

**МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ И НАУКИ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ**

Курганский государственный университет  
Кафедра иностранных языков гуманитарных специальностей

## **АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ЯЗЫК**

**Практикум по развитию навыков  
устной речи на основе  
профессионально-ориентированных  
текстов по специальности 030401 (020700) «История»  
для студентов I-II курсов  
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# **Part 1**

## **Great Britain**

### **Text 1. British peoples**

Little is known about the earliest human inhabitants of the British Isles. Scientific study of prehistoric times has taught us something about the tools, the burial habits, and the domestic architecture of these peoples.

About 3000 B.C. a people called Iberians who came by sea from Spain appeared. We know much more about the latest of prehistoric peoples, the Celts. They certainly came over from North West Europe. The Celts imposed their language on all inhabitants of the islands. From one of their tribes or peoples, the Brythons, has come the name Britain.

Early in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century the Romans conquered Britain with their legions and organized part of the island as a province of their Great Empire. Politically and culturally their invasion was a major consequence for it brought the island for the first time in touch with civilization. It brought Roman law and business.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries after Roman law had ended Britain was subjected to mass invasion by pagan Germanic tribes. Some purely Germanic villages were formed in England, especially in Kent and East Anglia.

In the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries came the raids of the Vikings from the Scandinavian peninsulas. Some of these sea-raiders stayed in the east of England, in Ireland and in the north of Scotland. They formed important Danish and Norwegian elements in the British nation.

Then in 1066 William the Conqueror of Normandy headed the last invasion in Great Britain. Like that of the Romans this invasion from across the Channel added little to the stock of the islands.

Since the Norman Conquest there have been a few small additions to the peoples of these islands – Flemish weavers in the late Middle Ages, and refugee French Huguenots, in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

With the discovery of new worlds in America and the Pacific people began to move out from the British Isles and though the total population at home has vastly increased, these islands have added millions of persons to the countries of the new world.

The British peoples – English, Welsh, Scots, Irish became a united nation after the Norman Conquest. The Normans set up a strong central monarchy with the necessary legal and financial institutions. When the French-speaking aristocracy and

the Anglo-Saxon-speaking common people had grown together into an English-speaking nation by the later Middle Ages, the unity of the country was complete.

### Topical vocabulary

1. to impose smth. on – навязывать
2. legion – легион
3. major – значительный, важный
4. to be in touch with – соприкоснуться с ...
5. to subject to – подвергать чему-либо
6. stock – основной состав
7. to add – добавлять
8. refugee – беглец, беженец, эмигрант
9. vastly – очень, крайне, в огромной степени
10. common – общий
11. reserve – сдержанность
12. coldness – холодность
13. inhuman treatment – бесчеловечное обращение

### Communication activities

**Task 1.** Answer the following questions:

1. What have you learnt about the Iberians?
2. What have you learnt about the Celts?
3. What was the effect of the Celtic invasion?
4. When did the Romans conquer Britain?
5. Why was the Roman invasion of major consequence for Britain?
6. What invasions was Britain subjected to in the 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> centuries?
7. When did the raids of the Vikings come?
8. What was the effect of their invasion?
9. What have you learnt about William the Conqueror?
10. How did the discovery of new worlds in America and the Pacific effect the British peoples?
11. What peoples make the Britains?
12. When did the British peoples become a united nation?

**Task 2.** Comment on the following or suggest additional information on the subject:

1. Little new human stock was added to Britain in the three centuries of Roman rule, for the Romans did not come to settle.
2. The Anglo-Saxons killed vast number of the earlier inhabitants except in Cornwall, Wales and the Highlands of Scotland.
3. They set up a new country with a new human stock.
4. The total population on the British Isles has also vastly increased.
5. These islands have added millions of people to the countries of the new world.
6. The Anglo-Saxons lived in tribes and early England was divided into seven independent and warring kingdoms.
7. The foreigners have almost universally noted the coldness of Englishmen and their reserve.
8. These short, dark people called Iberians still survive as a physical type in Wales.
9. The British peoples – English, Welsh, Scots, Irish were one after another brought together in political unity under the English Crown.
10. Union with Scotland has been a success, union with Ireland at least a partial failure.

**Task 3.** Translate into English:

1. После крестовых походов торговля с Востоком значительно возросла.
2. Это вторжение имело колоссальное политическое и культурное значение.
3. Кельты насаждали свою культуру и язык повсюду на всех обитателей островов.
4. В 9 и 10 веках со Скандинавского полуострова совершали свои набеги викинги.
5. Вильгельм Завоеватель возглавил последнее вторжение на Британские острова.
6. После норманнского завоевания народы Британии объединились.
7. К концу средневековья объединение страны было завершено.
8. После падения Римского права Британия подверглась массовым вторжениям языческих германских племён.
9. Римляне впервые дали Британии представление о цивилизации.

**Task 4.** Topics for discussion:

1. The Iberians and Celts.
2. The Roman conquest.
3. The Norman conquest.
4. The unity of the country.

## **Text 2. A Century of paradox**

The Fifteenth Century was an age of violent contrasts. To some people it has appeared a period of general decline, of ruined towns and political chaos. Others have

pointed to the real increase of prosperity of the mass of the people, to the growth of trade and industry and to the development of parliamentary institutions in the period from 1399 to 1450. While feudal relations and the feudal mode of production were decaying, bourgeois relations and the bourgeois mode of production were developing rapidly.

The decline of feudalism did not only affect the baronage and agriculture, it affected also the towns and guild organisations. The Black Death and the heavy taxation entailed by the Hundred `Years` War dealt a heavy blow at the towns. An important exception to this decline of towns was the continued progress of London and a few great ports like Bristol. The most profitable branches of foreign trade became increasingly concentrated in the hands of the organisation known as the Merchant Adventurers, who were able to squeeze out competitors and to canalise trade into a few places. The growth, especially of London, became one of the reasons for the decline of lesser trade centres.

At that time the raids of pirates were more frequent as a result of the continued wars and many towns were stormed and burned by such raiders. Inside the towns the guilds were growing more exclusive and the apprenticeship system was ceasing to be a normal stage in the development of a craftsman and was being used to keep the guilds in the hands of a selected minority. Under Henry IV it became illegal for any but freeholders with twenty shillings a year to apprentice their children.

### **Topical vocabulary**

1. decline – падение, упадок
2. prosperity – процветание, благосостояние
3. increase – возрастание, рост
4. decay – упадок, распад
5. taxation – обложение налогом
6. profitable – прибыльный, доходный
7. to squeeze – вытеснять
8. raid – набег
9. apprenticeship – обучение (ремеслу)

### **Communication activities**

**Task 1.** Find the answers to the questions:

1. Why was the 15<sup>th</sup> century the age of violent contrast?
2. What spheres of life did the decline of Feudalism affect?
3. In whose hands did the most profitable branches of Foreign trade become concentrated?

4. Why did the raids of pirates on towns become more frequent?

**Task 2.** Pick out information which you think is the most informative or important.

### **Text 3. British Colonial Imperialism**

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain was gradually losing her position of the world's leading industrial power. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the USA became the most developed country in the world, while Germany surpassed Britain in the development of certain important branches of industry.

The key feature of imperialism is the emergence of monopolies, and in Britain monopolies developed strongly from the closing years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was especially the case in the iron and steel industries, in shipping and ship-building, in some new industries like the manufacture of chemicals, soaps and in the case of the railways and banks. In 1902 there were 57 trusts and monopolies of other types in Britain.

