

Научно-исследовательская работа

Английский язык

### **Как Великобритания стала великой державой?**

«Великобритания действительно иная. Именно поэтому у нее периодически возникают разногласия с другими странами.» – **Маргарет Тэтчер**

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## **Introduction**

Great Britain is considered to be one of the most powerful and successful countries nowadays, but if you take a look on a map, you will see that it is situated on only one island! Obviously, Great Britain can't also be called leading country in the field of weapon. On the other hand, London is still the biggest financial center throughout the world, the nation boasts the world's tenth largest economy, with a combined wealth of over 2000 billion US dollars and politics of British has impact on both Europe and the USA. In addition, Britain remains an important member of a number of international forums and retains strong diplomatic links with not only her former colonies through the Commonwealth but also with the majority of major economies across the world. So, I came up with the question – How did Great Britain manage to become such an impressive nation? It is a complicated story and there are no easy “reasons” or “causes”. Instead, the empire grew in fits and starts. In other words, there are a number of reasons and factors that I'm going to describe by analyzing the British history.

My project goal is to understand and show you how small island country has become the workshop of the world.

### **The following tasks were set:**

1. To examine the history of the development of the UK
2. To identify the ways of the country's development
3. To analyze the achievements in economics
4. To understand the ways of conducting foreign policy
5. To determine the state of Great Britain nowadays and get the perspective of its role in the international area

## **The process of gradual democratization**

British have been always known for their progressive visions and prospectives. Thus, modern parliament has its roots in England at the start of Middle Ages. The Norman kings called a Great Council of barons and bishops three times a year – at Christmas, Easter and Whitsun, which is the Sunday 50 days after Easter. These meetings came to be called 'parliaments'. The word 'parliament' comes from the French word 'parler', meaning 'to speak'. During the 13th century, these parliaments slowly grew in power. In 1407, Henry IV promised not to interfere in Parliament's debates, or take taxes without their agreement. In 1414, Henry V promised Parliament that he would not make any new law without its agreement.

By 1500 Parliament had acquired powers and rights:

- Parliament had the right to meet.
- Commoners, as well as lords, had the right to attend Parliament.
- Parliament had the right to debate whatever it wanted, and to tell the king its demands.
- Parliament controlled taxes.
- No law could become law without Parliament's agreement.
- Parliament could punish the king's ministers if they were corrupt.
- England was ruled by "the king in his council in Parliament".

However, during the reign of Tudors and Stuarts, Parliament lost its strength and that led to the Glorious Revolution of 1688, when the Dutch leader, William of Orange, was asked by English nobles to invade. In December 1688, William and his wife Mary were made joint monarchs by Parliament. William issued a Bill of Rights (1689) promising to obey the law and call frequent Parliaments. Soon after, the Act of Settlement (1701) made it law that the king of England had to be a Protestant.

Most historians agree that the Glorious Revolution of 1688 permanently established a 'constitutional monarchy', which is a 'king-controlled-by-parliament'. It was the turning point in England's government. The king remained influential, but Parliament made the laws.

The United Kingdom was a constitutional monarchy in the 18th century, but, by our standards, government was corrupt and repressive:

- Less than 2 per cent of the population had the vote.
- Elections were held in public, so voters could be bullied and votes bought.
- In 1817, the government suspended the law which prevents people being arrested without a trial. In 1819 it passed the Six Acts, giving itself the right to search any house and to punish any writer who criticized the government.

People were not comfortable with voting system. The Chartists campaigned for the vote for all men. They presented huge petitions called 'Charters' in 1839, 1842 and 1848.

There were further voting reform acts in the 19th century:

- The Representation of the People Act of 1867 gave the vote to about a third of the male population, including urban householders and agricultural landowners.
- The Ballot Act in 1872 brought in voting in secret. This law still exists to this day.
- The Representation of the People Act of 1884 gave the vote to about two-thirds of the male population by including rural householders. The electorate rose to about 5 million out of a population of 30 million. It was after this Act that some women started to organize themselves to demand the right to vote (known as the right of suffrage). This movement was to develop into the Suffragettes.
- However, despite the campaigns by the Chartists, and also by the Suffragettes, at the start of World War One only two-thirds of men, and no women, had the vote. Britain was not a democracy in 1914.

