

**UNIVERSITY OF TARTU  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES**

**DESIGNING A SYLLABUS AND PILOTING LESSON PLANS FOR AN  
ELECTIVE COURSE ON BRITISH CULTURE FOR UPPER-  
SECONDARY STUDENTS OF AUGUST KITZBERG GYMNASIUM  
MA thesis**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the project is to design a syllabus for an elective course on the British culture for the upper-secondary students of August Kitzberg Gymnasium. There is a lack of elective courses in English and the administration has asked the author of the project to teach the course. However, there is no syllabus for the course nor special materials available at school. In order to carry out the course, it is essential to design a syllabus that is suitable for students in form 12 which would give them an overview of selected topics on the British culture.

The thesis consists of 2 chapters: a literature review and a description of the planning and designing of the course along with the analysis of the materials that were tested in lessons with the students of the target group for the course. The literature review explores the definition of culture and the necessity of including it in an English as a foreign language classroom. It also describes the approaches of teaching culture and the main approach chosen for the course.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	2
INTRODUCTION .....	4
1. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	7
1.1. The Definition of Culture .....	7
1.2. Teaching culture in EFL classroom.....	8
1.3. Flipped classroom.....	11
2. DESIGNING THE COURSE SYLLABUS, PILOTING AND EVALUATING THE LESSONS .....	14
2.1. Planning the Course.....	14
1.2.1. Learning Aims and Outcomes .....	17
1.2.2. Main topics .....	19
2.2. Piloting the lessons .....	23
1.2.3. Analysis of lesson 1. Introduction .....	24
1.2.4. Analysis of lesson 2. Invaders in the early history .....	26
1.2.5. Analysis of lesson 3. Henry VIII .....	29
1.2.6. Analysis of lesson 4. The British Empire .....	31
2.3. Evaluating the Lessons and Improving the Course .....	32
CONCLUSION.....	36
REFERENCES .....	38
APPENDICES .....	39
RESÜMEE.....	52

## INTRODUCTION

Language and culture are terms that are very closely bound, so when students learn a foreign language then ideally, they should also learn about the culture of the target language users. Brown (2007) believes that language and culture are connected claiming “that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture” and also claims that when we learn a new language, we also acquire a second culture. Being aware of the culture of a foreign language one studies and speaks seems essential but depending on the textbook and the teacher’s readiness to teach culture, it may be that the focus in language lessons is not necessarily on culture, but rather on grammar structures and vocabulary.

The teacher also has to consider the curriculum and preparation for examinations which also require teaching the topics and skills that are necessary for successful completion of the examinations. There is also the time issue and going through everything that is required in the curriculum, so the topic of culture might not get the attention it deserves. The Estonian National Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools (2011) states 7 general competences and the first of them is value competence which also emphasises that the students should be able “/.../ to sense and value one’s ties to other people, nature, the cultural heritage of one’s own country and nation and those of others, and events in contemporary culture /.../”. According to the author’s personal experience, language textbooks provide some aspects of culture in sections called “literature corner” or “culture bank”, but that is just a chunk of knowledge, which students might not be able to link together while they do not have all the background information, for example, historical background.

Teaching culture in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom is claimed to be a necessity and a norm, but there are implications and possibilities one has to consider. In the school where the course will be taught, the students in form 12 have four English lessons per week but they are mostly focused on grammar, vocabulary and preparation for the national

examination in English. In January, an additional lesson is added to their schedule where the students practice solely for the examination. In order to help the students practice spoken and written English even more and also be educated in a wider field, more elective courses in English is the future goal of the school. A culture course is thought to be helpful because students can broaden their horizons and acquire more knowledge about British culture which might be useful for getting better results in their exams and making future plans. While planning the course, it is important to consider all possibilities that can benefit the students' speaking and writing skills. Usually, these parts are more difficult for the students to master during their language studies and additional practice is needed.

In order to plan the course, two English teachers in the school were also consulted. During casual meetings, the author asked their opinion on topics for the course. While the teachers are very well familiarised with the area and students that go to our school and have taught here for years, it proved to be a valuable source to get affirmation on the choice of topic areas and also thoughts on the learning habits of our students and how to challenge them. The teachers also expressed interest in using parts of the course in their lessons, the materials could be modified to be used with basic school learners and as an addition to thematic events or lessons, for example, foreign languages' week, which has been popular among the students in the recent years. Furthermore, the course can be the basis of British cultural studies in the school, and in the future, English teachers could add other courses to cover more topics or focus on certain topics more thoroughly. The elective course on British culture, which is the result of the thesis, will focus on history, monarchy, geography, and symbols.

To challenge students and give them more responsibility for their learning, the course aims to follow the principles of a flipped classroom. Using the idea of flipped learning would benefit the course because it enables the teacher to use more time in class to focus on tasks where students can communicate and work in groups, rather than giving lectures to passive

listeners. The National Curriculum (2011) states several goals of upper-secondary education for instance, students should learn to interact in diverse environments with different partners; to read and comprehend information, and also, to create different texts. The author hopes that flipped classroom helps to achieve these goals and also enforces self-efficiency in students while they have to plan their time and studies to be prepared for class.

The master's thesis consists of two chapters, the first chapter focuses on defining culture and teaching culture in an EFL classroom. In the second part the process of planning the course is explained and an analysis and evaluation of the testing period is provided. The analysis and evaluation are based on the teacher's notes, students' written and oral feedback and consultation with colleagues. The course syllabus and the piloted lesson plans have been added in the appendices.

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1.1. The Definition of Culture

Defining culture has been a difficult task for scholars throughout history and definitions have been offered in various fields. One of the earliest definitions by Tylor in 1871, cited in Encyclopedia Britannica webpage, describes culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. When typing the term “culture” into the Cambridge Dictionary search tab, one gets an explanation as follows: “the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time”. Both definitions clearly connect culture with people and their everyday life and beliefs and customs and this seems to be the most common approach. While it seems a quite general definition, it gives an opportunity to expand and specify. All the different definitions of culture have their own angle depending on the environment and the context.

Culture can be defined in multiple ways and each person might do it differently, but researchers and scientists are fascinated with researching the definitions and how people perceive it in the hope of finding one universal definition. According to Taras *et al* (2009), some elements seem to occur in various definitions. Firstly, it appears that most authors agree that culture is a “complex multi-level construct”; secondly, culture is often associated with groups of individuals or a certain society who share similar values, symbols, etc; thirdly, culture is a result of a long process; and lastly, culture is said to be quite stable. In their article, they formulate a working definition that covers all the important elements and state that “culture is a group's shared set of distinct basic assumptions, values, practices, and artefacts that are formed and retained over a long period of time”. So it seems that while different studies and authors may express various definitions depending on their

field, there are certain similarities in what they have mentioned. While focusing on the topic of teaching culture, a subdivision has emerged, which enables us to categorise different sub-topics into two and therefore focus on the parts we have chosen to teach. Chlopek (2008) restates the distinction between big-C and small-c cultures. Big-C culture includes areas of fine arts (literature, fine arts, theatre, dancing, etc.) while small-c culture includes attitudes, norms, beliefs, values, customs, traditions, and other related aspects which are harder to perceive by merely observing. Hofstede (2011) states his main definition years after its original date of publishing and writes that "culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others". However, he explains that the term does not only include ethnic groups but it can be applied to various groups, for instance, nations, organizations, social classes, gender, etc. Therefore, we cannot define culture only as something that belongs to a certain ethnic group or nation.

In conclusion, culture cannot be defined with one single phrase or sentence and that might be one of the reasons why teachers struggle with what to teach as culture or which topics to choose. It is necessary to distinguish, what aspects we consider while talking about culture and especially when teaching culture – it is impossible to imagine that we could teach all aspects of culture within one course. Therefore, the only reasonable way to teach culture in a language classroom is to choose certain topics to concentrate on and implement suitable approaches to support the studies. While it is challenging to cover all the necessary information and areas, we still activate the students' minds and offer them opportunities to research additional topics of their own curiosity.

## **1.2. Teaching Culture in EFL Classroom**

Teaching culture within EFL classes is considered important and has been discussed and researched by many authors and experts in the field. The relevance of teaching culture



has been discussed thoroughly by Kramersch (2013), who questions the choice of culture that should be taught and gives examples of communicative competence and mastering conversational skills. The first is related to small-c culture which refers to everyday life and the other to big-C culture which includes arts and literature. Whether to choose small-c or big-C culture as the focus in the classroom, is up to the teacher to decide because students are different and their interests and needs concerning education also depend on where they live and which learning styles they are used to.

