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Historia i kursböcker för Engelska A och B
History in English Course books
An Analysis of four course books aiming for English at Upper secondary School in Sweden

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Abstract

In this thesis I look at how the English Speaking countries’ history are presented in four English course books aiming for English studies at Upper Secondary School, courses English A and English B (EN1201 and EN1202). I have chosen to look at which countries that are mentioned in the course books and how much fact about the English speaking countries history that the course books have. I also wanted to see what images these texts gave the readers about the countries, a positive or a negative image.

The results of my analysis are that the amount of facts in the course books varies, depending on which book you look at and also the choice of countries that are presented in the books. It is not only “factual” texts in the course books either; there are also extracts from different novels and poems that were written through the ages. This so the reader gets a “taste” of what literature was like back when.

The English speaking countries that are included in the course books are as follows: the USA, Ireland, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India, Jamaica, the Caribbean Islands and countries on the African Continent. Some of the English speaking countries’ are more frequent than others in the course books, for example the USA and Ireland, are mentioned in all four of the course books.

The order in which the countries are mentioned above is due to the number of pages that they claim in the course books, putting the USA in the lead with most pages. The result of this is that the power structure of the world today is transferred to the course books at Upper secondary school in Sweden, that the USA is the most frequent country mentioned in the course books and also in world. This contradicts what Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis (which I use in this thesis) is trying to do, namely to create a more equal world.
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1. Introduction

To learn a new language is not only to learn vocabulary and grammar, it is to learn a new culture and another way of thinking. A language represents the people who speak it and their way of life, part of which comes down to history. Potentially to learn a new language is to open up a whole new world. In order to learn a new language and all that it represents, the learner must have some kind of background knowledge. This knowledge can be of help when learning and understanding the language. One important aspect of this is to have an insight into the country and its history. Since English is one of the foreign languages that we are taught in Sweden from a young age, it is necessary to learn about English history. The older the student becomes, the more they should know about the language (hence, about the history of the countries where they speak English) and they should therefore be able to obtain and to process more information.

This is clear if we look the aims in the curriculum for English A and B at Upper Secondary school in Sweden

The pupil should have some knowledge about the social structure and the tradition of culture and also how people live in English speaking areas. The pupil should be able to use this knowledge to compare different cultures to each other (SKOLFS:2000:4, my translation).

In other words, the students at Upper Secondary school in Sweden should have some knowledge as to what kind of culture traditions that they have in English speaking countries or areas, and how they are different or alike ours, when they have finished the course. They should also know a bit about the social structure in those countries.

The curriculum for English B also states that “the student should have knowledge about the social structure, the history and the cultures in countries where they speak English” (SKOLFS:2000:4, my translation). This means that when the student is finished with the course they should have some knowledge about the English- speaking countries’ history in addition to the social structure and cultural tradition in these countries.
The importance of knowledge about history and culture is conveyed in the curriculum for English A and B. In this work I therefore analyse four course books aiming for the courses at Upper Secondary School and how they are used for English learning in reference to the contents of culture and history.

1.1 Aim and Research questions

The aim of this dissertation is to find out how the English speaking countries’ history is presented in four Upper Secondary textbooks in English in Sweden today.

- Which countries’ are presented in the course books?
- How much history is brought up in the course books?
- What history is brought up?
- What images of the English speaking countries does it convey?

1.3 What is history?

According to the Swedish National Encyclopedia history is:

partly a past reality, partly the description and study of that reality. The thing about history is that the reality that is explored cannot, directly, be observed or reached through experiment. It has to be investigated through the clues that people in the past has left behind. (Nationalencyklopedin, 2011, my own translation)

I interpret history as a generic term for everything that has happened in the past, before today. As history is such a wide term I just want to clarify what I will look at in this thesis. My definition of history includes history of a country, language history and literary history. Literary history can give us a view of how it was during that time in history, when certain literary works was written. Many novels, short stories and poems were written, describing specific elements which we can tie to that particular period in time. Through literature we get a view of the past. The language history can be an indicator as to what happened in the countries at specific times in history, due to how the English language has developed and evolved. We should learn from history, because of history we are where we are today. History has shaped our future.
I have also restricted my research to include history of these three areas (the country’s history, literature history and language history) up until 1945, when the Second World War was over, because it seems like the world then had a new beginning after years of war and conflict.

