth two English pounds and is called the Scottish kilt
   d) as well as its own legal and postal systems, parliament and Queen
   e) ............................................................

23) **Edinburgh** is famous for:
   a) a modern tattoo parlour
   b) Changing of the Guards
   c) its theatre festival
   d) very strong dark beer
   e) ............................................................

24) Britain’s Kings and Queens are crowned in:
   a) St. Paul’s Cathedral
   b) Westminster Abbey
   c) the Canterbury cathedral
d) the Houses of Parliament
e) .................................................................

25) Edgar Allan Poe wrote:
a) Cat's Cradle
b) Cat on a Hot Tin Roof
c) Of Cats and Men
d) The Black Cat
e) .................................................................

26) ... is the Commander-in-Chief of the American Armed Forces.
a) The Prince of Wales
b) The Vice-president
c) The National Security Adviser
d) The President’s Chief of Staff
e) .................................................................

27) The American Congress is divided into two parts:
a) the House of Representatives and the Senate
b) the House of Commons and the House of Lords
c) the Parliament and the House of Lords Temporal
d) the House of Representatives and the Government
e) .................................................................

28) Which is not true about the Telecom Tower in London?
a) it is the tallest building in the UK
b) it has viewing galleries at the top
c) it has a revolving restaurant
d) it houses the National Gallery
e) .................................................................

29) Samuel Beckett:
a) was the first British person to climb Mount Everest
b) was a writer and a winner of a Nobel Prize in 1969
c) was the notorious Prime Minister who introduced VAT in Wales
d) is the architect who influenced the work of Christopher Wren
e) .................................................................

30) Sir Christopher Wren was the architect who designed:
a) Westminster Abbey
b) the Telecom Tower
c) St. Paul’s Cathedral
Choose the correct answer. If you believe that none of the answers given in points a), b), c) or d) is right, give your own in the space provided in point e):

1) **Cockney** is:
   a) a famous British pop star
   b) a brand of beer
   c) London working-class slang
   d) a rude word
   e) .................................................................

2) The **Commonwealth** is:
   a) a national pension fund
   b) another name for Great Britain
   c) another name for the United States
   d) the name of a famous street in London
   e) .................................................................

3) In **Canada** the official language(s) is/are:
   a) only English
   b) only French
   c) English and French
   d) Spanish, English and French
   e) .................................................................

4) **Woody Allen** is:
   a) a film director
   b) a sculptor
   c) a ballet dancer
   d) a politician
   e) .................................................................

5) **James Bond**, the main character of Ian Fleming’s spy stories, is:
   a) Australian
   b) American
   c) Canadian
   d) British

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6) A **pint** is a measure which is equal to:
   a) 1 litre
   b) 2 litres
   c) 0.56 litre
   d) 1.67 litres
   e) .................................................................

7) **Slaughterhouse 5**, a novel by Kurt Vonnegut, takes place in:
   a) Arizona
   b) Washington
   c) New York
   d) Alabama
   e) .................................................................

8) **Tony Blair** is:
   a) the main leader of the Conservative Party
   b) the Prime Minister of Great Britain today (in 2000)
   c) the leader of the National Front
   d) a middle-aged red-haired pop singer
   e) .................................................................

9) On November the 5th, 1605, **Guy Fawkes** made an attempt to:
   a) assassinate Queen Elizabeth II
   b) become the King of England
   c) blow up the Houses of Parliament
   d) beat the Spanish fleet
   e) .................................................................

10) **New England** is a historical name for:
    a) the South of England
    b) the English Republic (1649-1660)
    c) post-war England
    d) the first 13 colonies on the American east coast
    e) .................................................................

11) **Halloween** is:
    a) the time of fun for American people
    b) the time of meditation before Lent
    c) the name of a historical ship
d) a holiday for a newly-married couple
e) .................................................................

12) Rhode Island is:
a) an island
b) a city
c) a city district
d) an American state
e) .................................................................

13) The total number of American states is:
a) 38
b) 48
c) 45
d) 55
e) .................................................................

14) Throughout English history the only king that has been assassinated was:
a) William of Orange
b) Charles the First
c) George the Third
d) Edward the Seventh
e) .................................................................

15) The American Civil War took place in the years:
a) 1776-1783
b) 1815-1830
c) 1941-1945
d) 1914-1918
e) .................................................................

16) Alaska was:
a) a French colony
b) purchased from Russia in 1867
c) a British colony until 1776
d) a Canadian colony
e) .................................................................

17) Monica Lewinsky:
a) was an American heroine of Polish descent during the War of the Roses
b) accused President Clinton of sexual harassment
c) is a feminist activist
d) was executed on the electric chair
e) .................................................................

18) **Stonehenge** is:
a) the name of a famous tourist attraction
b) a cave populated by the Neanderthal Man during the Stone Age
c) a world-famous gold mine
d) a famous New York skyscraper
e) .................................................................

19) The **Republic of Ireland** is otherwise called:
a) The United Kingdom
b) Albion
c) Eire
d) Dixieland
e) .................................................................