The purpose of teaching culture and language together is important nowadays, while the expectations of the globalised world are high and one cannot expect to become a successful citizen with no actual cultural awareness or communication skills. As Liddicoat (1994) points out that the goal of language studies has long been to achieve fluency and be able to communicate with people from different cultures. Nevertheless, he also claims that one has to bear in mind that communication is not only a skill that consists of grammar and vocabulary but also includes culture. He continues to emphasise that it is impossible to teach everything about the culture, especially in the classroom, but there is one thing that we can aspire to as teachers, and that is to “help learners develop ways of finding out more about the culture they are learning by analysing their experiences and developing their awareness”. For teachers, this means that we should be the advocates of showing direction to students and assisting them with complex issues when we encounter them. We can help students practice their analytical skills and critical thinking skills by discussing topics and asking questions and inspiring them to find out more on their own as well. Liddicoat (1994) also presents five broad principles which emphasise the main concept of “learning to continue to learn”: active construction, making connections, social interaction, reflection, and responsibility.

Another approach to teaching culture in a language classroom is focused on developing students' cultural awareness which is considered relevant in today's world because people have never travelled more than they do now, and that means that they should also be aware of the culture, not only the language that is spoken. Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) recommend a task-oriented approach in their resource book for teachers to raise students' cultural awareness. They bring out three important characteristics of the co-operative tasks:

- [students] work together in pairs or small groups to gather precise segments of information;
- [students] share and discuss what they have discovered, in order to form a more complete picture;
- [students] interpret the information within the context of the target culture and in comparison with their own culture(s).

These should be taken into consideration when planning to teach culture in order to focus on the ways how students should learn besides deciding what they should learn. Culture topics offer opportunities to engage them in discussions using the target language they are learning. Discussions or sharing what one has discovered offers different insights and shows that there are many ways of handling and even understanding the same topics or texts.

Nowadays, culture can also be taught by using Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) which Coyle *et al.* (2010) define as an approach with a focus on content and also on language, for example, a foreign language which is used to teach and learn content simultaneously. There are various options to define what *content* is, whether it is a subject from the school curriculum or a certain topic, for example, culture. According to Coyle *et al.* (2010), CLIL aims not to teach grammar and vocabulary but rather to give the students opportunities to use the language in a natural environment and practise their skills in addition to gaining confidence, furthermore, CLIL also enables the use of interactive learning and cooperative tasks which help students find the best options for them to learn and reinforce one of the main goals of learning: learning to learn.

Teachers have a wide choice of models to choose from when teaching culture on its own or integrating it into their language classes and it depends on their aims and preferred results whether to choose one model or combine multiple models. The models mentioned above are just a few examples which offer possibilities to teach culture and also implement approaches which support the aims of the National Curriculum.

### **1.3. Flipped Classroom**

Flipped classroom is an approach which has emerged rather recently with the help of rapid technological advancements because technology is often used to practise flipped classroom successfully. The pioneers or first practisers of the flipped classroom are considered Colorado high-school teachers Jonathan Bergman and Aaron Sams in 2006. Flipped classroom approach has not been subject to exhaustive research yet but is viewed as an efficient and useful tool for teachers who want to use classroom time for more than teacher-led lectures.

Bergmann and Sams (2012) share their insight into flipped classroom model in their book “Flip Your Classroom: Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day”. They explain that the idea is to reverse the traditional learning model so that students come to class prepared and are able to participate in tasks which require critical thinking, analysing, problem-solving and more. Furthermore, the students often participate in group work and team-based tasks which enable them to develop their cooperation and communication skills while the teacher has more time to give feedback to students and instruct them based on individual needs. For the students, some benefits include choosing the time, tempo and place of their studies, they have the possibility outside of the classroom to go through the material several times, and make sure they understand everything. Vaikjärvi and Pilli (2015) explain the flipped model with the following three steps: firstly, students work at home independently. Secondly, after they have learned the material, they get a task based on the

previous work either at home or at school. Thirdly, they are expected to complete activities inside the classroom which are more complex and after that, they receive feedback from the teacher. This concept gives the teacher a chance to plan more activities during lesson time, while the students have prepared for the lessons and the teacher does not have to use lesson time to lecture on a new topic.

The teachers might not be enthusiastic about new approaches right away because there is not enough time to be up to date with all the recent trends in teaching but with the help of reviewers and writers, we get an idea of how to implement approaches and what the possible benefits might be. Hamdan *et al.* (2013) and Bishop and Verleger (2013) have analysed various study results and summarised the main attitudes towards flipped classroom model. Both reviews found that students had a positive attitude towards the model, some beneficial aspects highlighted in the studies were positive relations in class among students and with the teacher, access to instruction and learning materials at all times, choosing the pace of learning and feeling more engaged in learning.

Hamdan *et al.* (2013) also report on some concerns among the teachers who are contemplating whether to try flipped classroom model, for example, the availability of technology among students. Nowadays, most of the students have internet access and either a laptop or a desktop computer at home. In addition, students carry their smartphones with them all the time so they are able to access content everywhere and all the time if they want to. Another concern mentioned after reviewing sources and studies by Hamdan *et al.* (2013) is about the quality of the videos produced and using generic videos which might not be suitable for all students. Although teachers usually make their own videos, they can decide to use other teachers' videos as well. Teachers know what is best for their students and what kind of instruction they need and are able to choose the most reasonable way to implement flipped classroom model.

In conclusion, teachers have many options to plan their lessons and choose suitable approaches taking into consideration the skills and possibilities of their students. Using flipped classroom model can prove to be a valuable tool for teachers and might help motivate students to learn in a different way and be responsible for their own learning. The author of the current master's thesis aims to use flipped classroom model in order to have more time in lessons to do activities and have discussions with the students, rather than giving them lectures on culture topics.

## **2. DESIGNING THE COURSE SYLLABUS, PILOTING AND EVALUATING THE LESSONS**

In the second chapter, an overview of the planning and designing phase is given along with an analysis and evaluation of the lessons carried out with the students. In order to design a syllabus, the author had to consider different approaches and choose the main topics for the course. After the main topics and corresponding sub-topics were chosen, 4 lesson plans were finalised and tested with the students in form 11. The author analysed the lessons and the feedback from the students and suggested changes to the future course.

### **2.1. Planning the Course**

The current thesis aims to create a course syllabus for upper-secondary students in August Kitzberg Gymnasium, so the characteristics and environment of the school have to be considered.

Firstly, as it is an elective course, one cannot expect all the students to participate, which means that the teacher has to be ready to teach a very small group while a regular class size in this particular gymnasium is around 16 students or less this school year.

Secondly, the target group of the course are students in form 12 as was set by the administration. According to the author's experience in that school, the language level of form 12 students can vary from B1-C1 and as the course is taught in English, it should be kept in mind that the weaker students could cope and the advanced students would also be challenged and able to develop their language skills. Grammar and vocabulary are not the main focus of the course so the students should not be afraid of extensive tests. While it is a culture course, the main aim is set to broaden the horizon and understand parts of the British culture to arouse curiosity in students and inspire them to keep on learning and discovering about other cultures as well as their own.

Thirdly, when designing the syllabus it is important to keep in mind the length of the course which is set to 35 lessons of 45 minutes. As it is clear, the choice between different big-C and small-c topics is too wide to consider them all for the course, a selection had to be made. Initially, it was planned to ask the students about their interests for the course, but having discussed the course and possible topics with colleagues it became clear that students usually pick the topics that they are most familiar with and already know something about. That is, they wish to stay in their comfort zones. The author and her colleagues were of the same opinion that our students are currently quite well informed about popular culture and modern lifestyle. Of course, their knowledge depends on their personal interests but students use social media to get information and find interesting topics rather than the news platforms or books, and therefore they might surprise their teachers with knowledge about popular people, music, etc. which is more widely covered in the content targeted to young people. In order to make sure that the course offers them insight into topics they might not research on their own, it was decided by the author, who will be teaching this course, that it should focus on traditional culture topics and take the students back in history to discover what kind of people were part of the development of Britain and also look at the world differently in a way that they see British connections with countries all over the globe along with their historical and cultural heritage. Many students do not think or know that Britain has been a big influence in the world in many ways and its history intertwines with many other countries, including small island nations.