The next important feature of imperialism was the division of the world among the imperialist powers. The race to colonise the world was intensified by the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Between 1875 and 1900 the area taken over by imperialist states increased from 11 per cent to 90 per cent in Africa alone. However, British imperialism was predominantly of colonial character.

#### **Topical vocabulary**

1. transition – переход, перемещение
2. surpass – превосходить, превышать
3. emergence – появление
4. predominant – преобладающий
5. to intensify – усиливать

#### **Communication activities**

**Task 1.** Pick out the key sentences from the text.

**Task 2.** Pick out additional information from the text.

**Task 3.** Have a talk on the types of monopolies emerged in Britain from the closing years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Text 4. Beginning of Britain`s truggle with Spain.**

1. With the appearance of factories British exports to other countries increased. British shipping developed rapidly. The merchants carried cloth, coal and fish in their ships to European countries and colonies.

2. Spain which had the biggest colonies, was Britain`s main rival in sea trade. The Spanish government forbade foreign merchants to trade with Spanish colonies. But they ignored the prohibition, and British pirates pillaged the Spanish coast and made daring expeditions to the shores of America. Spanish ships carrying gold and silver from America often became the pirates` prey. Special merchants` companies were formed in Britain to organise pirate expeditions against the Spaniards.

3. Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603) patronized trade and navigation. A big fleet was built during her reign. The Queen secretly supported the pirates and received part of their booty. The most successful of the pirates became admirals in the Royal Navy.

4. Spain began to prepare for an invasion of Britain. A huge fleet of 130 ships sailed to Britain with 20,000 soldiers aboard. They were to land in the mouth of the Thames. Confident of their victory, the Spaniards called their fleet the “Invincible Armada”.

5. In 1588 British troops attacked the Spanish fleet in the English Channel. There were sea battles for two weeks. The light and speedy British vessels, manned by experienced sailors, fired at the enemy fleet at long range, and damaged, burnt and sank many ships. The Spaniards suffered heavy losses. Their fleet was driven into the North Sea, and they tried to sail home round Scotland. Only a few ships reached home.

6. The defeat of the “Invincible Armada” undermined Spain`s naval power, while Britain gradually came to dominate the sea and became a strong sea power.

### **Topical vocabulary**

1. merchant – купец
2. rival – соперник, конкурент
3. forbid – запрещать
4. to ignore – игнорировать, отвергать
5. patronize – опекать, покровительствовать
6. navigation – мореходство, навигация
7. booty – награбленное добро, добыча
8. to sail – плавать, отплывать
9. to man – укомплектовать личным составом
10. to fire at – стрелять
11. to suffer – потерпеть



## Communication activities

**Task 1.** Give some facts from the text to support the following statements:

1. Foreign merchants ignored the prohibition to trade with Spanish colonies.
2. Queen Elizabeth I patronized trade and navigation.
3. Spain began to prepare for an invasion of Britain.
4. In 1588 British troops attacked the Spanish fleet in the English Channel.

### Text 5. London

London, the capital of Great Britain, is one of the oldest and largest cities of the world.

It is said that London is two thousand years old. Hundreds of years before our era it was a small settlement on the banks of the Thames. To this place, in the year 55 B.C., Caesar came from London.

Llyn-din (which means `a lonely place`) – that was the name of the settlement – became Londinium. The Romans made Londinium a large and rich city with good streets, beautiful palaces, shops and villas. It was surrounded by walls and its gates were locked at nights.

In the fifth century the Romans left Britain and Saxons and Danes invaded the British shores. They conquered the land and ruined the city.

During nearly 400 years Londinium lay in ruins, grass grew where the beautiful buildings had been before, wild beasts walked on the good Roman roads.

In the 9<sup>th</sup> century and later Saxon kings began to rebuild the ruined city of Londonium. Soon, two miles west from it, another centre, Westminster Abbey was founded.

In 1066 came William the Duke of Normandy, or William the Conqueror. He settled in Londinium which now became London. For 500 years the Normans were masters of Britain. They brought with them Latin and French civilization, the learning, the laws and the organization of the land.

The Norman masters went everywhere about the country, building new palaces and churches and cathedrals. Simple wooden halls were good enough for poor Britons, stone and marble were used by the Normans who wanted to shine in the conquered land. The ideas were Norman, the labour was British.

Westminster Abbey was finished and William was the first king to be crowned there. Since then for nearly 1000 years, all English kings have been crowned in the Abbey. Many of them are buried there too.

At that time the Tower of London was built on the Thames, it stands there unchanged, for nearly 1000 years.

In 1665 a great misfortune – the Plague – fell upon London. At that time London was a busy, rich and crowded city. The streets were so narrow that the people, out of their bedroom windows on one side of the road, could shake hands

with those living on the opposite side. Lots of ships came to London daily. On one of them, together with some goods, the Great Plague had arrived in London. People fell ill one after another, whole families died. Many people tried to run away from London and died on the roads. In the city the houses of the sick were guarded so that no one could come in or go out. Baskets were hung out of the windows for the food for those inside. A large red cross was painted on the door to tell everybody: The Plague Is In the House. At night `the Dead Cart` went round the streets. The driver rang the bell and shouted, `Bring out your dead`. All life in London came to a standstill, the ships stopped coming, the streets were empty and grass grew between the stones.

By the end of summer there were not enough people to bury the dead. In a few months nearly 100,000 died, about one fifth of the population. It was the winter cold that saved the city.

In 1666, just the year after the Plague, there was the Great fire in London, which destroyed 3000 houses and 97 churches. They say that a young and careless baker left at night a small bundle of wood near a very hot oven. In a few hours big flames were seen all along the narrow street. All the houses, made of wood, soon were burning like paper. Small shops on the riverside caught fire at once and from there on to the houses on London Bridge. The fire on the bridge destroyed the water-wheel, so there was no more water to put out the fire. Only when the wind changed and then stopped blowing, a heavy rain fell and London – what was left of it – was saved.

The Fire cleared away the old and dirty houses and a new London, a London of stone, with wider streets and better houses was built.

### **Topical vocabulary**

1. to surround – окружать
2. to invade – вторгаться
3. church – церковь
4. cathedral – собор
5. to crown – короновать
6. misfortune – несчастье, беда
7. plague – чума
8. to guard – охранять
9. to bury – хоронить
10. baker – пекарь

### **Communication activities**

**Task 1.** Ask your fellow-students questions to find out:

- 1) how Londinium looked like under the Romans;
- 2) who ruined the city in the 5<sup>th</sup> century;
- 3) when Londinium became London;
- 4) what the Normans brought with them in London;
- 5) what historical facts they know about Westminster Abbey;
- 6) how London looked like in 1665;
- 7) what misfortune the Plague brought to Londoners;
- 8) if they know some facts about the Great fire in London.

**Task 2.** Have a talk on the text with your partner. Make use of the questions above.

**Task 3.** Guess the meaning of the following statements:

### **Do You Know That ...**

... one of the oldest spots in London is Charing Cross, an open space to the south of Trafalgar Square? There was a small village here once. The villagers were charring wood, making charcoal of it. That is why the village was named Charing. Here, until removed by Parliament during the Civil War (1647) stood Eleanor's Cross, a Gothic monument erected in 1291 by Edward I. A modern copy of the cross stands in the courtyard of Charing Cross Railway Station.

... the Mall is a very wide Royal avenue with a Palace and magnificent Stafford House on one side and St. James' Park on the other?

... the Circus is not only a kind of show, but it is also a circular open space in a city or town where a number of streets meet? You know Piccadilly Circus, Ludgate Circus and some others. The word square is used if the open space is rectangular in shape. You know Trafalgar Square, Leicester Square, Hanover Square, Cavendish Square and some others.

