

**Inštitút anglistiky a amerikanistiky FF PU v Prešove**  
Program: anglický jazyk a anglofónne kultúry, Bc.  
Štátnicové témy

**Cultural studies**

**Brief exam description:** The exam focuses on a variety of issues surrounding the topics listed in this document, related to British and American history and culture. As both contemporary cultural traditions emanate from a similar source, the focus will be put on the interrelationship between various aspects of cultures in Great Britain (including its past and present Commonwealth) and the US (including issues surrounding US territories).

**Areas of competence required:**

- Candidates are required to demonstrate their ability of creative thinking and to analyze, compare and contrast a variety of issues relevant to the chosen topic, using specific examples they consider relevant and avoiding unsupported generalizations.
- Candidates are required to identify various idiosyncrasies of British and American cultures in order to be able to compare and contrast both cultural traditions.
- Candidates are required to provide support for their general claims, i.e. to use specific examples from relevant sources, referring to specific events, historical figures, etc.
- Candidates are required to introduce the chosen topic briefly, then move on to discuss relevant details, and try and respond to any questions raised or comments made by members of the state exam committee.
- Candidates are required to avoid stating the obvious (e.g. irrelevant claims, extended biographies or historical accounts, etc.).
- Candidates are required to make references to any of the recommended literature they consider relevant.
- Candidates are required to use established academic terms/concepts related to cultural theory or history rather than non-academic ones.
- Most importantly, candidates are encouraged to use their original ideas and interpretations, however unusual or controversial, as long as they can be supported by evidence from sources relevant to the chosen topic.

**Exam topics and areas:**

1. The dawn of history in Britain: pre-Roman and Roman Britain, the Anglo-Saxon period and the Norman Conquest and their heritage. Their impact on contemporary British culture (language, architecture, etc.).

2. The 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century Britain: describe the achievements of the most important sovereigns of the House of Tudors and the Stuarts. Describe the impact of the era on the political system, religion, art, etc.
3. The birth of a Colonial Empire and the Industrial Revolution: the geographical location of British colonies, their role in the British consolidating their power, the impact of British colonization on the colonies themselves, the effect the Industrial Revolution had on everyday life in Britain.
4. The birth of a democracy - the USA: the Revolutionary War, its ideals reflected through the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution, the effect of The Revolutionary War abroad (the French Revolution).
5. Legislative and Executive power in the UK and USA: compare the political system in the UK and the US, name differences and similarities, and give reasons for the difference in the two political systems.
6. A salad bowl or a melting pot? (The picture of a variety of cultures and minorities in the UK and the USA): describe the “salad bowl” and “melting pot” theories and the rationale behind them, apply these theories to the current situation in the UK and the US, choose a theory that you side with and explain why.
7. The Civil Wars in England and the USA: describe both British Civil Wars: The War of Roses, The English Civil War (Glorious Revolution); describe the American Civil War, the reasons for its manifestation, as well as the impact it had of American life and the US Constitution.
8. The 20<sup>th</sup> century (the century of change): The decline of the British Empire and the rise of the USA in becoming the world power. The situation in Britain and the US after WW1, and its impact on both world powers.
9. The advantages and disadvantages of the system of education in the UK and the USA: describe and compare the education systems in both countries, while putting special attention to the upsides and drawbacks of both systems (UK: lack of national guidelines for education, school leaving exams (GCSE, A-levels, 6<sup>th</sup> form), etc.); US: student loans, lack of federal oversight with respect to education, charter schools, etc.)
10. Union Jack culture and Stars and Stripes culture in our eyes: official political and economic relationship of Slovakia towards the UK and the US, general view of the Slovak public towards both countries’ actions in the world, impact of Brexit and Trump’s trade war on the EU (Slovakia).

**Recommended literature:**

Bromhead, P. 1992. *Life in Modern Britain*, London: Longman.

- Harvey, P., Jones, R. 1992 *Britain Explored*, London: Longman.
- McDowall, D. 1991. *An Illustrated History of Britain*, London Longman.
- McDowall, D. 1992 *Britain in Close - Up*, London: Longman.
- Sheerin, S., Seath, J., White, G. 1985. *Spotlight on Britain*, London: OUP.
- Veselý, K. 1988. *The English - speaking countries*, Prague: SPN.
- O'Callaghan, B. 1990. *An Illustrated History of the USA*, New York: Longman.
- Stevenson, D.K. 1989 *American Life and Institutions*, New York: USIA
- Falk, R. 1993. *Spotlight on the USA*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Bromhead, P. 1990. *Life in Modern America*, New York: Longman
- Broukal, M. 1993. *All about the USA*, New York: USIA.

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