20) **Ulster** is:
a) another name for Northern Ireland
b) the name of an Irish separatist party
c) another name for England
d) the second biggest city in Ireland
e) .................................................................

21) **James Joyce** wrote:
a) *Romeo and Juliet*
b) *Catch 22*
c) *Paradise Lost*
d) *The Red Badge of Courage*
e) .................................................................

22) **Jerzy Kosinski** is the author of:
a) *The Painted Bird*
b) *Ameryka – Krawna Twoich Marzenie*
c) *Othello*
d) *The Satanic Verses*
e) .................................................................

23) **Geoffrey Chaucer** is the author of:
a) *Macbeth*
b) *Murder in the Cathedral*
c) *The Death of A Salesman*
The Fall of the House of Usher

e) .................................................................

24) Great Britain is made up of:
a) England and Northern Ireland
b) Britain, Scotland and Northern Ireland
c) Wales, Britain and Northern Ireland
d) Wales, Britain and Scotland
e) .................................................

25) Margaret Thatcher was:
a) an American Secretary of State
b) a British Prime Minister
c) a Minister of Justice
d) an author of love stories
e) .................................................................

26) Franklin Delano Roosevelt was an American President who held office in the years:
a) 1933 – 1945
b) 1941 – 1945
c) 1914 – 1918
d) 1929 – 1933
e) .................................................................

27) Big Ben is:
a) the highest mountain in Great Britain
b) the highest mountain in The United States
c) the name of a famous London clock
d) the nickname of Benjamin Franklin
e) .................................................................

28) Pink Floyd:
a) has never given concerts in Poland
b) has once made a tour of Poland
c) made a tour of Poland in 1999
d) has not existed for ten years
e) .................................................................

29) Alexander G. Bell is the inventor of:
a) the steam engine
b) the telephone

c) the lightning rod

d) the television

e) .................................................................

30) **Oliver Cromwell** had the title of:
a) the King of England
b) the Deputy Minister
c) The Lord Protector
d) The Defender of Faith
e) .................................................................

31) The **Battle of Alamo** was an episode in the war between the United States and Mexico in the years:
a) 1883 – 1885
b) 1770 – 1782
c) 1846 – 1848
d) 1911 – 1913
e) .................................................................

32) **Kazimierz Pulaski** was a Polish-American hero killed in the battle of:
a) Savannah in 1779
b) Gettysburg in 1863
c) Boston in 1775
d) Washington in 1865
e) .................................................................

33) **Rowan Atkinson**:  
a) plays Mr Bean  
b) is a film partner of Leonardo Di Caprio  
c) is a notorious serial killer  
d) is an architect  
e) .................................................................

34) **Winston Churchill** was:
a) an English king  
b) an American Vice-President  
c) the owner of a tobacco company  
d) the Commander-in-Chief of the allied invasion of Normandy in 1944  
e) .................................................................
Choose the correct answer. If you believe that none of the answers given in points a), b), c) or d) is right, give your own in the space provided in point e):

1) The population of **New York** is more or less:
   a) 1000000 inhabitants
   b) 3000000 inhabitants
   c) as that of Warsaw and Rzeszów taken together
   d) less than that of Lublin
   e) ........................................................................

2) The abbreviation **I.R.A.** stands for:
   a) The Independent Republican Administration
   b) The International Radical Association
   c) The Industrial Reform Agenda
   d) The Irish Republican Army
   e) ........................................................................

3) The political party that is currently in power in Great Britain is:
   a) The Republican Party
   b) The Labour Party
   c) The Democratic Party
   d) The Conservative Party
   e) ........................................................................

4) **England** is separated from France by:
   a) The La Manche Channel
   b) The French Channel
   c) The British Channel
   d) The Brittany Channel
   e) ........................................................................

5) Today’s British **Prime Minister** is:
   a) Tony Blair
   b) John Major
   c) Margaret Thatcher
   d) Kevin Keegan
6) The *Grapes of Wrath* was written by:
   a) John Milton
   b) William Saroyan
   c) John Steinbeck
   d) William Shakespeare
   e) ..........................................................................

7) The **United States of America** is otherwise called:
   a) Uncle Sam
   b) The Big Brother
   c) The World Policeman
   d) The Old Boy
   e) ..........................................................................

8) A **pound** as a measure of weight is equal to:
   a) 1 kilo
   b) 2 kilos
   c) 0.45 kilo
   d) 1.25 kilos
   e) ..........................................................................

9) **Oliver Cromwell** ruled Great Britain in the years:
   a) 1564 – 1560
   b) 1907 – 1917
   c) 1770 – 1775
   d) 1649 – 1660
   e) ..........................................................................

10) **Mick Jagger** is:
    a) a film director
    b) a model
    c) a Nobel Prize winner
    d) a tennis player
    e) ..........................................................................

11) **Benjamin Franklin** was:
    a) an American President
b) the inventor of the lightning rod

c) a British Prime Minister in the 18th century

d) an American general who took part in the allied invasion of Normandy in 1944

e) .................................................................