During the discussion with colleagues who have been teaching in that particular school for years and have experience with the students and the materials that are used in English classes, it was agreed that we do not have extra time to go over many cultural topics in language lessons. Some topics may arise during the studies and then the teachers elaborate and explain but there is not much time to plan separate lessons exclusively for culture. The English teachers

agreed, that the students' basic knowledge of the United Kingdom and its history is not very extensive and even if they have gone through some topics during their studies, they tend to forget what was discussed or just are not able to connect that knowledge to topics that may emerge later in their studies. Therefore, an elective course on culture with a focus on history would be a suitable addition to the list of courses for upper-secondary students and it might help students to find new interests or even consider further studies in English. The author and her colleagues hope that once we have one cultural syllabus, we might be able to plan other culture courses in the future and be able to focus on other topics which are not covered in this current course.

In addition to the previously mentioned aspects, there is also the question of suitable learning materials for the course. As stated before, there are no available materials at school so the teacher has to compile the learning materials which are available online or in the library and make sure to make modifications to be able to use them in the classroom or for assigning homework.

The main topics of the course include:

- history, how the United Kingdom has transformed into what it is nowadays
- basic knowledge of England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland (history, symbols, customs, geographical situation)
- monarchy in the past (some of the most famous rulers and important events), the Royal Family nowadays

As the students in the upper secondary level have enough stress concerning tests and exams, the aim of this course is not to test students' vocabulary or grammar skills but rather to use the language in discussions and acquire new vocabulary while researching topics on their own and also during class discussions. The students are encouraged to notice, look up and write down



new words and phrases in their study journal to have an overview of the vocabulary they meet along the way. While one of the requirements of the course is to create a virtual study map (Google Drive folder) then it seems that the most practical classroom for the course is the computer class, where students can add notes in class and also present their homework. That way the technology can be used in different assignments during the lesson as well.

### **1.2.1. Learning Aims and Outcomes**

The aim of the course is to give an overview of British culture focusing on the history of the islands which has affected the development of culture and traditions. Students explore the history of the countries in the United Kingdom, the changes that have taken place and the factors that have influenced these changes. Throughout history, Britain has seen different nations who wanted to settle there and Britain has been the one who claims new territories or power in other countries. In this course, students expand their knowledge on the topic and discuss the way of life in Britain in different ages. As the length of the course is limited, a choice has been made among key historical figures and events that will be covered.

The learning outcomes of the course were created corresponding to the aims of the course and the aspects that were considered during the planning phase. The learning aims should also reflect the competencies and learning objectives in the National Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools (2011).

In order to get their credit for the course, the students have to be aware of the requirements and plan their studies to be able to pass the course. The students will not be given grades, because the school wants the elective courses to be the output for students' interests and offer possibilities to discover different study areas and find what they are good at. The assessment, requirements and learning outcomes are described below.

Assessment: Pass/fail

### Requirements:

- attendance: the student has to attend at least 80% of the classes to pass the course. If one has relevant reasons for being absent (illness etc) they have to finish the tasks according to their agreement with the teacher.
- active participation in group work and discussions in class
- reflective learning journal (12 entries in total, first entry should include expectations for the course and prior knowledge of Britain; final entry when the course is over - should include feedback to the course)
- homework – short presentations, posters, role-play, reading and short quizzes
- final quiz
- Study map for gathering and keeping course materials, learning journal, homework etc (Drive folder)

### The student:

- names the countries in the UK and their symbols, is aware of other countries connected with the British monarchy
- describes national holidays and traditions
- compares aspects of British culture to their own culture
- uses the internet and/or books to find information independently about the British culture
- practises speaking skills in presentation tasks, group work tasks and discussions in class
- practises writing skills in their study journals
- works collaboratively with classmates to complete tasks
- reflects on the learning experiences and ideas about culture topics

- works independently and practises time management skills to organise one's studies at home and prepare for class

### **1.2.2. Main Topics**

The main topics of the course include:

- Wales, Ireland and Northern-Ireland

The first main topic starts with an introduction and also enables students to discuss the topic of culture in general, it also gives an overview to the teacher on what the students think about culture and consider as culture. The first part covers the first settlers and invaders and how they moved around in Britain, emphasizing the journey of the Celts and where they ended up. The students should research different groups of people and how they influenced Britain.

Three countries will be the focus in the first part because of their geographical position and connections with the Celts. Ireland is included while it was a part of the United Kingdom before and therefore is important to discuss.

- England

During lessons about England, the sub-topics of the Norman Conquest, the Middle Ages, wars, chivalry and other topics will be covered. Knights and chivalry are discussed while the gaming world, young adult novels, and even TV series have widely popularised this era and theme. The topic of chivalry allows us to compare the topic of politeness then and now. In addition to history, the students will also revise the symbols of England and discuss some legends. Henry VIII is one of the monarchs that students know and have heard of, mainly because of his wives, but now they will get the chance to find out more about each wife and their children and what Henry had to change in England in order to live a life that he desired. This provides many discussion points and there are also aspects to compare concerning the lifestyles of them and people nowadays.

- Scotland

The topic of Scotland covers its history with the UK and the relations of the monarchs which eventually led to the union of the crowns. Mary Queen of Scots and Elizabeth are also important figures to discuss while they led very different lives and their comparison enables us to analyse the moral norms and lifestyle of the society at that time and again use the description of that age and compare it to our society nowadays. Students also follow Scotland's path to becoming part of the United Kingdom.

- British Empire

The British Empire was once the most influential power in the world and offers multiple interesting and even intriguing topics to discuss and understand when looking back at that time. The students get a better understanding of how the Empire started, how and why it evolved, and how it ended/collapsed. The students also have to familiarise themselves with the map of the world at that time, while there were many countries and islands that were once part of the Empire. To be able to visualise it, they will have an assignment of marking all those parts of the Empire on the map. Once that map is complete, they can compare it to the situation nowadays.

- Modern monarchy

The topic of modern monarchy comprises of aspects like the changes after the Empire collapsed and how a new union of nations emerged: the Commonwealth. Elizabeth II and her legacy along with other members of the Royal Family will be discussed. The factors that have influenced how the monarchy has changed and how popular it is among people – public opinion and media coverage will also be looked at. The comparison of how William's and Harry's families are portrayed. The future of monarchy and succession is also discussed. By the time the course starts, Charles III will have been crowned and students can find out more about him as a king and which changes he might enforce.

These five topics include several sub-topics which have been chosen as a result of discussions with the supervisor of the thesis, and the English teachers at the school where the course will be taught and are largely based on the author's interests. Therefore, the list of the sub-topics is not an exhaustive list of topics to cover but rather a small selection of topics which remained after narrowing down the initial ideas of the author. One might argue that the list of sub-topics is still too long and impossible to cover in 35 lessons but the author wishes to have options for mediating and modifying the course with different groups. When the first meeting of students and the teacher of the course is over, then the teacher can learn more about the specific interests and previous knowledge of the current group of students. This will determine how the course will precede and if some topics need more attention or on the contrary, can be finished quicker due to students' previous knowledge.

This course is meant to be flexible in a way that it can be used with different students each year by choosing suitable topics or leaving out certain topics or focusing on one main topic thoroughly and on another main topic more generally. It might happen that the students who have registered for the course, need more explanations than anticipated and are not that comfortable or masterful in writing and speaking, therefore fewer topics will be covered but the topics that are chosen are dealt with in depth. The author of the thesis and teacher of the course also has to be able to adapt to various schedule changes, for example, the students in form 12 get extra time to prepare for examinations and do not go to lessons according to their previous schedule anymore. This could mean that the teacher does not have 35 lessons, but instead, 28 or 30 to teach the course. As the author cannot predict what the schedule of 12<sup>th</sup> graders might look like next year, the syllabus follows the regular pattern of an elective course. Therefore, the author challenged herself to create a "perfect" syllabus to be taught in a perfect environment and with ideal conditions but is aware that the syllabus is dense and choices have to be made during the teaching period.