... the Strand is one of the oldest streets in London skirting the bank of the Thames, the great artery of traffic between the West End and the City, one of the principal thoroughfares of London? (Strand means 'a river's bank'.)

... Bloomsbury Square dates from 1665? It is a 'literary district', many writers and art critics used to live here. It is known for the British Museum founded in 1753.

... Park Lane is one-sided London street where the richest bourgeois live? It skirts the east side of Hyde Park and is a synonym for wealth.

... Drury Lane is the street in London where the famous Drury Lane Theatre stands?

... Covent Garden is the principal vegetable, fruit and flower market in London? The Royal Opera House known as Covent Garden is almost inside the market.

... Hoxton is a poor and crowded district in London inhabited by workers and artisans?

...the biggest of London Parks are: Kensington Gardens, Hyde Park, Green Park, James` Park, Regent`s Park, Battersea Park, Victoria Park, Richmond Park, Finsbury Park, Palace Park and Kew Gardens?

...the Serpentine is an artificial lake running the whole length of Hyde Park?

...in 1847 the First and the Second Congresses of the Union of Communists took place in London?

...in 1848 the first edition of the Manifesto of the Communist Party was published in London?

...in 1864 the First International was founded in London?

...in 1857-1865 A. I. Herzen and N.P. Ogaryov were publishing their magazine *The Bell* (Kolokol) in London.

...to commemorate the Great Fire of 1666 the column known now as the Monument was erected? It is 202 ft high, 311 steps ascend to the top of the column from which there is a magnificent view of London.

...St. Giles is the heart of London slums, the worst quarter of London?

...the typical Londoners of the East End are called cockneys.

...there are many street artists in London who draw their pictures right on the pavements?

...Hyde Park is the largest and finest of the London parks? It is a favourite place of organized crowds holding demonstrations. It is famous for its Speakers` Corner where open air meetings take place.

...there are many swans in London and according to the tradition they are considered to be the property of the Royal family?

**Task 4.** Comment on the facts above, using your knowledge of London.

## **Text 6. Tower of London**

For a city whose history goes back nearly 2000 years, London has a fine display of great buildings, but because of the devastation of the Great Fire and two world wars, few of them date back further than the 17<sup>th</sup> century. And the Tower is one of them. Very few buildings in the world can have witnessed so much of a country`s history as the solid Tower of London. The Tower has performed many roles, among them that of fortress (under the Norman), place of execution and fortune (under the Tudors), palace. Miniature zoo (under Henry III), and museum – which is the service it performs today.

The Tower is one of the most historic buildings in England, if not the world. There is no controversy in saying that it attracts far more visitors than any other building in the United Kingdom. It is a very old building, more than 900 years old.

There is no single answer to the question what is the Tower. But the first thing to say is that it is a great fortress. Built in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century by William the Conqueror, the Tower soon became England`s symbol of power. Whoever held the

Tower, held the kingdom. England's early kings, when they visited their kingdoms and dukedoms across the Channel, left the key to their kingdom in the care of a Constable, who was their most powerful and loyal magnate. The Constable is still appointed by the monarch. These days he tends to be a retired officer of great distinction of the armed services.

But the Tower has always been much more than a fortress. It is still technically a royal palace, though the main palace buildings south of the White Tower (the oldest part of the Tower of London) were finally destroyed by Cromwell.

In addition to fortress and palace, from time immemorial the Tower has been the repository of the Crown Jewels and the national collections of arms and armour. It is one of the greatest museums of the world. During its long history it has also served as the Royal Treasury, the Mint, the law courts, the Royal Observatory.

For centuries the Tower has been the state prison; and it is in this role that it lingers in the popular memory. It is here that the ghosts of three beheaded queens – Catherine Howard, Anne Boleyn and Lady Jane Grey – haunt the inner chambers. The most notable Tower mystery is the `disappearance` in 1485 of the two little princes, Edward and Richard, who were imprisoned in the Bloody Tower by their uncle who later became King Richard III. The latter's proclaimed innocence of their murder has been the subject of historical debate ever since. In 1605 Guy Fawkes and his companions who had tried to blow up the Houses of Parliament were tortured unmercifully in the dungeons of the great White Tower. And even in this century the Tower has been used to guard notorious prisoners, the last being Hitler's Nazi deputy Rudolf Hess in 1941.

The Tower is still a village in which more than 200 people live. The Tower is guarded by the yeomen warders popularly called `Beefeaters`. There are two letters, E.R., on the front of their tunics. They stand for the Queen's name Elizabeth Regina. The uniform is as it is used to be in Tudor times. Their everyday uniform is black and red. But on state occasions they wear a ceremonial dress: fine red state uniforms with the golden and black stripes and the wide lace collar, which were in fashion in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Every night at 10 p.m. at the Tower of London the Ceremony of the Keys, or locking up of the Tower for the night, takes place. It goes back to the Middle Ages. The keys are finally carried to the Queen's House where they are safe for the night. After the ceremony, everyone who approaches the gate must give the password, which changes every day.

### **Topical vocabulary.**

1. execution – казнь, экзекуция
2. torture – пытка
3. repository – хранилище
4. jewels – драгоценность
5. mint – монетный двор
6. to behead –

7. treasury – сокровищница
8. to imprison – заключать в тюрьму
9. innocence – невинность, невиновность
10. debate – дискуссия, дебаты
11. notorious – известный
12. to guard – охранять
13. warder – стражник
14. password – пароль, пропуск

### Communication activities.

**Task 1.** Pick out the facts from the text to prove that:

1. The Tower has performed many roles.
2. The Tower became England`s symbol of power.
3. The Tower was the state prison.
4. It was one of the greatest museums of the world.
5. The Tower is guarded by the yeomen warders.

**Task 2.** Make a short summary of the text.

## Text 7. Early and Medieval Literature

The English literary tradition, like the English language, begins with a fusion of Germanic and Romance elements. The Germanic poetry brought to the island by the Saxons did not develop much here, although it was early Christianized, but its verse structure contributed to modern English versification. It was based on a regular succession of strong stresses marked by alliteration. To get the feeling of it read some of the epic *Beowulf*.

*Beowulf* is the largest epic of the early English literature which was brought in the sixth century by the Angles. But it is not about England nor even about the Angles; it is a sheer Scandinavian mythology, of monsters and rescues. Its main tone is of northern melancholy, fatalism and heroic fight to typical of this form of poetry (see, for example the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer and the *Aeneid* of Virgil).

Names of history and literature fade into one another as night into day. It`s wise to remember at least one great name which stands for the period described. It`s Chaucer (1340-1400), the giant of the English medieval poetry. *The Canterbury Tales*<sup>1</sup> are his masterpiece. In this work he didn`t use the alliteration metre, but naturalized French versification, which depends on a fixed number of syllabus to the line. Chaucer transformed the accepted types into something new, different in structure and form.

In general medieval literary works fall into such main types as romance, allegory, debate, animal tales, etc. One type that is specially important is the romance. By this time are known the cycles of story that were common property throughout medieval Europe. Of these the chief one in England was the story cycle that related to adventures of King Arthur and his Knights. Chaucer's *The Nun's Priest's Tale*<sup>2</sup> is the most delightful of all animal tales. The great medieval poem *Vision of Piers Plowman*<sup>3</sup> presents a social philosophy of that time by means of allegory.

It is during this period that ballad became the wide-spread type of story-telling, notable for its form and technique. The ballads were transmitted from mouth to mouth through a number of generations before they were written down by the collectors. Scottish ballads were especially popular at that time.