12) The only English king who has been executed throughout English history was:

a) William of Orange
b) Henry the Eighth
c) George the Fifth
d) Charles the First
e) .................................................................

13) **Eire** is another name of:

a) the U.S.A.
b) The Republic of Ireland
c) Northern Ireland
d) Wales
e) .................................................................

14) The abbreviation **MA** stands for:

a) Master of Arts
b) Master of Agriculture
c) Master of Advanced Studies
d) Military Ammendment
e) .................................................................

15) **Joseph Conrad**, a famous novelist of Polish origin wrote about:

a) slums
b) the sea
c) university life
d) flowers
e) .................................................................

16) The **American Civil War** took place in the years:

a) 1861-1865
b) 1815-1830
c) 1941-1945
d) 1914-1918
e) .................................................................
17) Rhode Island is:
a) an island
b) a city
c) a city district
d) an American state
e) .................................................................

18) Whisky is made by:
a) distilling fermented malted barley
b) distilling fermented apples
c) distilling fermented rye
d) distilling a mixture of Coca-Cola and malted barley
e) .................................................................

19) The total number of American states is:
a) 38
b) 48
c) 45
d) 55
e) .................................................................

20) The Prime Minister has his residence:
a) in The White House
b) in The Houses of Parliament
c) in Westminster Abbey
d) at 10 Downing Street, London
e) .................................................................

21) Alaska was:
a) a French colony
b) purchased from Russia in 1867
c) a British colony until 1776
d) a Canadian colony
e) .................................................................

22) Winston Churchill was:
a) an English king
b) an American Vice-President
c) the owner of a tobacco company
d) the Commander-in-Chief of the allied invasion of Normandy in 1944
23) Abraham Lincoln was elected in:
   a) 1777
   b) 1778
   c) 1812
   d) 1933
   e) ..........................................................

24) Scotland Yard is:
   a) a Scottish measure unit
   b) the name of a stadium in Glasgow
   c) the chief police headquarters
   d) the name of a busy market place in Edinburgh
   e) ..........................................................

25) Ernest Hemingway wrote:
   a) The Murder in the Cathedral
   b) The Old Man and the Sea
   c) Lost Paradise
   d) The Painted Bird
   e) ..........................................................

26) New York’s symbol is:
   a) Manhattan
   b) Ellis Island
   c) The Brooklyn Bridge
   d) The Stock Exchange
   e) ..........................................................

27) Graham Greene was:
   a) an American poet
   b) an English novelist
   c) an American novelist
   d) an English poet
   e) ..........................................................

28) The West End in London is famous for its:
   a) theatres
   b) sex shops
   c) bookshops

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29) The **Anglo-Saxon** king who prevented the Danes from conquering the whole of England in the 9th century was:
   a) Harald
   b) Alfred the Great
   c) Ethelbert
   d) William the Conqueror
   e) .................................................................

30) **The Commonwealth** is:
   a) a national pension fund
   b) another name for Great Britain
   c) another name for the United States
   d) the name of a famous street in London
   e) .................................................................

   **TEST 6 (by Grzegorz A. Kleparsi, Lublin)**

   Choose the correct answer. If you believe that none of the answers given in points a), b), c) or d) & e) is right, give your own in the space provided in point f):

1) There is/are ...... hospital(s) in **New York**.
   a) less than 3
   b) exactly 2
   c) more than 5
   d) 1
   e) no/none
   f) .................................................................

2) The legendary English hero **Robin Hood** lived:
   a) in the 19th century
   b) 430-470 BC
   c) in the late 18th century
   d) 50-100 years before J.F. Kennedy was born
   e) in the Sherwood Forest
   f) .................................................................
3) The small English town of Stratford (up)on Avon is associated with:
   a) Geoffrey Chaucer
   b) William the Conqueror
   c) William Shakespeare
   d) James Joyce
   e) Tina Turner’s twin sister
   f) .................................................................

4) Jazz originated in:
   a) the Philippines
   b) the Isle of Man
   c) the Channel Islands
   d) Santa Cecilia
   e) the country where the present President of the USA was born
   f) .................................................................

5) British Redbrick Universities:
   a) were founded before Oxford and Cambridge
   b) belong to the oldest American Universities
   c) were founded in the 19th century
   d) are the oldest universities on the territory of the British Isles
   e) have nothing to do with the British system of education
   f) .................................................................

6) The masterpiece Paradise Lost was written by:
   a) William Shakespeare and Boris Pasternak
   b) James Fenimore Cooper
   c) J.F. Kennedy and his sister Emily Brontë
   d) John Milton
   e) a group of anonymous American authors
   f) .................................................................

7) William Shakespeare wrote:
   a) one detective story and a number of short stories
   b) 54 collections of short stories
   c) To Whom the Bell Tolls, among others
   d) a number of comedies and tragedies
   e) Magna Carta Libertatum and Macbeth
   f) .................................................................

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8) The abbreviation VAT stands for:
   a) Value Added Tax
   b) Vulnerable American Teetotallers
   c) Visiting American Tourists
   d) Value Additional Tax
   e) an honourable title used with respect to unmarried women
   f) .................................................................