1.4 Previous Research

When looking for research previously done I have found two theses written by Weronika Höglund, Susanna DiMattia and Rebecka Svensson. Höglund has analysed a book aiming for English A, DiMattia and Svensson has looked a two course books that are aiming for English studies at the senior level of the Swedish “grundskola”. Even if DiMattia´s and Svensson´s thesis look at course books aiming for a lower level of studies, there is still a connection when it comes to the curriculum in English. This since the English studies they are looking at gives the students knowledge that they at an Upper Secondary level will develop with the help of, perhaps, the course books that I look at.

Weronika Höglund says in her thesis, which focus on English course books ability to meet the goal of the curriculum of English A, that

One of the goals of EN 1201 is to have knowledge of social conditions, culture traditions and way of life in areas where they speak English, and be able to use this knowledge to compare cultures. In several of the books it was this goal that was not met (Höglund, 2006, p. 27 -28, my own translation)

She points out that the texts that do discuss the issue of culture and culture traditions mainly apply to the aborigines or the Maori people while the English-speaking countries´ “typical” culture traditions, such as their educational system and government, are not discussed at all. Höglund say that these “issues” are not prioritized. This, she thinks, is due to the fact that it is very hard to say that one country has only one culture and history in today’s society. Still, Höglund thinks that this particular goal in the curriculum is important because it supports the issues that the students will encounter should they travel to the English-speaking countries in the world. However, all the textbooks that she has looked at have failed to support that aim (Höglund, 2006, p. 28).

Susanna DiMattia and Rebecka Svensson also argue, in their thesis, that it can be hard to “solve” that particular aim in the curriculum. They base this on the fact that countries usually
have more than one culture and one history, due to for example immigration (DiMattia, Svensson, 2006, p. 12, my own translation).

Even though the course books do not include enough facts so that the students can reach this particular goal in the curriculum, they can definitely help the students on the way to fulfill the goal and there is no reason as to why the course books cannot be used in class despite this deficiency (DiMattia, Svensson, 2006, p. 3, my own translation).

1.5 Method

The method and theory that I have chosen to work with is Norman Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis. Fairclough say that the written language is not only written text but is also depending on who wrote it and who it is written for, that texts and the reason they exist has a pivotal point in how we interpret them and their message (Bergström, Boréus, 2005, p. 308, my own translation). Hence what we learn through reading them.

The critical discourse analysis is critical in the sense that it sees it as its task to elucidate the role of the discourse practice in upholding the social world, social relationships included. The aim is to contribute to social changes towards a more equal power structure in the communicational process and in society at a whole (Winther Jörgensen, Phillips, 200, p. 69, my own translation).

The main goal for the critical discourse analysis to map out connections between language use and social practice (Winther Jörgensen, Phillips, 2000, p.76, my own translation).

Critical Discourse Analysis is said to be 3 dimensional, according to Fairclough. The 3 dimensions are the text, the discourse practice and the social practice. Looking at the text-part of the discourse, the base is linguistics, as when looking at the grammar of the text. The discourse practice looks at how texts are produced and distributed, also what the consumption of the text looks like. The social practice, in part, depends on the relationship between texts and discourse practice and their relation to something external and wider. (Bergström, Boréus, 2005, p. 308, my own translation)
The advocates for the critical discourse analysis point out that this type of analysis has a connection to the tradition of criticism towards society (Bergström, Boréus, 2005, p. 321, my own translation).

I have decided to work with one of these 3 dimensions, namely the discourse practice. When you analyse the discourse practice you are interested in how the text is produced and how it is consumed. To do as I did in this thesis, namely looking at the interpretations of the texts, is not very common amongst discourse analysts, according to what is written in Winther-Jørgensen’s and Phillips’ book. This links to my research question of what image we as readers get of the countries when looking at the texts in the course books.

Within the discourse practice I have focused on the production and consumption of the texts in the course books, to see what image of the countries you’ll get from working with and reading the four course books that I have chosen for this thesis. Looking at if the image that you as a reader might get, is it a divergence from the existing social structure in the world?

1.5.1 Delimitation

I have chosen to work with four books aiming for the English courses at the Upper Secondary level in Sweden. The books that I chose to look at are Streams 1, Streams 2, Short Cuts 1 and Short Cuts 2. Streams 1 and Short Cuts 1 aim for the course English A at Upper Secondary School and Streams 2 and Short cuts 2 aim for the course English B at Upper Secondary School.

The reason for the choice of these four course books were that I wanted two books from each level of mandatory English at Upper secondary level in Sweden, preferably two books from the same series of course books and from the same publisher. The books that I ultimately choose were books that I had never used before and didn’t know much about; this so that my experience as a reader would be as for any reader who open the course books for the first time, something new.