The syllabus with main topics, sub-topics, and possible activities can be found in the Appendices section (see Appendix 1). The outline of the course includes the following main topics and sub-topics:

<b>Main topic</b>	<b>Lessons and sub-topics</b>
INTRODUCTION WALES NORTHERN IRELAND IRELAND	Lesson 1. Introduction. Geography. History
	Lesson 2. Celts
	Lesson 3. Wales
	Lesson 4. Ireland and Northern-Ireland
	Lesson 5. Ireland
	Lesson 6. Recipes from Wales, Ireland
	Lesson 7. Recipes from Wales, Ireland
ENGLAND	Lesson 8. England
	Lesson 9. Knights and chivalry (medieval knights)
	Lesson 10. Legends. Arthur, Robin Hood
	Lesson 11. Henry VIII
	Lesson 12. Guy Fawkes and Gunpowder plot
	Lesson 13. Summary of the second main topic
SCOTLAND	Lesson 14. Christmas
	Lesson 15. Christmas
	Lesson 16. Scotland
	Lesson 17. Mary Queen of Scots. Elizabeth
	Lesson 18. Mary and Elizabeth
	Lesson 19. Act of Union 1707
	Lesson 20. Scotland summary
BRITISH EMPIRE, BRITAIN IN THE WORLD – POWER	Lesson 21. British Empire
	Lesson 22. British Empire
	Lesson 23. India.
	Lesson 24. India.
	Lesson 25. White dominions
	Lesson 26. Colonies
	Lesson 27. Britain as a power in the world
	Lesson 28. Summary of the British Empire
MODERN MONARCHY	Lesson 29. Elizabeth II life and legacy.
	Lesson 30. Elizabeth II
	Lesson 31. The monarchy
	Lesson 32. Modern Royal Family
	Lesson 33. Monarchy nowadays and in the future.
	Lesson 34. King Charles III
	Lesson 35. Final lesson – fun quiz

## **2.2. Piloting the lessons**

In order to test a part of the designed course and get feedback to make improvements, four lessons were piloted with the students who are possible participants in this course next year. The length of each lesson was 45 minutes. The advanced English group consists of 11 students from grade 11 and is the class taught by the author of the thesis and they are also the target group of the course next year. Choosing this group was the most sensible choice because in this way the author did not have to make changes to their school schedule and avoided troubling other teachers and their plans with the students. The lessons were carried out during their regular English lessons and altogether the students got to take part in four culture lessons. The lesson plans were reviewed by 2 English teachers who work in the same school.

The author chose four topics from the course: the introduction lesson, early history concerning the invaders, Henry VIII, and the British Empire. These topics were chosen from different parts of the course to be able to see what kind of knowledge the students already have about various stages in history. The author avoided choosing lessons from one main topic because it seemed more interesting to observe how the students will talk about the topics from various eras and what their experience with these topics is. Furthermore, the topics used in the testing period gave the perfect opportunity to introduce these topics but also left options for further discoveries and deeper discussions in the future. While some of the students will be taking the course next year, the author will plan a different introduction lesson with them and will briefly touch upon the definition of culture and what it enhances. The other three topics that were discussed during these lessons do not need a long introduction next year and the teacher can plan activities to follow up on the topics and focus on the subtopics according to the course plan.

The lesson plans were discussed with 2 colleagues of the author who are also English teachers in the school where the course will be taught. Their suggestions and comments will

also be taken into consideration when teaching and improving the course. The lesson plans can be found in the Appendices section at the end of the thesis.

### **1.2.3. Analysis of lesson 1. Introduction**

The first lesson aimed to introduce the topic of culture and evoke thoughts on culture and what they associate with the term *culture* (see Appendix 2). It also gave the teacher an overview of what the students know and what they associate with culture. The teacher also informed the students that this course will be an elective course available for the next year and that the teacher wishes to test some parts of it to see how to improve it. This testing period also sparked a highly valuable conversation between the author and her students who also have to finish and defend an important research project at the end of grade 11 to be able to graduate next year. It helped to connect with the students and share helpful tips and experiences and hopefully inspired them to work hard on their projects to reach their goals. They understood that this might not be the last paper they have to complete and that this writing experience is valuable for their future studies as well.

In the first lesson, there were 7 students present out of 11, which is nothing out of the ordinary in upper-secondary school during springtime and of course, because some of them had trouble finishing their research project, it might have been one of the reasons why there were many people absent. This reflects the situation at school nowadays and it creates a real environment for the testing period as well because the number of participants for the current course next year might be relatively small considering that everyone will not choose this course. Nevertheless, those who were present got to familiarise themselves with the content of the course and it might help them to decide whether to choose it at the beginning of the next school year or not.



First, the students were asked to insert 10 keywords that they associate with culture in order to combine the results and discuss the outcome. An environment for creating presentations and gathering answers or votes, called Mentimeter, was used to gather the answers and create a word cloud with the keywords (see Appendix 3). Students participated actively in inserting the keywords and it was evident that they had thought about the topic and did not insert meaningless keywords just to finish the task. After the students had inserted 10 keywords, a word cloud was created with the help of the platform Mentimeter. The results indicated that the most popular keywords were: people, food, traditions, and language which indicates that the students strongly associate culture with people and their traditions. Some other keywords that were entered more than once include religion, manners, history, roots, stories, beliefs, dance, art, literature, etc. A discussion followed to make sure the students paid attention to all the keywords and how they are connected to culture. In this way, the students acknowledge that it is difficult to only describe culture with a few words but it requires much more thought and depends on who is describing culture and what their perspective is.

The next step was to try and define culture in groups which turned out to be a challenge, while the students wanted to define it with one sentence and that started productive discussions to come up with a definition. Some similar definitions were offered, for example, that culture is the way of life or the way people live and also, the mental environment that we live in. The definitions sparked a class discussion and Google Search helped to find definitions available online. The teacher emphasised that there is no one way to define culture and that many different perspectives are offered by researchers and scientists, etc.

The next task was related to geography and how well the students know the terminology concerned with the British Isles. They were given maps with some absent terms, which they had to come up with. The countries were marked on the map but the terms British Isles, Great Britain, Ireland, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland were missing.

The students struggled at first because the teacher did not provide the terminology prior to the task in order to see what the students remember from their previous English studies. They came up with some terms but were not confident so the teacher wrote the terms on the board and students tried to match them with the map. Once the terms were given, they had more confidence to successfully finish the task and most of them managed to do it without errors.

At the end of the lesson, the teacher explained the task they have to complete at home and divided students into 5 groups in order to give them a task to research different invaders who had once settled in Britain: Celts, Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, Normans. The students got questions along with one link to get them started with their research. The teacher divided the students into groups so that the research at home would not take up an extensive amount of time and interfere with other homework. One group of settlers for each student seemed a reasonable choice and enabled them to focus on one topic and then later in class share their findings with others. During this testing period, all four lessons took place in one week but in the case of the elective course the students will have one lesson per week and more time to plan their studies and manage their time.

All in all, the lesson outcomes were met despite the teacher's fear that the students are not interested in discussions and might not actively participate in tasks while their overall attitude is more apathetic towards the end of the school year. The lesson plan and the time teacher had planned for it was almost accurate, the discussions took up more time than expected and less time was left for the students to think independently during tasks.

#### **1.2.4. Analysis of lesson 2. Invaders in the early history**

For the second lesson, the students had to finish a task at home which included independent research and answering questions they got from their teacher. The fact that this topic is a necessary part of the course was proved when the students got their homework and

many of them did not know who Celts, Anglo-Saxons or Normans were or did not remember that they have probably heard those terms during their English studies. In this lesson, the main aim was to revise the beginning of British early history and the different settlers who played a part in shaping the history of the British Isles and the nations who inhabited it (see Appendix 4).

In this lesson, there were 6 students present out of 11 students and that created the first obstacle: all the settler groups were not present. The groups and pairs who researched Romans and Normans were not present and had not sent in their homework. The teacher decided to continue with the 3 groups present and go through the answers the groups had found and then look at the remaining 2 groups. While asking the students it became clear that everyone had not done their homework thoroughly and lacked some answers or the answers were very general and superficial. It was obvious that the plan had to be altered and some extra time was given to expand their answers. This lesson took place in computer class as initially planned when designing the course and it proved to be useful for the task. As the lesson did not go as planned and more time was spent on researching than discussions, it might be said that the learning outcomes were not met entirely and the teacher made notes about improving this part of the plan and also the way that preparation tasks are given and what kind of tasks they have to do at home. One has to consider the time that the students have at home as well, while on that day they had other tasks to finish at home too, and did not manage to do everything. As testing the lessons seemed like a less obligatory task than their other tasks, they chose to spend less time on it.