9) The Mississippi and the Missouri are:
   a) the longest American rivers
   b) the longest rivers in the world
   c) the longest rivers in the territory of Australia
   d) closely associated with life and work of Geoffrey Chaucer
   e) less than 300 miles long
   f) .................................................................

10) The Magna Carta Libertatum was signed:
    a) in the 13th century
    b) before William the Conqueror invaded Britain
    c) by Alfred the Great
    d) aboard the Mayflower ship
    e) by one of the National Front leaders in 1066
    f) .................................................................

11) One could say that ...... are (probably) the biggest English cities.
    a) Sidney, New York, Otranto, Pannamaria
    b) Birmingham, Manchester, London, Glasgow
    d) Stratford-(up)on-Avon, Isle of Man, Nagasaki
    e) London, Los Angeles and Washington
    f) .................................................................

12) The Mayflower is:
    a) the nickname of Joseph Conrad-Korzeniowski
    b) the name of a famous American warship
    c) the name of the ship that brought a group of colonists to the New World
    d) the name of a Roman emperor who invaded Britain
    e) the name of the ship that bombed Pearl Harbour in 1941
    f) .................................................................
13) **Boston Tea Party** is associated with:
a) the beginning of the American Civil War  
b) the beginning of the American War of Independence  
c) the Hundred Years’ War  
d) Alfred the Great’s wife who loved to read tea leaves  
e) the Korean War  
f) .........................................................................................

14) **Detroit** is:
a) the smallest town in Scotland  
b) one of the US centres of the car industry  
c) situated about 100 miles from Los Angeles  
d) the centre of the film industry in the USA  
e) associated with the death of Queen Victoria  
f) .........................................................................................

15) **Independence Day** is celebrated:
a) on the same day as the Halloween  
b) on the 14th of September  
c) on the 4th of July each year in the United States of America  
d) on the 4th of July every 21 years  
e) in the territory of Great Britain and Canada  
f) .........................................................................................

16) The population of **Australia**:  
a) is about 200 million inhabitants  
b) is more or less the same as that of the USA and Poland put together  
c) is less than 50 million inhabitants  
d) is more or less the same as that of China  
e) is more or less the same as that of Germany, China and Poland put together  
f) .........................................................................................

17) **Tina Turner**:
a) is more than 25 years old  
b) sings her pop songs with a heavy Russian accent  
c) is the twin sister of Michael Jackson  
d) has never been in Europe on account of pollution and unemployment  
e) started her career in the late 1930s  
f) .........................................................................................

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18) *Moby Dick*:
a) is a legendary figure associated with the War of the Roses 
b) was written by Kurt Vonnegut

c) visited the Gdańsk shipyard in the autumn of 1998
d) was written by Herman Melville

e) was written by an anonymous American author at the end of the 14th century
f) ........................................................................

19) The lake where the **Loch Ness Monster** (supposedly) lives is:
a) situated in the main square of Stratford (up)on Avon 
b) situated some 500 yards from Detroit 
c) situated in Scotland 
d) situated in Northern Ireland 
e) situated in Northern California 
f) ........................................................................

20) The **English language**:
a) belongs to the Slavonic group of languages 
b) is spoken by about 20 million people in the world 
c) belongs to the Germanic group of languages 
d) has no tense distinction between present, past and future 
e) is closely related to Eskimo languages 
f) ........................................................................

21) The abbreviation **N.H.S.** stands for:
a) Nationalistic and Healthy Students 
b) Nihilistic and Healthy Students 
c) National Health Service 
d) National Homerose Society 
e) Naughty Home Office Secretary 
f) ........................................................................

22) The best-known and the oldest **universities in Great Britain** are:
a) Harvard and Oxford 
b) Yale and Harvard 
c) Cambridge, Oxford and Yale 
d) Cambridge and Oxford 
e) Oxbridge and West Point 
f) ........................................................................
23) **The United States of America** borders with:
   a) Canada, Mexico and California
   b) Canada, Mexico, Argentine
   c) Ireland, Mexico and Canada
   d) Canada and Mexico
   e) none of the countries enumerated in points a, b, c & d
   f) .................................................................

24) For the first time the world could hear the electric guitars and the singing of **The Beatles**:
   a) in 1929
   b) after the Second World War
   c) in the early 1980s
   d) in the late 1980s
   e) during the reign of Queen Victoria
   f) .................................................................

25) **Winston Churchill** died:
   a) soon after he had completed *To Whom the Bell Tolls*
   b) in the 19th century
   c) at the same time when slavery was abolished in America
   d) at the beginning of the World War I
   e) in the middle of the 20th century
   f) .................................................................

26) **Guy Fawkes** was:
   a) one of the conspirators of the Gunpowder Plot
   b) one of the leaders of the Conservative Party in the 15th century
   c) one of those who assassinated J.F. Kennedy in the early 1960s
   d) one of the IRA activists assassinated in the late 18th century
   e) the author of *Huckleberry Finn*
   f) .................................................................