In my analysis of the course books and there content of history I have chosen to only show the three countries that have the most pages dedicated to their history in the order of number of pages (the one with the most pages first and so on). The reason for that limit is the amount of space it would take in this thesis, had I included all of them.
1.5.2 Execution

I have looked at the four course books to see how much of the content in them that is dedicated to history (that being the countries’ history, literature history or language history) looking at the amount of pages or sentences that is presented about these three areas in the course books.

I have also looked at what kind of information that the course books address when it comes to the English speaking countries’ history, positive or negative, and what the texts are about, the facts presented. This will also give me an image of how the country is presented. I can also see if the facts support the prevailing power structure of the world today.
2 A look at the textbooks

2.1 Streams 1 and 2

Published by Gleerups Publishing in Malmö. The authors are Eva Alderborn and Lena Ågren. *Streams 1* and *Streams 2* aim at the courses English A and B in Upper secondary school but can also be used at adult education, for the same courses. The book does not, in any way apply to any one school program, but can be used both at trade programs as well as programs that prepare you for studies at the University or College.

2.1.1 Streams 1

The textbook contains a total of 228 pages, wordlist at the back included. Each page has approximately 20 – 25 sentences depending on if the page has a picture in it or not. Obviously you also have to take into account that some pages are written with dialogue and therefore they might have more sentences, but the average page has approx. 20 – 25 sentences.

11 whole pages and 80 sentences (approx. 3 ½ pages) in the book contains references to history in some way. This makes 14 ½ pages of the book that in some way contains historic references. In total 6 % of the book have references to history.

These 14 ½ pages you can find in 5 chapters in the book, from a total of 7 chapters, so there is a wide spread of historic information in the course book.

We begin with chapter 2 - *Around the World* (p. 19 – 50). There are 11 subheadings in that chapter. Under the second subheading - *Welcome to New York City!* (p. 22 – 26) you can find information about New York. On page 24 you find 3 sentences about the history of the building. Among the information is the fact that the building at one time was the tallest building in the world.

On page 25 you find the next historic reference. There are 2 sentences about The Statue of Liberty and how it was given to the US by France in 1886. On the same page you find
information about Ellis Island; that it was here millions of immigrants first came between 1891 and 1943.

The third subheading – *The Land of Reggae: Jamaica* (p. 27 – 29) contains information about the island. The only reference to history you can find on page 28, 2 long sentences about how 95% of the Jamaican people are descendants from slaves and that their official language is English. They also have a creole language that is based on English, which is spoken by most Jamaicans.

Subheading number five contains information about *Scotland in brief* (p. 31 – 33). On page 32, under the heading Politics, you can find the information about Scotland being governed from London before (no dates or years mentioned). The total of information is 1 ½ sentence. Information about Ireland’s history you can find under subheading six – *Sunday, bloody Sunday* - on page 34. The texts begins with 2 sentences about the bloody Easter Sunday 1916, when the Irish Volunteers started a rebellion to try to end the British rule over Ireland.

Finally, subheading nine – *Being a Student in India* (p. 42 – 45) contains an information box, on page 45, with information about the caste system in India, about the four castes. The box takes up ½ a page (10 sentences).

Chapter three – *Not Like Everybody Else* (p. 51 – 76) has eight subheadings and only subheading three – *A Husband with Six Wives* (p. 59 – 60) contains historic information. The subheading is the beginning of a text about Henry VIII, his life and the Reformation in England. The text is mostly about his six marriages, not so much about the Reformation, just a few sentences. The text about Henry VIII is two pages long.

Chapter four – *Down Under* (p. 77 – 112) has 12 subheadings. Subheading one is an introduction to New Zealand (p. 78 – 80) and on page 80 there are 2 sentences about how Captain Cook mapped the islands in 1769 and how the British colonized New Zealand in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Subheading two – *Meeting the Maori* – has two pages (p. 81 - 82) with facts about how the British captain, James Cook, was supposed to find the “Southern Continent”, the South Pole. But he reached the west coast of New Zealand. When the ship crew went ashore they were met by Maori warriors and mistook their dance for an attack so they shot them. Even though
64 powerful Maori chiefs signed the Treaty of Waitangi, which meant that the Maori ceded their rule to the Queen of England, the British still saw the Maori as savages. This meant that they were stripped of many of their legal rights, for example their children were not allowed to attend British Schools.

Subheading three – *Maori Traditions and Modern Values* (p. 83 – 84) informs the reader about the All Blacks, the national rugby team, which starts every game with a *Haka*, the old war dance of the Maori. The text is also about the Maori tattoos and their meaning, a text approximately 3 sentences long, on page 84. That in the old day’s most Maori men and women had tattoos. They were symbols rather than pictures, showing which family that the wearer belonged to. The symbols were often “taken” from nature, such as feathers and leaves for example.