At the end of this lesson, the teacher asked the students to fill in a Google Forms questionnaire to get some feedback on the task. The students were asked to choose the correct chronological list of the invaders and 4 students out of 6 were correct. Although this was the topic of the lesson and it was discussed before the questionnaire, everyone did not remember

or did pay attention. The students were also asked if they knew something about the settlers before and what was new for them. This helps the teacher to prepare for the course and consider the time spent on invaders and the subtopics. Most of the students knew something about Vikings and a few knew about the order in which they arrived, everyone said they acquired new knowledge in addition to their previous knowledge. There was one question about the time they spent on homework. They were asked to be honest and two of them answered that they did not really do the task at home, the others spent 5-10 minutes on it. The reasons can be found in the answers to the next question about the problems they encountered during their homework. Three students said they did not have difficulties with the task, and one had previous knowledge and had to briefly check the answers. One student admitted that he or she had difficulties finding the motivation to do the task. One student did not realize that there was any homework for that day which means they might not have checked Studium. One student had problems understanding the terms while reading and did not have a lot of time for homework that day. All of the students agreed that the class discussion helped to understand the topic and was easier than reading about it, they also felt that they received additional information. This might be explained by the attitudes among students towards reading in recent years, the students are not interested in compulsory reading lists and most of them do not read for fun either so it is no surprise that they find reading unpleasant or difficult. The last question was to get suggestions to improve the task and make it more student-friendly. Most of the students were satisfied with the task and discussion and had no suggestions. One of the students recommended offering more links for the research part which will be taken into consideration by the teacher.

In conclusion, this lesson helped the teacher with the future preparations for the course and gave an overview of the students' impressions and learning habits. It can be said that the learning outcomes were partly met because all of the settlers' groups were not discussed in

detail while some of the students were absent and did not provide their part of the work. The teacher added information about those groups but there was not enough time to discuss them properly. During the elective course, there will be clear requirements in place for the students in order to pass the course, and not doing the tasks at home has consequences. For the next lesson, the teacher chose a video for the students to watch and compiled an online quiz for them to finish before class which should save time in class and helps to understand whether the students understood the main ideas in the video. By doing this they will be prepared for the lesson and discussion.

### **1.2.5. Analysis of lesson 3. Henry VIII**

The main topic of this lesson was Henry VIII and his life (see Appendix 5), the students watched a video about the aims and character of Henry VIII to get more background information on how and when Henry became king and what he was like at the beginning of his reign. This video and topic were chosen because people mostly know only one aspect about Henry VIII, which is the number of wives he had. 7 students out of 11 were present in this lesson and in the morning before the lesson only a few of them had finished the online quiz but surprisingly, at the beginning of the lesson, it appeared that everyone had finished. This means that the students completed the quiz during their school day, not at home the previous day which brought into question whether they watched the video. In order to avoid such situations in the future, the quiz has to be locked at a certain time so that it would not be possible to finish it the next day and the students would be informed about the exact time when the quiz ends.

The quiz report indicates that the accuracy of the participants' answers was 67%, 3 out of 7 answered all questions correctly and a few had one or two wrong answers. The teacher asked in the classroom whether they felt they were familiar with the topic or answered based on the video. Most of them agreed that it was easy to answer with the help of the video and also, that they had some previous knowledge.

Most of the students knew how many wives Henry VIII had but they were not sure what happened to them exactly, they knew some of them were beheaded but not who and how many. They were not sure about the names of the wives either, which shows that people have heard of Henry VIII and his six wives but the details remain foggy. This assures the teacher that the topic is relevant, while there are many aspects to go through and learn more about the life and influence of Henry VIII. The topic seemed interesting to the students because everyone participated in discussions and wanted to share what they have heard and were not taken aback when there were gaps in their knowledge. They also listened to additional information and explanations the teacher had to offer. One of the tasks was to quickly find information about the wives to see how skilful they are in googling for specific information. They started with enthusiasm and focused on their search, no one seemed uninterested or rejecting the task. They managed to find all of the information, half of them were quicker and the other half needed more time to focus on the search but managed to fill in the gaps during class discussion. After gaining the facts about the wives the discussion went on with the teacher emphasising some of the information about Henry VIII and his wives but also the society and health issues at that time. Most of the students are 17 or 18 years old and when the teacher reminded them that Henry VIII was 17 when he became King and married, they were surprised and said they had not thought about it. This helped them to try to compare life in the court of Henry VIII and their life nowadays. The fact that Henry VIII died when he was 55 is something that can be associated with medicine in those days and of course the lifestyle of the King as well. Our life nowadays is filled with information about a healthy and active lifestyle, eating habits, and taking care of one's health in general so the comparison of lifestyles is drastic.

Unfortunately, the discussions took up more time than anticipated and the last task was not completed. It seems that the topic was gripping, the discussions were long and the students were actively participating so the teacher did not want to stop in the middle of a fascinating

discussion. Although one task could not be finished, the lesson was successful and the students participated with interest and were eager to finish the tasks. They were given the assignment for the last lesson during this testing period which was about the British Empire. They were expected to watch a video and answer some questions in order to come to class prepared.

#### **1.2.6. Analysis of lesson 4. The British Empire**

There were only 5 students in the fourth lesson and one of them had sent the answers to questions beforehand, the others did not realise they had to send the answers, they presented them in the lesson. The aim of the lesson was to get familiar with the topic and start from the beginning of the Empire (see Appendix 6). The students have the chance to discover more about the topic during the elective course but this lesson gave them an opportunity to understand what the British Empire was, and how it started and expanded. Of course, it is important to emphasise that while the British Empire reached all over the world and included many different countries and small island nations, it had its upsides and downsides and affected the lives of millions of people. The students then used internet sources and found information about the effects that the British Empire had on the nations that were part of it. As a result, they were able to discuss both sides and gained more perspective on the topic. Initially, the teacher had planned a debate but the teachers who read the lesson plan thought that it might be too controversial to choose a winner in such a debate which includes sensitive topics like racism and slavery. The research and discussion proved to be a better option because the students were not competing and were focused on finding information and examples to share. They found several statements which were all relevant and were able to explain and answer additional questions. The aim was to present all the findings without choosing sides and make sure the students were aware of the complex nature of the topic. The discussion enabled the teacher to make sure that everyone understood the findings and the context.

During the conclusion of the lesson, the teacher asked about the ways that students preferred to prepare for the lessons at home. We discussed these four lessons and how the students should have prepared for the lessons and which task made it easier to go through the material. Most of the students said that they prefer to watch videos because it is easier than reading something. One student said that he would rather read than watch videos but did not explain his opinion. Everyone preferred online questionnaires and quizzes instead of answering questions on paper or via email. Despite their preferences the teacher also has to consider the requirements and learning aims and ensure that the students are aware that in order to master different skills in a language, they have to be versatile learners.

### **2.3. Evaluating the Lessons and Improving the Course**

After piloting the four lessons from the course some problems arose. After analysing the lessons, getting feedback from the students, and discussing the lesson plans with colleagues, the author will offer possible steps to improve the course in this subchapter.

Firstly, in order to assure that the students would prepare for the lessons as required, some modifications have to be made. When students need to work through the material at home, giving them a video to watch rather than read a long text would be advised. Experience shows that reading takes more time for them and students might not understand long and complex texts on specific topics. What is more, it is difficult to find texts that are meant for upper-secondary students and would only contain the necessary information and not be extensive in length. Of course, there is always the option of modifying texts to be suitable for students but that takes up extra time and might not always be possible. One option that should be considered is making video lectures using screencast technology to present them with the material that the teacher expects them to work through. Using screencasting would be familiar to the author because she got to try it out during courses in the university and finds it suitable



to use for this course as well. Nevertheless, all topics should not be covered with video lectures and students should be able to work with texts as well because this skill has to be developed during their studies to prepare them for the future. In order to help them get started with reading, some shorter texts would be advised for the beginning and steps should be taken to help them manage with more complex texts as well. Students who plan to continue their studies after upper-secondary school, have to be able to work through academic texts and in this way they might feel more comfortable in the future knowing what to expect. To ensure that they read at home and work through the texts, there should be a way in class to check it, whether a discussion or written answers where they can demonstrate their understanding of necessary concepts.