27) **British Royal Observatory** is situated in:
   a) Greenwich
   b) Glasgow
   c) the suburbs of Chicago
   d) the Isle of Man
   e) south-west coast of the USA
   f) .................................................................
28) .... are the **biggest political parties** in Great Britain.
   a) The Republican Party and the Liberal Party
   b) The Conservative and the Labour Party
   c) The Liberal Party and the Democratic Party
   d) Liberal Party, Democratic Party and the IRA
   e) The Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the Liberal Party
   f) .................................................................

29) **One ounce** equals:
   a) more or less 330 grams
   b) 28.35 grams
   c) 3.5 gallons
   d) 1 pound
   e) 1 pound sterling
   f) .................................................................

30) Those who camp on a **Los Angeles** beach may bathe in ...... first thing in the morning.
   a) the North Sea
   b) the Atlantic Ocean
   c) Lake Michigan
   d) the Pacific Ocean
   e) the Mississippi river
   f) .................................................................

31) The famous drink **Coca-Cola** originated in:
   a) the United States of America
   b) South America
   c) Ireland
   d) Australia
   e) Scottish Highlands in the 12th century
   f) .................................................................

32) The **American Constitution**:
   a) was written by Tony Blair
   b) starts with the following words *God Save the Queen*
   c) starts with the following words *We the people*
   d) was composed by George Gershwin
   e) was written in the second half of the 15th century
33) **Monica Lewinsky:**
   a) may have had an improper relationship with President of the United States of America
   b) was born during the time of the Great Depression
   c) was tried and executed because of her improper relationships with President Bill Clinton
   d) is the Secretary of State in the House of Commons
   e) is one of the most active representatives of *Sinn Fein*
   f) .................................................................

**TEST 7 (by Natalia Sarzyńska, Lublin)**

Choose the correct answer (encircle). If you believe that none of the answers given in points a), b), c) or d) is right, give your own in the space provided in point e):

1) **Stonehenge** is the name of:
   a) a marketplace in Newcastle
   b) a festival in Leeds
   c) a park in London
   d) one of the biggest stone circles in England
   e) .................................................................

2) **Guy Fawkes’ Day** is celebrated on:
   a) November 5th
   b) December 12th
   c) March 16th
   d) May 6th
   e) .................................................................

3) **Boxing Day** is an extra holiday after:
   a) Easter
   b) Halloween
   c) New Year
   d) Christmas
   e) .................................................................

4) The **British national anthem** begins with:
a) God save our noble King  
b) God save our gracious Queen  
c) Auld Lang Syne  
d) We all fall down  
e) .................................................................

5) Haggis is a traditional kind of food of:  
a) Ireland  
b) Wales  
c) Australia  
d) Scotland  
e) .................................................................

6) A scone is:  
a) a kind of cake  
b) the name of fruit  
c) the name of a sport  
d) another name for a pancake  
e) .................................................................

7) Don’t look a gift horse in:  
a) the eyes  
b) the ears  
c) the mouth  
d) the teeth  
e) .................................................................

8) The Union Jack is the name of:  
a) a football team  
b) a political party  
c) a famous pub in London  
d) the British flag  
e) .................................................................

9) Eisteddfod is:  
a) the name of a city in Scotland  
b) an arts festival in Wales  
c) a river in Ireland  
d) a rock festival in Scotland  
e) .................................................................

10) The capital of Scotland is:
a) Glasgow
b) Dundee
c) Edinburgh
d) Aberdeen
e) 

11) **Prince Charles** and **Lady Diana** got married in:
a) St. Paul’s Cathedral
b) the Tower of London
c) Westminster Abbey
d) the Whitehall
e) 

12) At **Madame Tussaud’s** you can:
a) have a French meal
b) see wax figures of famous people
c) buy expensive clothes
d) watch an opera or a play
e) 

13) In the middle of **Trafalgar Square** there is a statue of:
a) Winston Churchill
b) Sir Christopher Wren
c) Admiral Lord Nelson
d) Shakespeare
e) 

14) **BBC** stands for:
a) Big Ben Corporation
b) British Business Council
c) British Baby Centre
d) British Broadcasting Corporation
e) 

15) **Shakespeare** was born in:
a) Leicester
b) Gloucester
c) Stratford-upon-Avon
d) Sheffield
e) 

16) **Eire** is the name of:
a) Northern Ireland  
b) the Republic of Ireland  
c) a city in Northern Ireland  
d) a park in London  
e) ........................................................................

17) **Plaid Cymru** is:  
a) a Scottish band  
b) a mount in Scotland  
c) a famous pub in Ireland  
d) the Welsh name of Welsh Nationalist Party  
e) ........................................................................

18) **Piccadilly Circus** is the name of:  
a) a square in London  
b) a cinema in London  
c) a famous international circus  
d) a theatre in London  
e) ........................................................................

19) **Heathrow** is:  
a) the name of a male character in *Wuthering Heights*  
b) the title of a play by G.B. Shaw  
c) a river in Wales  
d) the name of a London airport  
e) ........................................................................