Subheading eight – *We are all Aussies* (p. 100 – 102) has 1 ½ pages (p. 100 – 101) with facts about the Aborigines, the native people of Australia. To read about their lives before they met the British, about their artwork, painted on rocks. We also get to know about their weapons of choice, spears and especially the boomerang. Then we get the information that James Cook named the country *Terra Nullius*, the Latin meaning of nobody’s land. All because the Aborigines were not considered to be humans and they were hunted and shot. On the same page there is an Aussie Limerick about a boomerang and its owner Ray.

*Waltzing Matilda* – subheading ten (p. 107) – contains information about how it was during the depression of the 1890s in Australia. About the swagmen that roamed the countryside looking for work where they could get it. These swagmen where frowned upon by the farm owners, who saw them as lesser people because they didn’t have the same education and connections. The text about the swagmen is 2 sentences long.

Subheading eleven – *The Stolen Children* (p. 108 – 109) is the testimony by Fiona from the Yankuntjura tribe. She is 68 years old and speaks about how the police one day came and took her (she was five years old), her sisters Essie and Brenda and three of her cousins. They brought the children to the United Aborigines Mission in Odnatta, a hundred miles away from their homes and families. They were brought up as “white people”; they had to live indoors, travel by train, do household work for the white people and they had to “forget” their own language. Fiona’s name was also changed. It took Fiona 32 years before she met her own
mother again. The British thought they did a good thing but they didn’t think that the Aboriginal mothers had any feelings when they decided to take their children away from them, without letting them say goodbye. The text about Fiona is 2 pages long.

Chapter five – Right or Wrong? (p.113 – 146) – has 10 subheadings. The first text in this chapter, What’s the matter with her? (p.114 – 121) is about Fiona and Sean, two Irish Teenagers who are in love. Their relationship might cause trouble for them, because Fiona is a protestant and Sean is a Catholic. The short text brings up the political hostilities between the two religious groups and that it has been going on for some time. The text is 2 very long sentences on page 114.

Subheading two - Two Black Leaders (p. 122 – 124) addresses Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr with a short summary of each of the men’s lives. We get to know when they were born, where they grew up and how they lived their lives which made them very important for the Black community in the USA and their history. The text tells the story of Malcolm X and his ties to the Black Muslim sect – Nation of Islam – and how members of this sect, his “own” people, eventually killed him. There is also an extract from Martin Luther King Jr’s famous speech about his dream for a new and safe America. Also included is the fact that he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 and that he was killed by sniper, only 39 years old. Subheading two is 3 pages long.

Chapter seven – People before us (p. 179 – 197) is a chapter about our past. The chapter has 8 subheadings and also contains information about history, when it comes to the English speaking countries.

Subheading three – An Aboriginal Myth (p. 187 – 188) is a text about one of the myths from the Dreamtime, which the Aborigines call the very first era of their history. The myths are almost as our fables, they all have a message to convey – embedded in the story. There are 6 sentences that clarify the Aborigines concept of Creation, which involves the Dreamtime, or Dream Road as it is also called. This information can be found on page 187.

Subheading five – The Vikings (p. 190 – 191) tell us about the Viking life. The text on page 190 tells us about how the Vikings travelled far away, to France, Russia and by the North Sea to England and Scotland, among other places. It is said that sometime between 980 and 990
AD the Viking Leif Eriksson crossed the Atlantic and reached the coast of America. He called the land Vinland and he was there 500 years before Columbus. The Vikings had settlements in Iceland, the Shetland Islands, the Orkney Islands and the Faroes and there are still Scandinavian words in the Scottish dialects and on the islands outside Scotland. The same goes for names on places, there are some that has Scandinavian origin, like Stromness and Kirkwall. On page 191 it says that the English language has borrowed some words from Old Norse (the language of the Vikings). Some examples of this are the words egg, knife and fellow. The information about the Vikings takes up a total of 9 sentences.

Who discovered America? (p. 194 – 195) is another subheading in chapter five. The text talks about the Inuits and the Indians that lived in America before Columbus came and how they probably came from Asia originally and crossed the Arctic area in order to survive, looking for a new home. The Inuits stopped at Greenland, Alaska and the northern parts of Canada, but the Indians moved south, to southern Canada and America. We find out how the Indians began to trade with the English and the French when they came, but with the Europeans came diseases and also nasty habits like drinking alcohol. This fast reduced the number of Indians and Inuits and the Europeans took control of the land. After that they still had to fight injustice. For example the Inuits in Canada didn’t have the right to vote until 1962. The text is 1 ½ page long.