Another improvement that the author will have to apply when teaching the course is to make sure all the online quizzes for the course would be locked at a certain time so that students could not attempt them 5 minutes before the lesson. This would help to assure that the students deal with the tasks at home appropriately. Quizzes should not consist of too many questions but enough to assess how well the students understood the subject matter and whether they acquired the necessary information. Another issue concerning home tasks is motivation which was also mentioned among the students. During the testing period, the students did not feel obligated to finish the tasks at home because the situation was different compared to taking the elective course and actually being assessed during and at the end of the course. Next year, those who will choose this course have to make sure they successfully meet all the requirements, otherwise they will not pass the course. Nevertheless, passing the course should not be the only motivation and is not enough to keep them working and focused throughout the course. The author hopes that the students who choose the course will do so because they are interested in British culture, history and heritage and it will be possible to keep them engaged with interesting content, discussions, and creative tasks. During the testing period, the author made

notes about the discussions and noticed that several students showed interest in these topics and shared their previous knowledge of the topics enthusiastically. This might imply that they are genuinely interested and it is possible to discuss and discover various topics with them. The author plans to give students more responsibility during the course than they might have in regular subjects. This means that they are responsible for their learning at home and in class, completing all the tasks at home and coming to class prepared and also choosing topics of their own interest to research further and present to others. In other words, they get more freedom in choosing their research topics but they also have to go through with them and use their self-regulation skills appropriately. In order to help them manage their time and use it efficiently, some useful practices should be discussed to make sure they know how to learn and set goals for themselves without wasting time and demotivating themselves. Although upper-secondary students have experiences with different learning styles, they still struggle to tackle all the assignments they have to finish.

The author received feedback from her colleagues who made suggestions about the lesson plans. The main aspect they advised to focus on was the time management issue, in order to plan sufficient activities but not rush through the material because no one will benefit from that. Another aspect which they helped to tackle was the choice of topics and activities for the lessons, in the end, the author removed a few topics in order to focus on one or two topics per lesson. They also provided comments on discussion questions and topics. The main suggestion was to teach less but more thoroughly.

All in all, the testing period enabled the teacher to try out lesson plans with students which provided useful information for the teacher in order to continue improving the course. Despite the low number of students attending school during this period, the students who were present provided feedback and took part in discussions so that the teacher could notice which topics sparked more interest and what kind of previous knowledge the students have. The

teacher could also assess the success of the activities planned for the lessons and students' engagement in topics. The teacher should prepare video lectures and texts for the students in order to vary tasks during the course and develop more skills. Learning strategies should be discussed and students should be encouraged to try them out.

## CONCLUSION

In all EFL classrooms, teachers aim to help students cope with learning and understanding a new language and gaining new knowledge. According to the National Curriculum for Upper-Secondary Schools (2011), students should learn to value other cultures in addition to their own culture and be aware of the differences between our culture and other cultures. The problem seems to be that teachers do not have unlimited time to deal with all the necessary topics and the choice of culture topics is wide. An overview of the definition of culture and literature on teaching culture in EFL classes was also provided in literature review.

The current thesis aimed to design a syllabus for an elective course which could be used with form 12 students in the school where the author works as an English teacher. To the author's knowledge, there has not been a similar course in the school before therefore, there are no existing study materials or even a course outline available. This presented the author with a task to design a syllabus for a British culture course to be able to teach it. The process included choosing the topics, considering different approaches, planning the course and lessons, and piloting lessons to identify problems and offer solutions after analysing the testing period. Narrowing down topic areas led to the final choice of main topics: history, geography, monarchy, and symbols. The main focus of the whole course remains on history and key events and figures chosen by the author. During the designing phase, colleagues were consulted to make sure that the author has adequately assessed the reasonable choices for the course to challenge students and engage them in topics they might not research on their own. The course also aims to broaden the horizons and pose questions about different eras and lifestyles in British history compared to aspects of our culture and life nowadays. It was decided to teach traditional culture topics instead of popular culture, while students are generally more up-to-date with modern culture in foreign countries than history.

During the course, students are expected to prepare for lessons by reading or watching a video and finishing quizzes to check whether they have successfully done their work. The reason for employing and testing flipped classroom method, is to help students prepare for their future studies and responsibilities by managing their own time and studying efficiently. In order to successfully pass the course, the students have to prepare for each lesson and actively participate in discussions and finish all quizzes and creative tasks. The aim is to support them while they prepare for examinations and give them more opportunities to practice speaking and writing skills. The students have to create a virtual study map in Google Drive environment which they will use for keeping a study journal, making notes at home and in class and also saving their creative tasks. At the end of the course, there will be a final quiz to revise the topics. Although the course will be taught in English, there will be no grammar or vocabulary quizzes, but the students should make notes of new vocabulary in their study folders.

The testing period showed that reading is not very popular among students and it was contemplated to prepare video lectures or screencasts to keep them motivated and doing the work at home. Although videos might be preferred by the students, the teacher has to prepare them for other types of tasks as well and therefore has to provide reading practice and check how well they manage with reading on their own and presenting their findings.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Course Syllabus

Main topic	Subtopics Lessons	Possible activities, materials
INTRODUCTION WALES NORTHERN IRELAND IRELAND	<p><b>Lesson 1.</b> Introduction: the course, requirements, schedule, assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Geography and terms: UK, Great Britain etc (a map to illustrate)</li> <li>- Union Jack</li> </ul> <p>History: <b>Romans</b> <b>Celts</b> <b>Anglo-Saxons</b> <b>Normans</b> <b>Vikings</b> What is known about them and their influence?</p>	<p><i>What is culture?</i> Mentimeter –(Students insert keywords that they associate with culture) Word cloud: Discussion The teacher presents different definitions - discussion</p> <p><b>In class, group work:</b> Students read about different settlers and find distinctive characteristics and influence of those groups of people and share their findings – discussion follows among all students – they have a table to fill in - each group shares information about the settlers they read about Discussion - compare with nowadays (migration, war)</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Celts – (guiding questions) students read/watch videos about Celts and make notes (different topics that interest them: jewellery, warfare, religion and prayers, music, lifestyle and love of nature(eco)</p>
	<p><b>Lesson 2</b> <b>CELTS – their movement and settlements</b></p> <p>Celtic Jewellery etc, warriors</p>	<p>Students present what they found out about the Celts and their way of life. Teacher will add necessary information – ask questions, clarify new words/phrases</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> research Wales (guiding questions from the teacher) + Students find fun facts about various topics that interest them about Wales – presentation to others (language, sport, music etc)</p>
	<p><b>Lesson 3. Wales</b> Celts movement to Wales, history, symbols, government, other main facts St David’s day</p>	<p>Students present what they found out about Wales A poster for the classroom(and/or to present during foreign language day) as an effort of the whole class</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> groups research Ireland and Northern-Ireland (guide from the teacher) Fun facts chosen by the students</p>

	<p><b>Lesson 4. Ireland and Northern-Ireland</b> History, symbols, how and why the 2 countries parted Celts in Ireland St Patrick christened Ireland St Columba Scotland St Aiden England Irish Christianity, saints in Europe</p>	<p>Students present their findings and fun facts (quiz to classmates etc)</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> fairies, Irish folklore, patron saint etc, Welsh and Irish music, ancient mythology – topics to research. Students choose and research topics that interest them - present</p>
	<p><b>Lesson 5. Ireland</b> Ireland Republic History St. Patrick's Day (March 17)</p>	<p>Students present homework/mini-lectures – others ask questions</p>
	<p><b>Lesson 6.</b> <b>Summary of the topic</b></p>	<p><b>Posters of Wales, Ireland, Northern-Ireland - groups</b></p>
	<p><b>Lesson 7.</b> Recipes from Wales, Ireland etc? Cooking class Background music (Welsh, Irish, Celtic – students choose)</p>	<p><b>Study map/portfolio. Required entries after the first main topic:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First entry – what are your expectations of the course? What do you know about British culture?</li> <li>• Homework notes + additional notes from class about all the topics</li> <li>• Short summary of the first main topic, what did you learn, what would you like to further discover on your own?</li> </ul> <p><b>Homework:</b> research England (guiding questions about symbols etc)</p>
ENGLAND	<p><b>Lesson 8. England</b> We will go over <b>Norman conquest</b> more thoroughly, students read on their own before the discussion. Answer questions about the battle, key figures and events, the consequences <b>History, symbols, St. George – England's National Day celebration nowadays. Dragon fight. Flag</b></p>	<p><b>Bayeux Tapestry</b> website- students discover the work and try to find connections with the battle and what is represented in this work – their own opinion and feelings about this work – group task. Teacher helps to navigate</p> <p>Pseudo medieval fantasy – presentation ideas depending on the students experiences, interests (optional, Game of Thrones etc)</p>