20) **Cinderella** can be translated into Polish as:  
a) Calineczka  
b) Cynaderki  
c) Centrala  
d) Kinder niespodzianka  
e) ........................................................................

21) Finish the title: **Much Ado about**:  
a) Women  
b) Men  
c) Nothing  
d) Nobody  
e) ........................................................................

22) **The Statue of Liberty** can be admired in:  

23) The author of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is:
a) Ernest Hemingway  
ob) F. Scott Fitzgerald  
c) Geoffrey Chaucer  
d) Jerzy Kosiński  
e) .................................................................

24) ..... was the first president of the USA.
a) Abraham Lincoln  
b) George Washington  
c) Ronald Reagan  
d) Franklin Roosevelt  
e) .................................................................

25) The shortening lb stands for:  
a) a pound  
b) legal bootlegging  
c) a litre  
d) liberty  
e) .................................................................

26) WC stands for:  
a) White Coast  
b) without conscience  
c) white colour  
d) wayside chapel  
e) .................................................................

27) Independence Day is celebrated in the States on:  
a) 1st May  
b) 21st March  
c) 12th August  
d) 4th July  
e) ........................................................................

28) The signing of the Declaration of Independence took place in:
a) 1814  
b) 1939  
c) 1776  
d) 1767  
e) .................................................................

29) **CIA** stands for:
   a) Communist Intelligence Agency  
   b) Communist Intelligent Association  
   c) Courageous Irish Army  
   d) Central Intelligence Agency  
   e) .................................................................

30) **Sherlock Holmes**:  
a) is a famous British author of crime stories  
b) was the Prime Minister in 1920s  
c) is the main character of A. Conan Doyle stories  
d) is the Archbishop of Canterbury now  
e) .................................................................

**TEST 8 (by Dorota Skulimowska, Lublin)**

Choose the correct answer. If you believe that none of the answers given in points a), b), c) or d) is right, give your own in the space provided in point e):

1) **Wall Street** is famous for:
   a) fashion  
   b) banks  
   c) sport  
   d) food  
   e) .................................................................

2) **The Union Jack** is the national ....... of Great Britain:
   a) sign  
   b) emblem  
   c) flag  
   d) motto  
   e) .................................................................

3) The **Chamber of Horrors** is in:
1) The Tower of London
b) The British Museum
c) The National Gallery
d) Madame Tussaud’s
e) .................................................................

4) A **kilt** is:
a) a skirt
b) a dress
c) a tool
d) a drink
e) .................................................................

5) The **national symbol of England** is:
a) a rose
b) a daffodil
c) a thistle
d) a daisy
e) .................................................................

6) Who won the **Battle of Hastings**?
a) King Henry VIII
b) William the Conqueror
c) William Caxton
d) Abraham Lincoln
e) .................................................................

7) **David Copperfield** was written by:
a) Emily Brontë
b) Jane Austin
c) Thomas Hardy
d) Charles Dickens
e) .................................................................

8) **BA** means:
a) Banana Association
b) Bachelor of Aviation
c) Blitz Association
d) Bachelor of Arts
e) .................................................................

9) The **British Prime Minister** and his/her family live at:

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10) **Tartan, whisky** and the **bagpipes** are characteristic for:
   a) the Scots
   b) the Irish
   c) the Scots and the Irish
   d) the English
   e) .................................................................

11) **English** is spoken as a second language in:
   a) India and Pakistan
   b) Canada and Australia
   c) New Zealand and the USA
   d) all the above countries
   e) .................................................................

12) The full title of **Queen Elizabeth II** is:
   a) Elizabeth II – the Queen of England, Scotland and Wales
   b) Elizabeth II – the Queen of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
   c) Elizabeth II by the Grace of God Queen of the UK, of Great Britain and
      Northern Ireland and of Her Other Realms and Territories
   d) Elizabeth II by the Grace of God Queen of the UK and Her Other Realms
   e) .................................................................

13) **The Speaker** is:
   a) an official who controls discussions in the House of Lords
   b) an official who controls discussions in the House of Commons
   c) the Queen’s Minister
   d) someone who makes a speech in Hyde Park Corner on Sundays at 11.30 p.m.
   e) .................................................................

14) **The Times** was first issued in:
   a) 1801
   b) 1910
   c) 1785
   d) 1875
   e) .................................................................
15) Agatha M. C. Christie was:
a) the world’s most famous poet
b) a famous actress in the 19th century
c) one of the British singers in the 19th century
d) a love-story writer
e) .................................................................

16) It is .... from London to New York.
a) 6000 kilometres
b) 15000 kilometres
c) 25000 kilometres
d) 40000 kilometres
e) .................................................................

17) Good Friday is:
a) the Friday before Christmas
b) a famous book written by Oscar Wilde
c) the first Friday after Christmas
d) the name of a charitable organisation in the USA
e) .................................................................

18) The Crown Jewels are kept in:
a) Buckingham Palace
b) The Tower of London
c) The British Museum
d) The National Gallery
e) .................................................................