The last subheading in the book is The Promised Land (p 196 – 197). It talks about the great famine that struck Ireland in the 1840’s and because of the famine many decided to emigrate to the Promised Land, America. In the end, over 1 million Irish people had left Ireland for America during this time. There is a description about how the journey took many lives and when the Irish finally arrived to Staten Island, outside New York, they were immediately brought to an immigration centre on Ellis Island. There they were taken care of by doctors before they would get permission to enter the Promised Land, The United States of America. Many of the travellers were suffering from malnutrition and had bad hygiene when they arrived, so this was a precaution so that no diseases would be brought into the country. The text about this is ½ page long (p. 196).
2.1.2 Streams 2

The textbook contains of 180 pages in total, wordlist at the back included. Each pages has a between 20 – 25 sentences, when it comes to facts. The page that contains extracts from texts has approximately 35 sentences on each page. This is due to the extracts that are written in a smaller size of letters to get more information in on each page.

58 ½ pages from the book contains facts or texts with historic content, which is 32 % of the whole book.

The book has 4 chapters, these 58 ½ pages are found in the last three chapters.

In Chapter two – *Lines in Language and Literary History – an Overview* (p. 29 – 110) you find most of the historic texts. This chapter contains both Language and Literary history, as the headline shows, as well as the history of the countries’- so it is quite a large chapter, perhaps the largest in the book – when looking at number of pages.

The first subheading is called *English yesterday* (p. 30 – 42) It addresses the history of the English language. We get to know more of the Celts, how they lived, and about their language, the Gaelic. The roots to the Gaelic language you can find in the Indo – European language, just like the Swedish language. The Celts never left any written documents behind for us to find, all their stories, poems and legends were passed down, orally, through the generations until today.

Then came the Romans and invaded parts of England and with them came the Latin language, which influenced the Gaelic. After a while the Roman Empire begun to fall apart and the Germani, a people from an area stretching from southern Scandinavia to the northern part of the European continent, established themselves on the British isle. The Germani people that came were divided into two groups, The Angles from southern Denmark and the Saxons from northern Germany. There were battles between the two tribes but for the most part they lived in peace. This was in the beginning of the period when Old English was spoken. The Vikings arrived and brought with them their language, Old Norse. This influenced the Old English and the language was modified and evolved.
The text also mentions that the Normans invaded Britain in 1066 and with them came the Norman French, which also became the language of the ruling class. For nearly 200 years Old English co-existed with the Norman French, but Old English was now only spoken among the lower classes. Then they both evolved into Middle English, the origin of Modern English.

Under the same subheading you also find information about Geoffrey Chaucer and his *The Canterbury Tales* (p.40 – 42). This part of the text has historic elements, facts about the author, language history and facts about the novel all entwined with each other. We get to know that during the 14th century England fought in the Hundred Year war against France and the plague spread across the land. This was the century when Geoffrey Chaucer was born as the son of a wine merchant. Chaucer was inspired by French and Italian literature and this contributed to him writing his own masterpiece, *The Canterbury Tales*. The book consists of several different stories told by pilgrims during their travel to Canterbury, just to pass time. A reason for reading *The Canterbury Tales* today is that they describe medieval England very well as Chaucer was an eye witness and wrote down how it was. The pilgrims in the story all come from different classes in society and different places, geographically. The original text is written in Middle English. Attached to the text about Chaucer and his work is an extract from *The Miller’s Tale*, one of the texts in the *Canterbury Tales*. Next to the extract from the original text is an extract from a modern version of the text, just so that the reader can see the differences when it comes to the written language. If you have the CD with the course book you can also listen to the text. The subheading contains of 13 pages in total.

Subheading two is called *William Shakespeare and the birth of Modern English* (p. 43 – 49). The text addresses language history and information about Shakespeare. We find out that Middle English (1100 – 1500) was a mix between Old English and Old French and that today we still have words that come from that time, like house and father. We also find out that Early Modern English (1500 - ) developed through influences from Latin, French and local dialects. Between 1530 and 1660 there was an enormous expansion of the English vocabulary. This was the time where authors and literate people, ordered by the authorities, created a national literary language - a standard for everyone to follow. A standardized language would make it easier to handle documents and writing new laws.
Early Modern English is much alike our language today, with some differences when it comes to certain words; such as for example skyscraper and automobile. This is quite obvious, since these types of things did not appear until recent years. But also the personal and possessive pronouns in the 2nd person are different. Today we say you and your, Shakespeare used thou, thee and thy. Other differences are grammatical peculiarities; such as for example that they did not use do in questions or negative phrases, which is a rule today. Example: Likest thou me? (Do you like me?). The pronunciation was also slightly different though the text mentions that a person today would probably understand the language as well as they does some modern day English accents.