In the early 20th century, many women campaigned for women's suffrage.

- In 1897, Millicent Fawcett organized the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies to campaign peacefully for the vote.
- In 1903, the Women's Social and Political Union was formed, led by Emmeline Pankhurst. The Suffragettes used violent protest, most famously breaking windows and chaining themselves to railings. However, Parliament rejected every bill to give women the vote.

During World War One women contributed greatly to the war effort, and kept the country going while the men were away. The Suffragists continued to campaign for the vote.

- In 1918, the Representation of the People Act gave the vote to men over the age of 21, and to women over the age of 30.
- In 1928, women over the age of 21, in line with men, were given the vote.

Britain was now a truer democracy.

- In 1969, the voting age was lowered to 18.

To sum up, through time, Britain was changed from a feudal monarchy to a free democracy, which definitely was possible because of revolutionary way of thinking of British. The people of the time were not building democracy – they were just seeking solutions to the problems of the time.

## **The industrial revolution**

It is a very well-known fact, that Britain was a birthplace to Industrial Revolution, which took place from 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Industrialization marked a shift to powered, special-purpose machinery, factories and mass production. The iron and textile industries, along with the development of the steam engine,

played central roles in the Industrial Revolution, which also saw improved systems of transportation, communication and banking. While industrialization brought about an increased volume and variety of manufactured goods and an improved standard of living for some, it also resulted in often grim employment and living conditions for the poor and working classes.

A number of factors contributed to Britain's role as the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution. For one, it had great deposits of coal and iron ore, which proved essential for industrialization. Additionally, Britain was a politically stable society, as well as the world's leading colonial power, which meant its colonies could serve as a source for raw materials, as well as a marketplace for manufactured goods. Personally, I want to mention English people, who themselves moved the society forward with their machines.

As demand for British goods increased, merchants needed more cost-effective methods of production, which led to the rise of mechanization and the factory system.

There are some inventions, that were firstly designed by English masterminds.

For example, around 1764, Englishman James Hargreaves invented the spinning "jenny", a machine that enabled an individual to produce multiple spools of threads simultaneously. By the time of Hargreaves' death, there were over 20,000 spinning "jennies" in use across Britain.

In the early 18th century, Englishman Abraham Darby discovered a cheaper, easier method to produce cast iron, using a coke-fuelled furnace.

In the 1850s, British engineer Henry Bessemer developed the first inexpensive process for mass-producing steel. Both iron and steel became essential materials, used to make everything from appliances, tools and machines, to ships, buildings and infrastructure.

Britain was the first country in Europe to start capitalistic development. Capitalist production was the most developed there, afterwards English trade companies put their competitors out of global market in 19<sup>th</sup> century. And in order to remain at the forefront of others, Britain needed colonies all over the world to supply itself with raw materials. I am sure enough, that was country policy which brought it success. British did everything to drain colonies' wealth and support their home country. From my point of view, it is entirely because of expansion of territory that industries went great guns.

### **The colonial politics**

There is no doubt, Britain needed a large amount of resources for fast and successful development of industry. Luckily, by the 18<sup>th</sup> century Great Britain was an enormous colonial empire and it had an opportunity to transfer all goods from all over the world. How did England colonize such a big territory? The history of the expansion of England must necessarily begin with the two ever-memorable voyages of Columbus and Vasco da Gama in the reign of Henry VII. From that moment the position of England among countries was entirely changed, though almost a century elapsed before the change became visible to all the world. In our rearrangement this tract of time forms one period, the characteristic of which is that England is gradually finding out its vocation to the sea.

What we see is simply that England is slowly and gradually taking courage to claim share with the Spanish and Portuguese in the new world that has been thrown open. The Spanish Armada marks the moment when this period of preparation or apprenticeship closes. The internal modification in the nation is now complete. It has turned itself round, and looks now no longer towards the Continent but towards the Ocean and the New World. It has become both maritime and industrial. Great Britain henceforth exists, for henceforth Englishmen are



living on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. It received at once a peculiar stamp from the circumstances of the time.