19) The Statue of ..... is situated in the Trafalgar Square.
a) Charles the First
b) Napoleon
c) Nelson
d) Winston Churchill
e) .................................................................

20) ..... abolished slavery in 1863.
a) Andrew Johnson
b) George Washington
c) John Adams
d) Abraham Lincoln
e) .................................................................

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21) Central Park is in:
   a) London
   b) Los Angeles
   c) Philadelphia
   d) Oxford
   e) ..............................................................
22) Independence Day is celebrated on:
   a) the 4th of January
   b) the 14th of February
   c) the 4th of July
   d) the 5th of November
   e) ..............................................................
23) Scotland Yard is the name of:
   a) one of the political parties in Scotland
   b) a long stretch of lowland through which the Severn runs
   c) a part of the Scottish police force that deals with serious crimes
   d) the headquarters of the Metropolitan Police in London
   e) ..............................................................
24) The longest river in the United Kingdom is:
   a) the Thames
   b) the Severn
   c) the Tyne
   d) the Tweed
   e) ..............................................................
25) Mick Jagger performs/perform with:
   a) the Beatles
   b) Queen
   c) the Rolling Stones
   d) Pink Floyd
   e) ..............................................................
26) The patron of England is:
   a) Saint George
   b) Saint Andrew
   c) Saint Patrick
   d) Saint Edward
   e) ..............................................................
27) The name **Union Jack** stands for:
   a) the British national flag
   b) Central Immigrants Agency
   c) the Australian national flag
   d) Criminal Investigation Agency
   e) .........................................................................................

28) **Thanksgiving** is celebrated in:
   a) the USA
   b) Canada
   c) the United Kingdom
   d) Mexico
   e) .........................................................................................

**TEST 9 (by Adam Urban, Chełm)**

Choose the correct answer. If you believe that none of the answers given in points a), b) or c) is right, give your own in the space provided in point d):

1) ..... is the capital of **Northern Ireland**.
   a) Dublin
   b) Belfast
   c) Bangor
   d) .........................................................................................

2) **Shillings** were used by the English:
   a) before 1975
   b) after 1975
   c) in 1975
   d) .........................................................................................

3) **Stratford-upon-Avon** contains the name **Avon** thanks to:
   a) one of Shakespeare’s plays
   b) his mother
   c) his house
   d) .........................................................................................

4) **Billy the Kid**:
   a) died a violent death
   b) is still alive

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c) was killed by Indians
d) .................................................................

5) **Thanksgiving Day** started:
a) in the 17th century  
b) in November 1605  
c) on the fourth Thursday of November 1888  
d) .................................................................

6) **ABS** is:
a) the English alphabet  
b) the Polish alphabet  
c) a car braking system  
d) .................................................................

7) Americans are sometimes called the **bathroom society** because:
a) they’ve got a lot of bathrooms  
b) they’ve got only bathrooms  
c) they never use bathrooms  
d) .................................................................

8) One **dime** is:
a) an English coin  
b) an American coin  
c) a bank note  
d) .................................................................

9) **Emily Dickinson** wrote:
a) novels  
b) short stories  
c) poems  
d) .................................................................

10) **Greenwich Village** is:
a) a district in New York  
b) a village in England  
c) a village  
d) .................................................................

11) The greatest concentration of Polish people abroad is in:
a) London
b) Warsaw  
c) Chicago  
d) .................................................................

12) The Vietnam War of 1965-1975 makes American people:
  a) proud  
b) indifferent  
c) ashamed  
d) .................................................................

13) Most American presidents were:
  a) Catholic  
b) Protestant  
c) Buddhists  
d) .................................................................

14) V-victory sign is associated with:
  a) Anne Bradstreet  
b) Winston Churchill  
c) Abraham Lincoln  
d) .................................................................

15) Blue-collar workers are called so due to their:
  a) overalls  
b) collars  
c) skin  
d) .................................................................

16) Today, at the end of the year 1999, the value of quid is:
  a) less than a pound  
b) more than 15 zloty  
c) less than a dollar  
d) .................................................................

17) Angry Young Men were people who:
  a) got angry easily  
b) were dissatisfied with the establishment after World War 2  
c) were angry because they couldn’t get old  
d) .................................................................

18) Thomas Dylan is:

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a) an English poet  
b) an American pop singer  
c) dead now  
d) .................................................................

19) *David Copperfield* is:  
a) an English writer  
b) an American writer  
c) an American novel  
d) .................................................................

20) The longest ruling monarch of Britain so far was:  
a) Henry VIII  
b) Elizabeth II  
c) Victoria  
d) .................................................................

21) *Shakespeare* did not write:  
a) comedies  
b) tragedies  
c) short stories  
d) .................................................................

22) *Paradise Lost* is associated with:  
a) John Milton  
b) the Hawaii Islands  
c) times of prosperity in America  
d) .................................................................

23) A *public school* in Britain is:  
a) a private school  
b) a school open to the public  
c) a state school  
d) .................................................................