The text about William Shakespeare tells us about the playwright and how his identity still is debated. We get to know that Shakespeare’s plays contain more than 28,000 different words. Among these there are a few that he has invented himself, therefore it is the first time in history they appear when they are used in his plays. His work was not only written for the eye, but also for the ear as his words are put together to create music. He plays with rhythm, meaning and melody. There is also a description of the Globe Theatre and how it was constructed. Following the description there is a dialogue taken from the play Romeo and Juliet (p. 47 – 48)

The audience were active while the play was played, they were a part of the dialogue, making comments if they liked it or not. They could also ask the actors questions during the play. The Globe was closed down because of religious reasons and also because of a fire that destroyed a big part of the building. Shakespeare’s Sonnet 18 is included in the text, and there is also an instruction on how to write a sonnet, the rules when writing. The text about Shakespeare and the language evolvement is 6 ½ pages long.

(Common sense and good taste) (p. 50 – 56) is the title of subheading three. The text explains to the reader about the Enlightenment, that it was the age of reason (common sense). This would lead to a better life for everyone. New inventions were invented such as the steam engine as well as other industrial machines. England also changed political system into parliamentary, which would solve the country’s social and economical problems. The literature became an informative channel for the people, discussing and analysing political issues and enlightening people by setting examples. The press also had a breakthrough; more people could read and wanted to read about their own realm.
The subheading also includes a short text about Doctor Johnson, also known as Samuel Johnson (p. 50 – 52) He was a literary giant during this period. He was a poet, essayist, editor and critic and also a well-know speaker. His most famous work was a dictionary: A Dictionary of the English Language. The text is followed by a few aphorisms from Johnsons´ work. This part of the text contains 2 pages in total.

Jane Austen is the course book´s chosen author of this literary period (p. 52 – 56). During a time when female writers were frowned upon and when publishers didn’t dare to print work written by a female, Jane Austen began to write. Her first novel, First Impressions, was finished in 1797. It was rejected by a publisher and it took 14 years before she started to work on that manuscript again, making changes and turning it into a novel that is well-known today, Pride and Prejudice. The same year she published her first novel, Sense and Sensibility. Two years later Pride and Prejudice also got published. But, her name was never included in the novels that she wrote, not during her lifetime.

After the facts about the period and Jane Austen there is an extract from the first chapter in Pride and Prejudice. The text about Austen and her work is 4 pages long.

Subheading four – The Romantic era: Let’s dream away! (p. 57 – 61) – describes the literary era when escapism was in its prime. People wanted to dream away when reading, so this was the era for romantic love stories and imaginary trips to the Middle Ages and places far, far away. In 1750 the reaction against everything that described real life was making itself known; the Romantic era was an era of mysticism.

Sir Walter Scott and his well-known novel Ivanhoe is described in the text, followed by an extract from the novel (p. 57 – 60) The first part of the text under this subheading is 3 pages long.

Amongst the poets during this time Nature was divine, they wanted to be as one with Nature – the most ecstatic experience that was possible. To be one with nature would make you understand the miracle of Creation. Very often a lonely wanderer appears in poems from this era.
William Wordworth, who grew up in the Lake District in the northern part of England, is one of the most well-known poets from this era (p. 60 – 61). The text includes his famous poem *Daffodils*. The Wordworth text is 1 ½ pages long.

Subheading five – *Reality makes itself heard* (p. 62 – 65) – describes the 19th century and how economic and technical developments made great fortunes for some and left many in poverty. Politics discussed issues like lack of housing, infant mortality, child abuse and other crimes but also illiteracy. This was also frequently occurring in newspapers at the time.

Charles Dickens was active as a writer during this time (p. 62 – 63). He knew all too well about poverty as he began to work 12 hours a day himself when he was 12 years old. The money he earned from this was not even enough to buy food. He took it upon himself to inform the middle- and upper classes about how it could be to belong to the lower class. The text contains an extract taken from Dickens’ famous novel *Oliver Twist*. The first part of this subheading the text that follows it is 1 ½ pages long.

Emily Dickenson is also included in the text (p. 63 – 63). Most over her poems were published after her death, though she is said to have written more than 1 700 poems during her life. Today she is considered one of the most popular American 19th century poets. Following the fact about Emily is a poem she wrote; *I am nobody! Who are you?* This text about Emily is approx. ½ page long.