<sup>1</sup> *The Canterbury Tales*-«Кентерберийские рассказы»

<sup>2</sup> *The Nun's Priest's Tale*-«Рассказ священника, сопровождающего настоятельницу»

<sup>3</sup> *Vision of Piers Plowman*-«Видение о Петре-пахаре»

### Topical vocabulary

1. versification – стихосложение
2. succession – последовательность
3. alliteration – аллитерация
4. epic – эпос
5. rescue – спасать, освобождать
6. medieval – средневековый
7. cycle – цикл
8. romance – романтика
9. allegory – аллегория
10. ballad – баллада

### Communication activities

**Task 1.** Match English and Russian equivalents:

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. literary tradition                       | a. посредством аллегории   |
| 2. animal tales                             | b. структура стиха         |
| 3. modern English versification             | c. цикл рассказов          |
| 4. to be related to smth                    | d. литературная традиция   |
| 5. to be transmitted from mouth to mouth    | e. закономерная            |
| 6. the giant of the English medieval poetry | последовательность ударных |
| 7. by means of allegory                     | слов                       |
| 8. a regular succession of strong stresses  | f. современное английское  |
| 9. verse structure                          | стихосложение              |

10.the cycle of stories

- g. рассказы о животных
- h. относиться к чему-либо
- i. гигант английской средневековой поэзии
- j. передаваться из уст в уста

**Task 2.** Correct the following statements:

1. The Germanic poetry brought to the island by the Saxons didn't develop much here. 2. *Beowulf*, the largest epic of the early English literature, was brought in the eighth century by the Saxons and was a sheer reflection of Saxon mythology. 3. The most story-cycle in medieval English literature was related to adventures of King Arthur and his Knights. 4. In his work *The Canterbury Tales* Chaucer used the alliteration metre, typical of the early English literature. 5. Chaucer's *The nun's Priest's Tale* is the most delightful of all animal tales.

**Task 3.** Answer the questions on the text:

1. What was the modern English versification influenced by? 2. Was *Beowulf* the largest epic of the early English literature? 3. What are the characteristic features of the English epic? 4. Who was the greatest representative of the early English literature and what was his masterpiece? 5. What main types do medieval literary works fall into? 6. What other types of story-telling became popular at that period?

**Task 4.** Make a short summary of the text.

### **Text 8. The British Monarchy Today**

The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy. This means that it has a monarch (a king or a queen) as its Head of State. The monarch reigns with the support of Parliament. The powers of the monarch are not defined precisely. Everything today is done in the Queen's name. It is her government, her armed forces, her law courts and so on. She appoints all the Ministers, including the Prime Minister. Everything is done however on the advice of the elected Government, and the monarch takes no part in the decision-making process.

Once the British Empire included a large number of countries all over the world ruled by Britain. The process of decolonisation began in 1947 with the independence of India, Pakistan and Ceylon. How, apart from Hong Kong and a few small islands, there is no longer an empire. But the British ruling classes tried not to



lose influence over the former colonies of the British Empire. An association of former members of the British Empire and Britain was founded in 1949. It is called the Commonwealth. It includes many countries such as Ireland, Burma, the Sudan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and others. The Queen of Great Britain is also the Head of the Commonwealth, and so the Queen of Canada, Australia, New Zealand ...

The Queen is very rich as are other members of the royal family. In addition, the government pays for her expenses as Head of State, for a royal yacht, train and aircraft as well as for the upkeep of several palaces. The Queen`s image appears on stamps, notes and coins.

Parliament consists of two chambers known as the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Parliament and the monarch have different roles in the government of the country, and they only meet together on symbolic occasions such as the coronation of a new monarch or the opening of Parliament. In reality, the House of Commons is the only one of the three which has true power. It is here that new bills are introduced and debated. If the majority of the members are in favour of a bill it goes to the House of Lords to be debated and finally to the monarch to be signed. Only then it becomes law. Although a bill must be supported by all three bodies, the House of Lords only has limited powers, and the monarch has not refused to sign one since the modern political system began over 200 years ago.

### **Topical vocabulary**

1. the Commonwealth – Содружество (политическое и экономическое объединение, центром которого является Великобритания. Включает 49 независимых государств. В Содружество входят также зависимые территории Великобритании, Австралии и Новой Зеландии).
2. chamber – палата парламента
3. the House of Commons – палата общин (нижняя палата парламента; играет важную роль в осуществлении его законодательных функций)
4. the House of Lords – палата лордов (верхняя палата парламента; невыборное учреждение; обладает правом отлагательного вето в отношении законопроектов, принятых палатой общин)
5. bill – билль, законопроект

### **Communication activities**

**Task 1.** Speak on the topics:

1. The Monarchy and its powers.
2. The Formation of the Commonwealth.
3. The Queen – the Head of the Commonwealth.
4. Parliament and the Monarch.

## **Text 9. The Royal Family**

### **The Sovereign**

“Her Most Excellent Majesty Elizabeth the Second by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Her other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith”.

The Queen is the official Head of State and, for many people, a symbol of the unity of the nation. For a thousand years England (and later the whole of the United Kingdom) has been united under one sovereign, a continuity broken only after the Civil War, by the republic of 1649 to 1660. The hereditary principle still operates and the Crown is passed on to the sovereign's eldest son (or daughter if there are no sons).

The Queen has a central role in state affairs, not only through her ceremonial functions, such as opening Parliament, but also because she meets the Prime Minister every week and receives copies of all Cabinet papers. However, she is expected to be impartial of “above politics”, and any advice she may offer the Prime Minister is kept secret.

#### **Functions of the Sovereign:**

- opening and closing Parliament;
- approving the appointment of the Prime Minister;
- giving her Royal Assent to bills;
- giving's honours such as peerages, knighthoods and medals;
- Head of the Commonwealth;
- Head of the Church of England;
- Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.

### **The Royal Family**

Many members of the Royal Family undertake official duties in Britain and abroad. Their various responsibilities reflect tradition, their own personal interests and Britain's former imperial status. For example, among her many titles the Princess Royal (Princess Anne) is Chancellor of the University of London, Colonel-in-Chief of eleven Army regiments, including the 8<sup>th</sup> Canadian Hussars and the Royal New Zealand Nursing Corps, and President of the Save the Children Fund, for whom she has travelled widely.

The Royal Family's money comes from two sources: government funds and their own personal wealth, which is considerable. On the one hand the Queen is certainly one of the richest women in the world, while on the other her power is limited by the fact that so many of her expenses are paid for by government money.

Parliament has had effective control of the monarch`s finances since the seventeenth century.

### **Topical vocabulary**

1. sovereign – монарх
2. hereditary – наследственный
3. Royal Assent – королевская санкция
4. peerage – сословие пэров, звание пэров
5. realm – королевство, государство; область
6. Commander-in-Chief – главнокомандующий, командующий войсками округа
7. to undertake – предпринимать; брать на себя определенные обязанности
8. regiment – полк, батальон
9. considerable – значительный, важный
10. expenses – расходы

### **Communication activities**

**Task 1.** Answer the questions:

1. What powers does the Queen have in government?
2. Who is the next in line to the British crown after Prince Charles?
3. How can Parliament control the Royal family?
4. What connections can you find between the Royal Family and the world outside Britain?
5. Which member of the Royal Family has the highest number of public engagements?