	<p><b>Anglo-Saxons, the name England</b>  <b>Wars – constant fighting, how did warfare and equipment change?</b>  <b>Middle Ages</b>  <b>The Hundred Years War</b></p>	<p><b>Homework:</b> chivalry, knight’s code of chivalry – find examples and be ready to discuss in class</p>
	<p><b>Lesson 9. Knights and chivalry (medieval knights)</b>  Chivalry (code) – rules, values. Why was it necessary? Ladies (up and high in the castle, ideology protects the ladies from knights  Ladies married higher class noblemen, untouchable for the knights, but adored by them, fought tournaments for the love of ladies.  Life in the castle  Educated knight  Game of Thrones  Young adult fiction, fantasy</p> <p>Politeness – nowadays vs knights  Polite society  English gentleman, the idea of Englishness</p>	<p>Students present their findings  In class – a task where they will compare the code to nowadays’ society and rules</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Students research and find connections to modern society – games, films, TV series etc their own experience with games and series</p> <p>Legends:  King Arthur  Robin Hood  Merlini sari</p>
	<p><b>Lesson 10.</b>  Legends:  King Arthur (Solutions advanced TB)  Robin Hood(different versions)  Merlini sari  Examples: show, read, compare – connections to what we have found out so far  Conclusion of the Middle Ages</p>	<p>King Arthur characters handed out to students by the teacher, they read (love stories, different short extracts to read)</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Henry VIII wives – everyone, or pairs get different wives + children: research Fakebook</p>

	<p><b>Lesson 11. Henry VIII</b> Henry VIII and his wives (personal life, problems, nowadays – domestic violence, health) Religion. Church of England Reformation</p>	<p>Students present their findings of Henry VIII and his wives Fakebooks? Quiz about the wives?</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Guy Fawkes and Gunpowder Plot – research and answer questions</p>
	<p><b>Lesson 12.</b> Guy Fawkes and Gunpowder plot – who lost Civil wars. Catholic conspiracy. What about nowadays, comparison</p> <p>Bonfire Night, (Guy Fawkes Night, November 5) traditions</p>	<p>Students present their findings Teacher: Stuarts, Civil Wars, Catholic reformation</p>
	<p><b>Lesson 13.</b></p> <p>Summary of the second main topic Recipes from England(or other countries, UK) – preparation for Christmas</p>	<p><b>Poster of England</b></p> <p><b>Required entries to the study journal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework notes + additional notes taken in class</li> <li>• Short summary of the first main topic, what did you learn, what would you like to further discover on your own?</li> </ul> <p><b>Homework:</b> Christmas traditions in the UK – in the past, nowadays?</p>
SCOTLAND	<p><b>Lesson 14. Christmas.</b> Christmas traditions, Boxing day etc,</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b> choose a recipe to try out at home – short video of the process (creative task, try out ideas you have seen on TikTok etc) Cooking class</p>
	<p><b>Lesson 15. Christmas</b> Christmas traditions, Boxing day etc,</p>	<p><b>Cooking class:</b> recipes which can be prepared within the time limit (some preparations at home)</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Scotland – research at home (guiding questions) + fun facts of your own interest to present to others</p>

	<p><b>Lesson 16. Scotland</b> History, symbols, joining GB St. Andrew's Day (November 30), Patron saint, the St Andrew's Cross. (Teacher: Presbyterian, Church of Scotland Celts, savages Scottish Highlands Scottish Lowlands The Central Lowlands, sometimes called the Midland Valley or Central Valley)</p> <p>The Royal Family and their fondness of Scotland</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b> Monarchy in England and Scotland. Mary and Elizabeth (guiding questions)</p>
	<p><b>Lesson 17. Mary Queen of Scots. Elizabeth</b></p> <p>Mary Queen of Scots vs Elizabeth Rivalry, treason, murders, deception, marriages Union of the crowns</p>	<p>Students present what they found out. Teacher adds necessary information. Discussion – the relationship of Mary and Elizabeth. Comparison</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Mary and Elizabeth. Choose one – Fakebook. Instagram. Twitter. What would their account look like? What would they say in their posts/tweets?</p>
	<p><b>Lesson 18. Mary and Elizabeth</b></p>	<p>Students: Social media accounts presentation – Mary and Elizabeth (pass/fail)</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> 1707, now: question of independence, not being part of the monarchy (guiding questions, articles to read)</p>
	<p><b>Lesson 19.</b> Act of Union 1707</p> <p><b>The question of independence nowadays</b></p>	<p><b>Scotland poster</b></p>
	<p><b>Lesson 20.</b> Scotland summary</p>	<p><b>Required entries to the study journal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework notes + additional notes taken in class</li> <li>• Short summary of the first main topic, what did you learn, what would you like to further discover on your own?</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

		<b>Homework:</b> British Empire – terms and definitions? (guiding questions)
BRITISH EMPIRE, BRITAIN IN THE WORLD – POWER	<b>Lesson 21. British Empire</b> “The sun never sets on the British Empire” Victoria Moral mission? civilize the world The beginning, development, trade(what products) Life during that time, key figures, important events From trade offices to empire Koh-i-Nor? Terms and definitions:	<b>Homework:</b> Geography – map and list of countries – each student gets a number of countries from the British Empire to look up and present to others (islands in the Caribbean and Pacific Ocean, small and unknown to us – how to pronounce the names etc) When did they become part of the British Empire. Why? What is the situation now?
	<b>Lesson 22. British Empire</b> Problems of the empire – ethics (colonialism, indigenous people, slavery etc)	Students’ presentations about countries, islands
	<b>Lesson 23. India. Other colonies</b> India – from the English East India Company to Crown colony (Jewel in the crown) Importance of India from the beginning	Large map with all the dominions, dependencies, protectorates, colonies, mandates trade offices (?) – students have to match the places with names
	<b>Lesson 24. India. Other colonies. India after the empire, 2 sovereign states after: India, Pakistan</b>	<b>Homework:</b> White Dominions which ones, what, when, why – students research one or two countries (compare?) (guiding questions from the teacher)
	<b>Lesson 25. White dominions</b> (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Irish Free State, Newfoundland and South Africa) <b>Results from students’ research</b>	<b>Homework:</b> make up questions about British Empire that you would like to know
<b>Lesson 26. British Empire</b>		

		<p>Students' questions. Teacher will divide the questions between students – they will try to answer using sources (teacher has seen the questions beforehand and is ready to fill in any gaps)</p> <p>WebQuest</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> read about Britain in World Wars, what happened after WWII , British Empire ending (guiding questions)</p>
	<p><b>Lesson 27. Britain as a power in the world</b>          Britain in World Wars          Remembrance day          After WW II</p>	<p>Connections with our history</p>
	<p><b>Lesson 28.</b>          Summary of the main topic          British Empire</p>	<p><b>Required entries to the study journal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework notes + additional notes taken in class</li> <li>• Short summary of the first main topic, what did you learn, what would you like to further discover on your own?</li> </ul> <p>Homework: Elizabeth II – guiding questions          Topics to research and present</p>
MODERN MONARCHY	<p><b>Lesson 29. Elizabeth II life and legacy</b>          Edward VIII abdication – King George VI and Elizabeth II          Commonwealth - Elizabeth II started Commonwealth now, new countries joining, Charles continuing with it</p>	<p>Students: Mini-lectures (2min) on the topic they researched</p>
	<p><b>Lesson 30. Monarchy Elizabeth II</b></p>	<p><b>Homework:</b> members of the royal family</p>
	<p><b>Lesson 31. The monarchy Stories of Elizabeth and Philip, Charles and Diana, Charles and Camilla The new Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh – Edward and Sophie</b></p>	<p><b>Homework:</b> group task – the image of William and Kate vs Harry and Meghan (publicity, topics etc.)</p>
	<p><b>Lesson 32. Modern Royal Family</b></p>	<p>Sibling rivalry          William and Kate          Harry and Meghan          The future of monarchy</p>

		Charles III
	<b>Lesson 33.</b> Monarchy nowadays and in the future. What might change?	<b>Homework:</b> the monarchy in 20-30 years?
	<b>Lesson 34. King Charles III, coronation spring/summer 2023</b>	Discussion
	<b>Lesson 35.</b> Final lesson – fun quiz – the whole course – questions by students(trick questions/details from the course etc)	<b>Final entry to the journal:</b> essay discussing a topic chosen a summary of what the student has learned during the course Feedback on the course – questionnaire?

## Appendix 2. Lesson plan 1. Introduction

### Learning outcomes:

#### Students

- express their opinion on keywords they associate with culture
- discuss the keywords with classmates
- define culture in their own words
- complete a map with the correct terminology

**Introduction:** the teacher explains that the students will take part in lessons where we explore a few topics on British culture and that the teacher will analyse how the lessons worked out and whether she needs to make changes to her course syllabus. The students were also asked to answer some feedback questions about the lessons.