*Literature of the 20th and the 21st centuries* (p. 66 – 105) is the title of subheading six. The text informs us about the significance the two world wars had on literature during the 20th century. Other events in world history which influenced literature were conflicts such as the Viet Nam war, the racial issues in the USA and the Apartheid system in South Africa. Many colonising countries lost their colonies during the 20th century. Basically, this was a time of many changes. People took more interest in psychology, the women were liberated and the sexes were more equal. More people migrated to other countries and brought with them their own cultures and mixed them with the new ones (this brought on the phenomenon *cross culture*). Many poetic innovations were founded, but none is mentioned in the text.

The Irishman George Bernard Shaw was one of the most important playwrights of the early 20th century (p. 66 – 72). When he was in his early thirties he became politically active in the socialist party and he became a well-know political writer and speaker. His work was not recognised until he was in his fifties, and he received the Nobel Prize in 1925. Shaw’s plays always had a serious message, but were full with satire, humour, wit and irony and his
characters didn’t have any psychological depth. He used his plays to communicate his thoughts and opinions about different subjects, such as for example pacifism, vegetarianism and other –isms. True to his heritage, Shaw was also involved in the liberation movement in Ireland, which lead to the Irish Free State in 1921. The Irish republic (Eire) was founded in 1937, when the ties to England were cut.

Following the text about George Bernard Shaw there is an extract from his play *The Apple Cart*, written in 1928 and set in England somewhere in the future. The political message in this play is the relationship between the USA and England. The introductory text of the subheading and the text about Shaw is 5 ½ pages long.

After *The Apple Cart* we get to know Dylan Thomas, an expressive and provocative poet from the early 20th century (p. 72 – 73). He was born in Wales in 1914. The poems he wrote were often about sex and religion. It has also been said about his poems, that they appeal to the heard rather than the head and that his sexual and religious imagery are naturally combined. His poems were also very suitable to read out loud as Thomas paid a lot of importance to sound and rhythm, he is one of the poets you’d enjoy listening to.

Included in the text is his poem *Do not Go Gentle into That Good Night*, a poem that is said to be about his father, but it could also represent Thomas’ own life. He died quite young in 1953 after a stormy life that included drugs and alcohol. The text about Thomas and his poem is approx. 1 ½ pages long.

Subheading 7 – *English in the world today and tomorrow* (p. 106 – 110) – is about the English language. How it is not the largest language in the world, if you count the people that has it as their mother tongue, but it is the language used by most people in the world. It is the official language of OPEC (Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) and the first language of the World Bank and the United Nations.

There are quite a few countries in the world that have English as the official language; such as New Zealand, Australia, India, the Caribbean Islands, many countries in Africa, Ireland and, of course, England. This subheading brings up why the countries have English as an official language and some of the specific characteristics that defines them (so that you can hear from which country the speaker is originally).

The text in the book say that New Zealand and Australia were colonized by the British and therefore the language was brought to them. In New Zealand the English originates from British English, but also has influences from Australian English and Maori (which the natives speak). New Zealand English might be mistaken for Australian English by an unknowing
person, but the Australians and New Zealanders are very aware about the differences when it comes to their English. When it comes to the written language there are also some differences and they have specific words to describe certain things that are not in the English language anywhere but there.

Because of the colonisation of Africa during the 18th and 19th century the English language came to the continent. Even within this continent there are a few variations of English, for example Southern African English and West African English. These variations you can find depending on which part of the continent you are visiting. One characteristic of them all is, for example, that the definite articles often are left out in expressions like: He is happy boy (He is a happy boy).

The colonisation of India is also the reason why the English language resides there. In India, English is the language used by for example, authorities and universities. But only 5% of the population use the language regularly, because Hindi is the first language of the country. You can recognise Indian English by the very typical accent which has a singing melody to it when spoken. Also, the English language has borrowed some words from the Hindi language, such as pyjamas and jungle.

In the Caribbean Islands the English Language is part of a Creole language called Jamaican Creole, but it also stand for itself, as the original language. A Creole language is developed from different pidgin languages that are mixed languages. These appear when people with different mother tongues talk to each other. For example: Mi nou (I know) and Him bad (he is bad).

In Ireland the English language shares the country with the original Celtic language, but more and more people use English as their first language. Because of the 2 languages co-existing the English Language (Irish English) has taken on a few changes from the standard language. An example would be that the Irish use the past tense instead of the perfect tense, like in I love him a long time, instead of the Standard English I have loved him a long time.