24) The words *O Lord our God arise, Scatter her enemies, And make them fall* come from:  
a) the American national anthem  
b) one of the novels by Mark Twain  
c) a prayer to God in the Church of England  
d) .................................................................
25) The **Wall Street** should best be associated with:
   a) New York
   b) Oxford
   c) apartheid in Australia
   d) .................................................................

26) The secular head of the **Church of England** is:
   a) the Speaker
   b) the Queen
   c) the Pope
   d) .................................................................

27) **Poet’s Corner** is associated with:
   a) Houses of Parliament
   b) Napoleon
   c) Westminster Abbey
   d) .................................................................

28) Charles has the title of **Prince of Wales** because he is:
   a) the youngest son of Queen Elizabeth II
   b) the son of Queen Elizabeth II
   c) just a prince
   d) .................................................................

29) Our Polish industry region of Silesia (Śląsk) can best be compared to:
   a) the Black Country
   b) the Lake District
   c) Birmingham
   d) .................................................................

30) **Nessie** is the name of:
   a) a lake in Scotland
   b) a lake in England
   c) a semi-legendary creature
   d) .................................................................
THE KEY

TEST 1 (M. Buczak)

1) c
2) d
3) a
4) b
5) c
6) c
7) c
8) a
9) b
10) c
11) a
12) b
13) c
14) a
15) a
16) b
17) b
18) c
19) c
20) a
21) a
22) a
23) c
24) a
25) b
26) a
27) b
28) a
29) c
30) a
TEST 2 (M. Chwalewska)

1) a  
2) c  
3) d  
4) b  
5) d  
6) b  
7) d  
8) b  
9) e – a BA  
10) d  
11) a  
12) e – Buckingham Palace  
13) a  
14) a  
15) d  
16) a  
17) b  
18) d  
19) e – Los Angeles  
20) a  
21) d  
22) a  
23) c  
24) e – a priest  
25) a  
26) d  
27) a  
28) a

TEST 3 (E. Gałgan)

1) a  
2) d  
3) c  
4) d

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5) a
6) a
7) a
8) c
9) d
10) b
11) d
12) c
13) b
14) b
15) a
16) b
17) a
18) d
19) b
20) a
21) b
22) b
23) c
24) b
25) d
26) the President
27) a
28) d
29) b
30) c

TEST 4 (T. Karpiński)

1) c
2) e – an organisation of independent states which were formerly parts of the British Empire, e.g., Australia, Canada, New Zealand
3) c
4) a
5) d
6) c
7) e – Dresden, Germany
8) b  
9) c  
10) d  
11) a  
12) d  
13) e – 50  
14) b  
15) e – 1861 – 1865  
16) b  
17) b  
18) a  
19) c  
20) a  
21) e – *Ulysses*  
22) a  
23) e – *The Canterbury Tales*  
24) e – Britain, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland  
25) b  
26) a  
27) c  
28) a  
29) b  
30) c  
31) c  
32) a  
33) a  
34) e – the Prime Minister

**TEST 5 (T. Karpiński)**

1) e – 10000000 inhabitants  
2) d  
3) b  
4) e – The English Channel  
5) a  
6) c  
7) a

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8) c
9) d
10) e – a singer
11) b
12) d
13) b
14) a
15) b
16) a
17) d
18) a
19) e – 50
20) d
21) b
22) e – an English Prime Minister
23) e – 1860
24) c
25) b
26) e – The Statue of Liberty
27) b
28) a
29) b
30) e – an association of independent countries which were part of the British Empire

TEST 6 (G.A. Kleparski)

1) c
2) e
3) c
4) e
5) c
6) d
7) d
8) a
9) a
10) a
11) b
12) c
13) b
14) b
15) c
16) c
17) a
18) d
19) c
20) c
21) c
22) d
23) d
24) b
25) e
26) a
27) a
28) b
29) b
30) d
31) a
32) c
33) a

TEST 7 (N. Sarzyńska)

1) d
2) a
3) d
4) b
5) d
6) a
7) c
8) d
9) b
10) c
11) a
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12) b
13) c
14) d
15) c
16) b
17) d
18) a
19) d
20) e – Kopciuszek
21) c
22) c
23) a
24) b
25) a
26) e – water closet
27) d
28) c
29) d
30) c

TEST 8 (D. Skulimowska)

1) b
2) c
3) d
4) a
5) a
6) b
7) d
8) d
9) b
10) a
11) a
12) c
13) b
14) c
15) e – a detective-story writer
16) a
17) e – the Friday before Easter
18) b
19) c
20) d
21) e – New York
22) c
23) d
24) a
25) c
26) a
27) a
28) a

TEST 9 (A. Urban)

1) b
2) a
3) d – a river
4) a
5) a
6) d – an American TV network
7) d – they like spending time there
8) b
9) c
10) a
11) c
12) c
13) b
14) b
15) a
16) d – one pound, that is 6.5 zloty
17) b
18) a
19) d – an English novel
20) c
21) c

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22) a  
23) a  
24) d – the English national anthem  
25) a  
26) b  
27) c  
28) d – the Queen’s eldest son  
29) a  
30) c
REFERENCES


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