#### **Main part of the lesson:**

- *What is culture?*

Mentimeter (<https://www.mentimeter.com/>) Students need their smartphones to participate.

Students insert keywords that they associate with culture

Word cloud of the keywords combined. Discussion.

- Define culture in groups. Come up with definitions in your own words. Discussion. The teacher gives examples of definitions found online – discussion and comparison with their own definitions.
- Geography and terms: UK, Great Britain etc (a map to illustrate) – students get the map without the terminology, discuss it in groups, and complete the map. Class discussion of the results. The teacher reveals the correct answers.

**Conclusion:** concluding the discussion of the term *culture*. Explain the task the students have to complete before the next lesson. Hand out the topics for groups: different groups of invaders (Celts, Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, Normans)

**Homework:** each group will research a certain group of settlers/invaders. They will find information independently and answer the questions:

Who were they and where did they come from?

Why did they come to Britain?

What is known about their lifestyle?

How did they influence the life in Britain? What did they bring with them, what did they build etc?





Google Forms feedback questionnaire for the students.

**Conclusion:** the teacher summarises the topic and adds more information if necessary, and explains terms or definitions. Short discussion. Ask about Henry VIII (what do they know about him?)

**Homework:** Watch the introductory video about Henry VIII and complete the short quiz.

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7BPFdK3D6c&ab\\_channel=LearningAcademy](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7BPFdK3D6c&ab_channel=LearningAcademy)

Quiz: <https://quizizz.com/join?gc=31715807>

## Appendix 5. Lesson plan 3. Henry VIII

Learning outcomes:

Students

- describe Henry's aims and character (early life)
- compare him with his father Henry VII
- know what happened to Henry's wives
- discuss "the King's great matter"
- discuss the changes that took place while Henry VIII reigned

**Introduction:** the teacher asks about homework and if necessary, addresses any problems or questions the students might have. Asks about the wives of Henry VIII and explains the plan for the lesson.

**Main part:** discussion in groups about what the students found out about Henry VIII.

Discussion questions. What did you already know about Henry VIII? Bring out 3 things that you didn't know before.

Students find information about the wives and fill in the table with facts. Discussion in class.

Compare life then and now: health, society, and domestic violence.

Letter to the Pope from Henry VIII asking for a divorce, explaining the reasons. Formal letter requirements have to be followed.

**Conclusion:** summarising the topic. Teacher asks for oral feedback about the tasks and makes notes.

**Homework:** The British Empire. Watch the video and answer the questions.

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mnws0xna2To&ab\\_channel=ThisIsHistory](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mnws0xna2To&ab_channel=ThisIsHistory)

Questions:

1. What was the British Empire? Explain it in your own words in full sentences.
2. How did the Empire expand?
3. The first colonies were .....?
4. What kind of problems arose with the colonies? Why?
5. Why were the discoveries of James Cook important? What happened to him?
6. What kind of people were sent to Australia?
7. Who was also interested in gaining more power in the world?
8. What country was the most valuable possession of the Empire? Why?

## Appendix 6. Lesson plan 4. The British Empire

Learning outcomes:

Students

- explain the term *British Empire*
- name problems that emerged in the territories of the Empire
- research and bring out the possible advantages and disadvantages of being part of the British Empire

**Introduction:** the teacher asks about homework and what the students found out. Students share the answers to questions that they finished at home. The teacher asks more questions to get an idea of how well the students understood the topic or if they had just written short and general answers to questions.

**Main part:** discussion and expansion of the topic, teacher adds information if necessary. 2 groups will research and discuss either the downsides or the upsides of belonging to the British Empire. The focus is on the territories they influenced, the possible perks, and also the problems caused by their regulations. Discussion, the teacher adds information if necessary, expands the topic, or helps to understand problems.

**Conclusion:** oral feedback from the students on the culture lessons and homework type.

## RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL  
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

**Liina Laanejärv**

**Designing a syllabus and piloting lesson plans for an elective course on British culture for upper-secondary students of August Kitzberg Gymnasium**

**Briti kultuuri valikkursuse ainekava loomine ja tunnikavade testimine August Kitzbergi nimelise Gümnaasiumi õpilastele**

**Magistritöö**

2023

Lehekülgede arv: 53

Käesoleva magistritöö eesmärgiks on luua gümnaasiumiõpilastele mõeldud Briti kultuuri valikkursus, mille fookuses on ajalugu, monarhia, geograafia ja sümbolid. Kursuse eesmärkide hulgas on õpilastes huvi äratamine, Briti kultuuri teemadel arutlemine, inglise keele riigieksamiks valmistumise toetamine, eriti suulise ja kirjaliku väljendusoskuse arendamine.

Kuna koolis, kus autor töötab, ei ole varasemalt loodud ainekava ega õppematerjale antud aine õpetamiseks, siis tuli esmalt teha valik, milliseid teemasid kursusel käsitleda.

Lisaks teemade valikule tuli arvesse võtta antud kooli ja õpilaste eripära. Kuna autor on koolis inglise keele õpetaja, saab antud kursuse loomiseks kasutada ära kogemusi õpilastega ja samuti kasutatavate õppematerjalidega, et leida parim viis kultuuriteemade õpetamiseks. Tavaline valikkursuse pikkus on 35 tundi, igäüks kestab 45 minutit. Antud kursuse toimumise jaoks on valitud arvutiklass, et võimaldada õpilastel tunni ajal oma virtuaalsesse õpimappi märkmete tegemist ja erinevatel teemadel reflekteerimist ning kodutöö märkmete kasutamist.

Selleks, et antud kursuse ainekava ja plaani täiustada, toimus ka testimisperiood, mille jooksul viidi õpilastega läbi 4 tunnikava erinevatel Briti kultuuri teemadel. Tunnid viidi läbi 11.klassi õpilastega, kes on järgmisel aastal toimuva valikkursuse sihtgrupp. Antud õpilased on ka autori poolt juhendatavas inglise keele rühmas, seega oli kõige mõistlikum tunnid nendega läbi viia tavapärase inglise keele tundide asemel, et mitte häirida tunniplaani ja teiste õpetajate tööd. Tunnid toimusid ühe nädala jooksul ja sellest tulenevalt oli märgata ka õpilaste motivatsioonipuudust, kuna ettevalmistused, mis tuli kodus teha, olid mitmel juhul tegemata või vähesel määral tehtud.

Testimisperiodi jooksul katsetati tunde, mis käsitlevad järgnevaid teemasid: kultuur ja selle defineerimine, varajased asustajad, kuningas Henry VIII ja Briti impeeriumi algus. Testimise käigus ilmnas aspekte, mida tulevase kursuse jaoks arvesse võtta ja autor toob välja mõned soovitusel. Kuna õpilaste lugemishuvi on kasin ja nad eelistavad video vaatamist, kaalub autor kursuse jaoks videoloengute ettevalmistamist, mis annaksid õpilastele võimaluse kodus end teemaga kurssi viia ja olla tunniks valmis. Lisaks videoloengutele peavad õpilased siiski ka lugema ja harjuma keerukamate tekstidega, et valmistuda tulevikuõpinguteks ja täita

ka õppekava poolt loodud eesmärged. Samuti ilmnes, et kui õpilastel oli ülesandeks kodus valmistuda ja omal käel vastatada online küsitlusele, ei pruugi nad seda kodus teha, vaid hoopis koolis enne tundi. Seega tuleks tulevikus teha kindlaks, et küsimustik või test oleks avatud ainult teatud kellaaajani ja hiljem sellele vastata ei saaks.

Positiivse aspektina tuleb välja tuua, et õpilased osalesid innukalt tunnis toimunud aruteludes ja neil on mõningased teadmised Briti kultuuri ja ajaloo teemadest, mis aitab autoril kursuse jaoks kava kohendada ja valida teemad, millele konkreetsete õpilastega keskenduda. Kuna antud valikkursus on mõeldud just 12.klassi õpilastele, siis tuleb arvestada sellega, et kevadel on neil eksamiperiood ja enne seda ka eksamiteks valmistumise aeg, mis lühendab ka valikursuse kestvust. Kursuse ainekava loodi siiski ideaalset olukorda silmas pidades ja võimaldab õpetajal kursust paindlikumalt kavandada kui on konkreetse õpilaste grupiga kohtunud ja võimalused edasiseks tööks kindlaks tehtud.

Märksõnad: inglise keel, briti kultuur, kultuuri õpetamine, ümberpööratud klassiruum, gümnaasiumi riiklik õppekava

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Liina Laanejärv

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Liina Laanejärv  
16.05.2023

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