**Task 2.** Give a short summary of the text.

**Task 3.** Comment on the following or suggest additional information on the subject.

## Part 2

### From the history of Slavs

#### Text 1. Kiev RUS

The state of the Eastern Slavs, the Kiev Rus, was formed in the 9<sup>th</sup> century with its capital in the city of Kiev. The basis of this state was formed by a tribe of Polyanye, called Rus. The majority of Eastern Slav tribes united around this tribe in the 9<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The Kiev princes had a big army and many ships. They undertook campaigns to the shores of the Black and Caspian Seas. Russian merchants traded with the European and eastern countries.

The Grand Duke of Kiev was the supreme ruler. The druzhina, his garrison, was divided into elders (the Boyars and the Duke`s men) and the juniors (the gridi and otroki). The grand Duke`s garrison took part in discussing state affairs.

Rudimentary relations of a slave system existed in Kiev Rus, but they never developed further. The growth of the productive forces provided the basis for the development of feudal relations in Kiev Rus.

The crafts were developing and were gradually breaking away from agriculture. In time the towns became the centres of crafts. In this respect Kiev Rus superseded Western Europe, where this process took shape during the period of developed feudal relations. The Chronicles note the existence of 89 towns in the 11th – century Rus.

Over 60 different trades were known in the 12th century Russian towns and over 150 different articles of iron and steel were manufactured. However, the insufficient social division of labour and the natural type of economy held back the development of home trade.

Foreign trade was more highly developed. One could find Russian merchants in Araby, Byzantium, Poland, Germany, etc.

In the 11th and early 12th centuries Kiev Rus was a powerful, economically developing state.

#### Topical vocabulary

1. majority – большинство
2. to undertake – предпринимать
3. campaign – кампания, военный поход
4. supreme – высочайший, наиболее важный
5. rudimentary – зачаточный, элементарный
6. craft – ремесло
7. superseded – заменять

8. to manufacture – производить
9. insufficient – недостаточный

### **Communication activities**

**Task 1.** Pick out the facts from the text to prove that in the 11<sup>th</sup> and early 12<sup>th</sup> centuries Kiev Rus was a powerful, economically developing state.

**Task 2.** Make a synopsis on the text.

### **Text 2. The Mongol-Tatar Invasion of Russia**

1. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the Mongol-Tartar hordes, nomad horsemen from the steppeland of Central Asia, fell upon Russia. They were fine horsemen and archers, in fact, each Mongol being well equipped to fight.

2. The Mongol-Tatar force was led by a khan and high-born generals, whom the warriors had to obey. Discipline was very harsh. If ten warriors fled from the battlefield, a hundred of warriors would be executed. And if one of the ten warriors was taken captive, then all other would be executed.

3. The Tartar khan, Batu, overran Russia in 1237. The Prince of Ryazan, the first city to be attacked asked the other Russian princes for help. But no help came. The princes fought amongst themselves, and each one hoped that the Tartars would leave him alone.

4. The Mongol-Tartar hordes advanced like an avalanche. Their chieftain called on the people of Ryazan to surrender. However, the people stubbornly defended the city. The Mongol-Tartars continued to attack day and night. They set fire to the log walls and finally broke into the city. Crowding into the streets, they killed old and young and looted homes. By night only a pile of flaming ruins was left.

5. Khan Batu and his hordes thrust further into Russia, leaving ashes and ruins behind them. For four long years Russia fought the invaders.

### **Topical vocabulary**

1. horde – орда
2. steppe – степь
3. archer – стрелок из лука
4. to equip – снаряжать
5. warrior – воин
6. to obey – подчиняться
7. execute – казнить
8. overran – переходить

9. avalanche – лавина
10. to surrender – сдаваться
11. log – бревно
12. to loot – грабить
13. nomad – кочевник

### **Communication activities**

**Task 1.** Answer the following questions:

1. Who led the Mongol-Tartar force?
2. What was the first city to be attacked by the Mongol-Tartar force?
3. How did Mongol-Tartar hordes advance?
4. The people of Ryazan stubbornly defended the city, didn't they?
5. How long did Russia fight the invaders?

**Task 2.** Translate the sentences into Russian:

1. The Prince of Ryazan wanted the other Russian princes to help him fight against the Tartars. 2. One could not hear oneself speak in the battlefield for the great noise. 3. The process of internal unification of the Russian land is known to have taken place simultaneously with the liquidation of the Mongol-Tartar yoke. 4. It was difficult for the people of Russia to defend their cities.

**Task 3.** Make an outline of the text.

**Task 4.** Give the annotation of the text in English.

### **Text 3. Peter the Great**

Peter the Great is the best known of the Russian Tsars. He was the first Tsar to travel outside Russia, and to try and find out what was happening in the rest of Europe. While he was Tsar, Russia changed a great deal. It became more like other European countries, more prosperous, and less like the “barbarous land” which George Turberville had so disliked.

Peter had a strange and wild childhood. He grew up in the country, outside Moscow, and his relatives were too busy quarrelling at court to have any time to attend to him. He was left to learn the things that interested him in his own way. He enjoyed working with wood and making things with his own hands – something Russian princes had never done before. He loved to play at war, and he organized “Play-Regiments” with his young friends, who later came to Moscow as his guards.

As Peter grew older, he spent a great deal of time in the part near Moscow where foreigners lived, and there he met sea-captains, soldiers, and craftsmen, the sort of people he always preferred to make friends with. From these foreigners he learned about the mighty armies and navies of countries west of Russia, and the great industries of Europe.

When Peter was only 24, he became sole Tsar of Russia. By then he was an enormously tall man, very strong, very determined, and with a violent temper. He had great dreams of making Russia as strong and prosperous as the European countries he had learned about. So he decided to visit these countries to find out what made them so prosperous. He travelled in Holland and Germany, and he lived in England for a while, working in the docks at Deptford and learning about ship-building and other crafts. He did not call himself Tsar, but only Peter, son of Michael (Mikhailov). His new friends respected him for his great energy and his skill with his hands. But they were rather alarmed at his roughness and violent behaviour, which did not seem to them much like a king.

Peter was called back to Moscow by a revolt of the palace guards. He punished the rebels with terrible cruelty, even killing some of them with his own hands. Then he set about modernizing Russia, and making it more like the other European countries. Peter was impatient and wanted to do everything all at once. He did not understand that you must not only tell people what to do, but also explain to them how to do it, and why they must change their ways so completely. Many of the changes offended the religious beliefs of old-fashioned Russians, who hated any changes. Peter took away the control of the Church from Patriarch and put the Church under State control. He set up Russia's first civil service and improved the tax-collecting in all parts of Russia. He gave orders that all the nobles were to shave off their big, bushy beards. He even shaved some of the nobles himself, and he had fogged those who still appeared with beards. He ordered everyone to wear European trousers and short coats, instead of the long Russian robes they were used to. Anyone who entered a Russian city in a long robe was made to kneel while his coat was cut to knee length.

Peter spent much of his reign fighting wars, especially against the Swedes and their heroic warrior-king, Charles XII, who led the strongest army in Europe. At first the Russians lost nearly every battle; but Peter would never give up over anything. He knew that the Russian soldiers were brave and could endure much hardship, but they were beaten because they did not know how to fight wars. So he set to work building training schools, and he organized his men into efficient, disciplined regiments, much as he had done as a boy with his friends. In 1709 Peter's army defeated the Swedish king, to the great surprise of all Europe. Ever since Peter's day, the peoples of Europe and Asia have feared and respected the Russian armies.

Peter also built up the first strong Russian navy, using his own first-hand knowledge of ship-building, and even helping to build the ships himself. He won a great naval victory on the Baltic Sea, and for the first time Russian ships sailed freely through the Baltic to the outside world.

