

CORRECTION – texte 6, “British values” by David Cameron

NB: La correction est présentée sous le même format que l’examen final.

Work on the text and the paratext (/10)

Answer the questions and write complete sentences.

1. What information can you give about the historical, economic and political contexts which might have led the author to write the document? /3

While Britain has never had a monolithic culture, recent problems have highlighted the growing racial divide which now haunts the country. The 2014 “Trojan Horse controversy,” to which the text under study refers, is one such manifestation as a fake document leaked to the media alleged a conspiracy to Islamize Birmingham schools. The scandal quickly became a polarizing story about Britain’s relation with its Muslim citizens. The Conservative Prime Minister at the time, David Cameron, who had already argued that the UK needed a stronger sense of national identity to prevent extremism, wrote an article published in *The Mail on Sunday* on June 15, 2014, in which he addresses the question of British values.

2. Underline and make a list of the key words. Give definitions if necessary. /2
cf. travail fait en classe

3. Comment on the language of the text. Do you find any relevant figures of speech? If yes, comment on them and say how you could use them to explain some points in the text. /2

Throughout the text, David Cameron predominantly uses the 1st person plural in order to better signal that he acts and writes as a spokesman for British people. The inclusive “we” also underscores that the writer and his readers share a common involvement with and commitment to British values. This is well illustrated in the sentence: “we need to make the most of the things that bring us together.” (l.66)

Even though the text is largely devoid of figures of speech, the metaphor of “the common home” may be read as expressing Cameron’s key argument concerning the importance of British values. While they are not in themselves British, they have been shaped by British tradition and history, and in that regard freedom, tolerance and responsibility are the cement of national unity.

4. What is the main topic of the text? Define it in 10 lines and present the point of view and the tone of the author(s) /3

David Cameron’s article illustrates his political stance on the question of multiculturalism in Britain. In the context of anxieties regarding multiculturalism of which the Birmingham school scandal is but a symptom, he forcefully defends the political, economic and social importance of actively promoting and enforcing British values in the name of unity in diversity. It is a highly political message which implicitly criticizes the approach adopted by former Labour governments.

Questions

/10

1. What arguments does the author give to justify the necessity of “actively promoting” British values? (/5)

To the question: why “should [Britain] promote” its values (1.23), Cameron offers three reasons.

The first is related to the idea of national pride: Cameron argues that celebrating British achievements is a way of fostering “patriotism” (1.24), and therefore of bringing people together.

The second reason, which is the most developed in the text under study, has to do with the economy. Cameron establishes a correlation between social and political liberalism (“vibrant democracy,” 1.31) and economic liberalism (“free enterprise,” 1.31). He underlines the necessity of defending the democratic model in the context of rising “authoritarian models of economic development” (1.33). According to him, what distinguishes Britain from other economically successful countries like Russia, is the fact that its prosperity is founded on its tradition of political liberty: governments are held accountable for their decisions as they can lose elections and become the object of criticisms in the press.

Finally, Cameron underscores the social importance of promoting British value. As Britain is a multicultural country, its citizens need to find a common ground, which can only be achieved by upholding shared values fostering national unity.