We have arrived then at the stage when England, in the course of expansion, stands out for the first time as the supreme maritime and commercial power in the World. It is evidently its connection with the New World that has given it this character; nevertheless, did not yet appear at least to ordinary eyes as absolutely the first colonial Power.

Then, after the Seven Years' War the new position given to England by the Treaty of Paris in 1762. Here is the culminating point of English power in the eighteenth century; nay, relatively to other states England has never since been so great. For a moment it seems that the whole of North America is destined to be hers, and to make forever a part of Great Britain. Such an Empire would not have been greater in mere extent than that which Spain already possessed; but in essential greatness and power how infinitely superior!

Also I want to mention why India is called the “jewel” in the imperial crown. First of all, India was the wealthiest English colony, there was a huge great big amount of resources such as cotton, silk, precious stones, tea, spices, grain, dyes, opium, that were highly valued by other countries. More than that, cheap manufactured items from England were sold like hot cakes there. Thus, Britain exported materials from India and imported its own production there.

At first sight, they did nothing but obtaining resources from colonies, however, the poor state of infrastructure was a major hurdle to this process. So, the British tended to invest the new technologies of the day in their colonies, particularly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Roads, railways, telegraph lines, schools and whatnot. Perhaps, that’s why most of former colonies willingly became part of the Commonwealth. Member states have no legal obligations to one another. Instead, they are united by English language, history, culture and their shared values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. These values are enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter. The priority objectives of its activities are humanitarian missions, educational activities,

etc. The Commonwealth is seen primarily as an organization with states that differ in the level of development and ways of economy have the opportunity to enter into close and equal interaction.

### **The Royal Navy**

Trade and naval power went hand in hand in the sense that the navy could send a warship to any British “interests” that were in trouble, or two warships, or a garrison of soldiers who could build a fort. This was the period when Britain’s navy “ruled the waves” and could control sea traffic almost anywhere in the world, fighting off competitors like Holland and France, and at times using a form of piracy, such as when warships were sent up Chinese rivers to force China to import opium. Royal Navy had all to be the most powerful: technological advance, tactics, logistical excellence, economic innovation. In 1588 they had a triumphant military victory over Spanish Armada, which badly damaged dominance of Spain and Portugal on the sea. Since then England has been doing its best to enhance status of a maritime nation. Thanks to admiral Nelson, England secured access to Mediterranean Sea. On October 20th 1805, the French and Spanish fleets put to sea and off the southern coast of Spain the Battle of Trafalgar took place. This was to be Nelson’s last and most famous victory. Before the battle, Nelson sent his famous signal to the Fleet, “England expects that every man will do his duty”.

In summation, Royal Navy was used to solve all kinds of problems. English government had paid a lot of attention and invested strongly in its development and, as a result, there were no worthy foes. With its assistance, British Empire had colonized large territories in Asia and Egypt.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, the resources were ships to cross oceans and steamboats to sail up rivers and money that could be invested by the City of London in all sorts of commercial operations – England was the first country to develop a modern financial and banking system. The industrial revolution gave Britain low-cost, factory-made goods for which it wanted world markets. If and when things got difficult, there were military resources to protect the British traders: a navy that was the world's strongest, and soldiers that could be stationed overseas.

None of these factors – people, skills, resources – alone explains the growth of the empire, and most historians today reject the belief that a single theory can account for the growth of the British empire; instead, they study the edges and corners of the empire and recognize how different the story was in different places.

Nowadays the policy of the UK is aimed not only at improvement relations with developing countries but also at maintaining the high level of relations with the USA. It is well-known, these countries have «special relationships». It started after WW II. Churchill and other British elite knew their days of empire were numbered. They were bankrupt but had this worldwide colonial network of bases and territories they could no longer support or afford. On the other hand, there were the United States, economic powerhouse and new world power without an international infrastructure. The deal was that the Brits would effectively turn over much of this international infrastructure to the US, as long as the UK was able to keep a seat at the international table. Both sides got what they wanted. To this day, the US relies heavily on former UK facilities while the UK is able to punch far above its weight and maintain a very high presence on the international military stage far beyond its independent capabilities. The US get a reliable ally and the UK. get to keep acting like a global power.

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