Peter thought that Moscow was stuffy and old-fashioned, and that Russia needed a new, modern capital. So he built a new city near the Baltic, on land which he had conquered from the Swedes. The land was so marshy that the city had to be built on deep foundations of strong, wooden piles. Peter`s new city was built of stone, not of wood like the old Russian cities. Thousands of men died in building it, especially during the unhealthy, damp, cold winters. But the lives of these men meant nothing to Peter compared with grand new city, which he called St. Petersburg.

### Topical vocabulary

1. prosperous – процветающий, имеющий удачу
2. determined – решительный
3. violent – неистовый, сильный
4. craft – ремесло
5. revolt – восстание, мятеж
6. rebel – повстанец
7. cruelty – жестокость
8. impatient – нетерпеливый
9. to offend – обижать, оскорблять
10. to improve – улучшать
11. efficient – умелый, подготовленный
12. reign – царствование
13. to endure – выносить
14. regiment – полк
15. navy – военно-морской флот
16. damp – сырой
17. marshy – болотистый

### Communication activities

**Task 1.** Write down all the facts from the text to get full information to the following questions:

1. What kind of Tsar was Peter I?
2. Did Peter have a strange and wild childhood?
3. Why did he visit many countries?
4. In what way did he modernize Russia?
5. Peter spent much of his reign fighting wars, didn`t he?
6. What was his role in the 1<sup>st</sup> Russian navy?
7. Peter built a new city near the Baltic, didn`t he?

**Task 2.** Recommend your partner to use the most important and informative facts about Peter the Great in his report.



## Part 3

### Interesting facts about different countries

#### Text 1. Interesting facts about Canada

1. Leaving out of account that in early times the Vikings crossed the Atlantic Ocean and visited many parts of North America, it may be said that John and Sebastian Cabot discovered Canada in 1497 A.D. The French were the first settlers in this great country and the word Canada comes from the Red Indian language; “Kannata”, meaning “a number of nuts”.

2. Canada, known as the “Land of the Maple Leaf” or the “Land of Promise”, is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. It was added to the British Empire as a result of General Wolfe’s victory over the French forces at Quebec in 1759 A.D. The country is divided into provinces, each having its own capital and laws. These provinces send a number of members to the Dominion Parliament in Ottawa, the capital of Canada. There are many fine cities such as Toronto, Winnipeg, Montreal, Quebec, Halifax and Vancouver.

3. As the country extends for thousands of miles from the Arctic Ocean to the United States and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, all kinds of weather conditions are to be found there. One part of the border with the United States along a line of latitude known as the “49<sup>th</sup> Parallel”, and most of the other part is formed by Lakes Superior, Huron, Erie, Michigan and Ontario which are popularly known as “The Lakes”. Time, according to the sun, changes by one hour every fifteen degrees of longitude so that it is necessary in Canada to have four standard times – Eastern time, Prairie time, Mountain time, and Pacific time.

4. Various methods of transport, from the sledge drawn by huskies to the modern airliner, are to be seen in this huge country. The most important link across Canada is the famous Canadian Pacific Railway, better known by its initials C.P.R. A journey across Canada takes several days. The trains have day cars, observation cars, dining cars and sleeping cars, and there are many attendants to look after the comfort of the passengers.

5. Lumbering is the name given to the work of cutting down trees and sawmilling them into logs. In winter, the lumberjacks fell the trees, lop off the branches, and place the trunks on sledges to be dragged to the nearest suitable river. When spring comes, the tree-trunks are formed into huge rafts and floated down the river to the saw-mills. Not only planks and boards are made from the timber, much of it is used in producing wood-pulp for paper-making.

6. Fishing is a very important industry. In the western rivers of Canada, immense quantities of salmon are caught and sent, in tins, to all parts of the world. It is said, “They eat all they can, and they can all they can’t”. On the Atlantic seaboard,

the island of Newfoundland (adjacent to and now a part of Canada) was our first colony, and is famous for its cod and herring fishing. This great fishing round is often covered with heavy fog, due to the meeting of the cold currents from Greenland with the warm currents from the south.

7. In central Canada, there is a vast plain known as the Prairie, and this region produces more wheat and corn than any other part of the world. The farms are so big that the houses are miles apart and nobody goes to the expense of fencing. The farm-houses are heated by basement furnaces with pipes to carry the heat to every room. Owing to the long distances between neighbours and friends, each family usually has a telephone and motor car.

8. The many forest of northern Canada are the homes of numerous wild animals, such as the bear, stoat (ermine), muskrat (musquash), marten (sable), mink, beaver, and fox. As these creatures have valuable furs, trapping is an important occupation. The Hudson Bay Company was started as long ago as 1670, and this famous firm has trading stations in many parts of the country. At these lonely outposts, the trappers sell their furs or exchange them for goods.

9. Law and order is maintained in the prairies and barren lands by a fine body of men in scarlet and blue uniforms, who are known to everyone as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (R.C.M.P.) or “Mounties”. These “Watchdogs of the Prairies”, as they are sometimes called, have earned a splendid reputation for bravery and devotion to duty, and criminals seldom escape them.

10. The grandeur of Canada`s scenery is well-known, especially of such places as the Niagara Falls, the Rocky Mountains and the Canadian National Parks. The people take full advantage of their surroundings to enjoy sport and recreation – camping and canoeing in summer, and sledging, skiing, and skating in winter. Ice-hockey may be said to be the national sport.

### Topical vocabulary

1. to extend – простираться, расширять
2. latitude – широта
3. sledge – сани
4. husky – лайка (порода собак)
5. saw-mill – лесопильный завод, лесопилка
6. adjacent – примыкающий
7. plain – равнина
8. basement – основание, подвал
9. furnace – очаг, печка, горн
10. stoat – горноста́й
11. muskrat – ондатра
12. marten – куница
13. mink – норка
14. beaver – бобр

## Communication activities

**Task 1.** Answer the following questions:

1. (a) Who is credited with the discovery of Canada?  
(b) What is said to be the origin of the word “Canada”?
2. (a) Give a popular name for Canada.  
(b) Where was the final battle between the British and French fought?  
(c) Name the leader of the British forces.
3. (a) What name is given to the land border-line between Canada and the United States?  
(b) Name various methods of transport to be seen in this huge country.  
(c) What is the most important link across Canada?
4. (a) What name is given to the land border-line between Canada and the United States?  
(b) Name various methods of transport to be seen in this huge country.  
(c) What is the most important link across Canada?
5. Describe the lumber industry.
6. Name the most important fisheries.
7. What is the Prairie?
8. (a) Name five wild animals hunted for their valuable pelts.  
(b) What famous firm has trading stations in all parts of the country?
9. Who maintains law and order in the prairies and barren regions?
10. (a) Name two places of outstanding natural beauty.  
(b) How do the people enjoy themselves (1) in summer, (2) in winter?  
(c) What is the national sport?

**Task 2.** The title of the text is “Interesting Facts about Canada”. Say why you think the author chose it.

**Task 3.** Give another title to the text.

**Task 4.** Give a title to each paragraph.

**Task 5.** Underline the words which express the main points to each paragraph.

**Task 6.** Say what new facts you have learnt from the text you read.

**Task 7.** Say what you know about the subject before reading the text.

**Task 8.** Express your personal view on the subject.

## **Text 2. Interesting facts about China and the Chinese**

1. In China, old people are thought to be wise and are always treated kindly by the young folk. There has been no lesson more widely taught than respect for parents, and this has gradually developed into the worship of ancestors. Cathay is the name given to China by the early writers.

2. The people have a dark-yellow or olive complexion, and it is noticeable that everyone has jet-black hair. Having a beard is an indication of age and dignity, and a man does not grow one until he is forty years old. Men wear loose blouses or coats and wide trousers tied at the ankles. Many women wear the same kind of clothes as the men, but quite a number have adopted the Western style of dress. The shoes are of cloth with thick felt soles.

3. Rice is the chief food of the people. The Chinese use bowls instead of plates, and chopsticks in place of knives and forks. Pork is also a popular food, while shark-fin soup and a soup made from a certain kind of bird-nest are regarded as very special dishes. Eating is an important event with the Chinese, and instead of greeting each other with “How do you do?” or “Good day!” they say “Have you eaten?” It is rude to talk at meals as this that you are neglecting the food provided by your host.

4. Many customs and habits appear to be the opposite of those in this country.

(a) In Chinese names, the surname comes first, e.g. Fu Wong is Mr. Fu, not Mr. Wong.

(b) White is the mourning colour. At a funeral, a band playing noisy tunes leads the procession to the burial-ground. The loud blaring sound is said to drive away the evil spirits.

(c) It is polite for a host, wearing a Chinese skull-cap, to keep it on when receiving a guest. The host always uses both hands when giving anything to his guest. This shows that he gives ungrudgingly.

(d) Books begin where ours end – starting at the right-hand side of the page and reading upwards or downwards instead of across.

(e) When sewing, the Chinese woman inserts the needle in the cloth and pushes the needle away from her.

5. China has the greatest population of any single country in the world. In some parts, the housing problem is very serious and many people make their homes in house-boats and sampans. The rivers overflow their banks each year and the country suffers dreadfully from floods, which destroy houses and crops and cause famine and disease.

6. Love of nature, politeness, and industrious habits are marks of this great people. Chinese of all ages are fond of fireworks and, at New Year time, all business stops, and they enjoy their holidays by setting off crackers and squibs. Young and old delight in the pastime of kite-flying. The “Double Tenth” (the tenth day of the tenth month - October) is celebrated as the anniversary of the Chinese Republic.

7. Some years ago, the binding of children`s feet and the wearing of pig-tails were banned. A Chinese woman was considered beautiful if her feet were extremely

small. With men, long finger-nails were a sign of wealth, as this showed that they did not need to work for a living. The unskilled workers are called coolies.

8. Along the Chinese coast may be seen the peculiar-looking sailing ships known as Junks. In certain parts of the country they have a quaint form of fishing. Sea-birds called cormorants are tamed and their long necks are ringed to prevent them from swallowing the fish which they catch for their masters.

9. The Chinese invented paper and were the sole makers of it for over seven centuries. They also knew how to print and how to make gunpowder long before other nations. The Chinese discovered how to turn a mixture of clay and sand into porcelain, and they have never been equalled in the making and decorating of beautiful dishes.

10. The Great Wall of China, which was built to keep enemies from invading the country, is the greatest barrier ever constructed by the hands of man. It is about 1,500 miles long, and extends the whole length of the northern border from the sea to Tibet. The wall is the height of a two-storey building and is as wide as a country road on top. At certain points there are turrets for defence and gateways for road traffic.

### Topical vocabulary

1. chopsticks – палочки для еды
2. sampan – сампан, китайская лодка
3. kite – воздушный змей
4. coolie – кули
5. junk – джонка
6. cormorant – большой баклан
7. gunpowder – черный порох
8. porcelain – фарфор
9. ancestor – предок
10. to adopt – принимать, усваивать
11. evil spirits – злые духи
12. flood – наводнение

### Communication activities

**Task 1.** Answer the following question:

1. (a) What good lesson has been widely taught in China?  
(b) Into what has this developed?  
(c) What did early writers call China?
2. Describe Chinese dress and appearance.
3. (a) What is the chief food of the people?  
(b) What do they use in place of knives and forks?  
(c) Describe a special Chinese dish.

4. Describe two customs or habits that appear to be the opposite of those in this country.
5. What causes dreadful famine and disease each year?
6. Name a very popular pastime.
7. (a) What cruel custom has now been banned?  
(b) What is the name given to a general unskilled labourer?
8. Describe a peculiar form of fishing to be seen in China.
9. Name two important Chinese inventions or discoveries.
10. Describe the Great Wall of China.

**Task 2.** Speak about the main idea of the text.

**Task 3.** Pick out the sentences which express the main points in each paragraph.

**Task 4.** Make up a summary of the text.

### **Text 3. Interesting Facts About the United States of America**

1. The United States of America, popularly called “The States”, “U.S.A.”, “The Land of Liberty”, “The Land of the Free”, is a vast country stretching across the middle of North America. This country, which was at one time inhabited by Red Indians, is now the home of a “nation of nations”, as people from every part of the world have gone to live in this land of wealth and promise. These settlers met, mingled, and worked with great enterprise, and, as a result of their efforts, the United States has become one of the most important countries in the world.
2. In 1620 the Pilgrim Fathers, a band of Puritans in England who sought freedom of worship, set forth for America in the sailing-ship Mayflower. Three months after leaving Plymouth Harbour, they reached the shores of what is now called New England, and founded the American township of Plymouth. Although they often had difficult times with the native Red Indian tribes, the colony soon prospered and more and more settlers joined them. The Indians used a new kind of grain, which the settlers called “Indian corn” (now termed maize) and they ate strange birds called turkeys. On the last Thursday of November the Americans celebrate Thanksgiving Day with a feast of turkey and Indian corn.
3. A great many emigrants went from European countries to America and thirteen colonies were formed, all of them under English rule. The government in England, however, took little interest in her American colonies, except from the point of view of trade. When certain taxes and laws were ordered by the English Parliament the colonists opposed them and the bitter feeling, as illustrated by the “Boston Tea Party”, gradually led to war. At first the

colonists fared badly, but later they rallied and eventually won final victory, under the able leadership of George Washington.

4. The American Declaration of Independence was signed on the 4<sup>th</sup> July, 1776. This day is still celebrated as the “birthday” of this great nation, and is called Independence Day. The leaders of the new country decided they would form a Republic, which would have no king but would have a President, chosen every four years by a vote of all the people. George Washington, who had led them so successfully in the war, became the first President and was called “The Father of the United States”.
5. The “Americans” dwelt in the eastern part of the country, but many of them decided to explore further inland, and settle on the rich farming land there. These pioneers travelled in covered wagons or prairie schooners, which rocked and rolled their way westward over the open, flat country. Each vehicle carried the settler’s family and equipment, and was his home and fort while on the move, a place wherein to sleep at the end of a long day’s journey, and a barricade against unfriendly Indians. The Frontier Scouts and Plainsmen were the trail blazers and fighters, who gave advice and acted as escorts to the settlers when travelling in dangerous territory.
6. Shortly after the discovery of the New World by Columbus, many Spaniards travelled northward from Mexico and settled along the western coast of America. That is why many places in this region such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and Santa Barbara have Spanish names. In 1849 the chance discovery of gold brought many people to California and numerous mining towns sprang up in a very short time. “The Golden Gate” (the channel connecting the harbour of San Francisco with the Pacific Ocean) was so called because many of the seekers of the precious yellow metal passed this way to and from the rich goldfields.
7. In the lower basin of the Missouri-Mississippi (the longest river in the U.S.A.) stretch the great cotton plantations, once tilled by black slaves taken forcibly from Africa, and still cultivated by negro labour. The northern states of America did not use negroes as slaves like the cotton states of the south, and they tried to stop this evil. In 1861, while Abraham Lincoln was President, a dreadful Civil War broke out. After four years of bitter fighting, the southern states were defeated and slavery was abolished. During this war the famous song, “John Brown’s body lies a`mouldering in the grave”, was composed and it became the marching song of the northern troops.
8. In American cities, men have erected huge buildings (skyscrapers), some as many as fifty flats high. The national capital of the United States is Washington and the White House is the home of the President. The famous Statue of Liberty in New York harbour was a gift from France. The following table gives a rough idea of the value of the money used in America:

A cent (1 c.)

A Nickel (5 c.)  
A Dime (10 c.)  
A Quarter (25 c.)  
A Half (50 c.)  
A Dollar (\$ 1.00)

9. While English is the national language of the country, some immigrants have continued the manners, customs, and even the tongue of their homeland, and newspaper, in all languages, may be seen on the bookstalls.

Here are some common English words for which the Americans have different names:

sweets – candies,  
shop – store,  
motor-car – automobile,  
motor-lorry – truck,  
tram-car – street-car,  
pavement – side-walk,  
petrol – gas,  
lift – elevator,  
dust-bin – garbage-can,  
holiday – vacation,  
trousers – pants,  
waistcoat – vest,  
laces – shoe-ties,  
tin – can,  
jug – pitcher.

There are also differences in the spelling of certain words:

colour – color,  
honour – honor,  
socks – sox,  
through – thru,  
programme – program.

10. The national banner of the United States of America, commonly known as “The Stars and Stripes” or “Old Glory”, as a flag bearing 50 stars and 13 stripes. Each star represents a present-day state and each stripe stands for one of the original colonies. The national anthem is the “Star Spangled Banner”, and the national emblems are the eagle and the buffalo. The national sport may be said to be baseball.



## Topical vocabulary

1. Puritan – пуритане, группа верующих в средневековой Англии, не согласные с официальной англиканской церковью, ревнители старых нравов.
2. Pilgrim – пилигрим, паломник
3. Pilgrim Fathers – ист. Английские колонисты, поселившиеся в 1620 г. в Америке.
4. Thanksgiving Day – День Благодарения, официальный праздник в память первых колонистов.
5. covered wagons – вереница крытых фургонов первых американских колонистов
6. prairie – прерия
7. Boston Tea Party – «Бостонское чаепитие». 16 декабря 1773 г. американские колонисты, не согласные с новыми налогами на чай, установленными Англией, сбросили весь прибывший на судах в Америку в порт Бостон чай в море. Начало войны за независимость Америки от Англии.

## Communication activities

**Task 1.** Answer the following questions:

1. What is the popular name for the United States of America?
2. (a) Who were (1) the original natives, (2) the first white settlers?  
(b) What is “Indian corn”?
3. Who led the victorious forces of the colonists against the British?
4. (a) When was the American Declaration of Independence signed?  
(b) What is a Republic?
5. (a) What was a “covered waggon”?  
(b) Who were the (1) Frontier Scouts, (2) Plainsmen?
6. Name three American west coast towns with Spanish names.
7. (a) Which is the longest river in the world?  
(b) Who were employed as slave labour on the cotton plantations?  
(c) Who was President when the American Civil War broke out?
8. (a) What name is given to the huge, multi-storeyed buildings?  
(b) What is the national capital of the United States?  
(c) What famous monument stands at the entrance of New York harbour?
9. (a) Name four American coins.

**Task 2.** Make an outline of the text.

**Task 3.** Retell the text according to your outline.

#### **Text 4. Interesting facts about Greece and the Greeks**

1. The ancient Greeks called their own country “Hellas” and themselves “Hellenes”, names in use to the present day. The land was very rough and mountainous, and there were no good roads from one part of the country to another. Most of the towns were built round an acropolis or hill, to which the people went in time of danger.
2. In olden times, the country we now know as Greece was made up of city-states – each completely separate and having its own government, laws and customs. The greatest city-states were Athens and Sparta: prominent also, were Corinth and Thebes.
3. (a) In Athens, a child was named on the tenth day according to custom. When a boy, of well-to-do parents, reached seven years of age, he was placed in the care of a pedagogue or personal attendant, who was generally a slave. The pedagogue accompanied the boy to and from school, and acted as his guardian.  
(b) From early childhood, the Spartans trained themselves to become soldiers, and their state was like a military camp. Slaves did all the household work, and this left the citizens free for their hard, strict training.
4. The houses were made of sun-dried bricks and had flat roofs. A host and his guests reclined on couches, during friendly visits. The door-knocker was usually a ring in a lion’s mouth and was said to keep away evil. Inlaid in the entrance passage was the Greek word for “Welcome”, and this is probably the origin of the same salute on the modern door-mat. The Athenians were very early risers, and thought nothing of calling on their friends, shortly after sunrise.
5. The men, accompanied by their slaves who acted as carries, went to the market-places to make household purchases. Their food consisted chiefly of barley porridge with salt or honey; dried salted fish, and barley cakes and loaves. Apples were rare, and considered a valuable delicacy. The barber’s shop was very popular, for there they heard the latest news, true or otherwise, from the slave who trimmed their hair or beard.
6. The men wore either a sleeveless tunic or a long mantle, the latter being worn on special occasions. The women wore a long, loosely-draped mantle with a girdle. Sandals were the common footwear.
7. At one time Athens was noted for its many temples, buildings, and statues, and was regarded as the most beautiful city in the world. The Parthenon, most famous of all Greek buildings, contained the city’s protecting goddess Athene. All the public holidays were connected with religion, and the songs, dances, processions, and plays were held in honour of some god or goddess.

8. The Greeks were very fond of music, plays, and all kinds of physical exercises. The famous Games at Olympia took place every four years and consisted of running, jumping, wrestling, and chariot race competitions. The winner of each event was rewarded with an olive wreath, which was considered the highest honour in sport.
9. One old Greek method of telling the time was by measuring the shadow of a stick, which was stuck in the ground. Instead of asking a guest to come for dinner at six o'clock (as we do nowadays), he would be invited to dine at ten feet of the shadow. One could never escape the chirping of crickets in Athens, and the people liked them so much that they had designs of this creature on their buckles and brooches.
10. At one time Athens was the centre of world learning. The great Greek philosophers Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle tried to lead the people to a discovery of truth by their clever, clear thinking in conversation. Euclid wrote a book on Geometry, which is the study of figures such as triangles, squares, and circles. Aesop, a Greek slave, was a famous storyteller, who made the animals talk and act to cleverly in his fables that they are widely-read and popular to this day.

### Topical vocabulary

1. Hellas – Эллада, Греция
2. Hellene – Эллин, грек
3. Athens – г. Афины
4. Sparta – г. Спарта
5. Corinth – г. Коринф
6. Thebes – г. Фивы
7. Well-to-do – состоятельный, зажиточный
8. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle – Сократ, Платон, Аристотель (древнегреческие философы)
9. Euclid – Эвклид (древнегреческий математик)
10. Aesop – Эзоп (древнегреческий баснописец)

### Communication activities

**Task 1.** Answer the questions:

1. What do the Greeks call their country?
2. Name three of the great city-states of ancient Greece?
3. What was the name of the personal attendant of a boy at school?
4. Describe a form of Greek door-knocker.

5. Greek food consisted chiefly of \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Describe the garments worn by the ancient Greeks.
7. What is the most famous of all Greek buildings?
8. (a) How often did the Olympic Games take place?  
(b) What award was considered the highest honour at these sports?
9. Describe an old Greek method of telling the time.
10. Name two famous Greek philosophers.

**Task 2.** Have a talk on the text with your partner. Make use of the questions above.

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