The English language originates from the British Isles, but even within them there are a few different accents. The Irish English I have already mentioned, but there are also special variants in Scotland and Wales. RP (Received Pronunciation) is the accent most used in education. This is an accent with clear English features. Oxford English, the most eloquent form of these, has a flavour of correctness and upper class, but there are other forms of RP as well, that are more relaxed.

Within the English border there are a few other more “common” accents as well. One is Cockney, which originates from the working class people in London. One typical feature of
this accent is the glottal stop, for example instead of pronouncing the t-sound in the word **butter** you use a catch in your throat, as if you have swallowed a whole egg. You can resemble it to Goofie’s laugh.

EE (Estuary English) was developed in the 1980s. It originates from the south-east corner of England, where the river Thames meets the Northern Sea. The text about the different English’s is 3 ½ pages long.

Chapter four (and therefore the last chapter in the book) is called **Popular Fiction** (p. 125 – 159) and it gives the reader an insight into some authors of popular fiction and their work from the 19th century and onwards.

Subheading two – **Literature for young people** (p. 127 – 138) addresses what young readers look for in a book in order to find it interesting and worth reading. It also discussed if there are any differences in what boys vs. girls like to read about. One thing they have in common is that the reader wants to be able to identify themselves with a character in the book.

The there is a short text about Mark Twain and his novels *The adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the tales of two orphan boys in a small Missouri Town along the Mississippi River in the USA (p. 127 – 130). Following the short factual text is an extract from *Tom Sawyer*. The text about Twain and Sawyer is 3 pages long.

After Mark Twain there is a short introduction of Lucy Maud Montgomery, a Canadian author who wrote the stories about the orphan girl Anne Shirley (p. 131 – 132). The stories about the young girl began with the novel *Anne from Green Gables*. Following the introduction is an extract from that first book. The text is 2 pages long.

Subheading three – **It is all about LOVE** (p. 139 – 143) begins with a short description of Charlotte Brontë’s novel *Jane Eyre*. It is said to be one of the first novels to put love, from a female point of view, in real focus. There is also an extract from the novel and the text is approx. 1 page long.

Subheading five – **Supernatural stories: the Irish hero legend** (p. 146 – 148) tells the reader about the Irish people being known for their abilities to tell stories, and that Ireland has a rich selection of folk tales and fairy tales from way back in history. This introduction is followed by fact about the Irish poet William Butler Yeats and a legend he once heard from a friend. The legend is then retold in the text. Approx. 2 pages long, with the text.
Subheading six – *The crime novel* (p. 149 -150) begins with an introduction of the genre and what a classic crime story should contain. Following the introduction is a short factual text about Raymond Chandler, who is famous for his tough characters in the novels he wrote. There is also an extract from Chandler’s novel *The High Window*. Approx. 1 page long with the text.

Subheading seven – *The bloodcurdling Gothic novel* (p. 151-154) is about Mary Shelley and her *Frankenstein (or the Modern Prometheus)*. The text also introduces the genre of the Gothic novel, where Gothic means, among other things, “wild” and “horrible”. The there is a short introduction of the novel *Frankenstein*, followed by an extract from that same novel (p. 151 – 152). Approx. 1 ½ pages long, with the text.

Subheading eight – *Science Fiction* (p. 155 – 159) tells the reader about the genre Science Fiction, which often takes the reader out in space or to the future. The texts are often very factual – with technical terms infused in the text. H.G Wells is presented as one of the earliest writers of science fiction and an extract from his novel *The War of the Worlds* is included in the text (p. 155 – 156). Approx. 1 ½ pages long, with the text.
2.2 Short Cuts 1 and 2

*Short Cuts* 1 and 2 are published by Bonnier Utbildning AB in Stockholm and the authors are Jörgen Gustafsson and Lennart Peterson. *Short Cuts* course books 1 and 2 aim at the courses English A and B in Upper secondary school but can also be used at adult education, for the same courses. The book mainly applies to school programs that are preparatory for higher education.

2.2.1 Short Cuts 1

The textbook contains a total of 320 pages, wordlist at the back included. Each page has approximately 20 – 25 sentences depending on if the page has a picture in it or not. Obviously you also have to take into account that some pages are written with dialogue and therefore they might have more sentences, but the average page has approx. 20 – 25 sentences.

14½ whole pages and 1 sentence in the book contains references to history in some way. In total 4, 5% of the book has references to history.

These 14½ pages you can find in 3 chapters in the book, from a total of 10 chapters, so there is a wide spread of historic information in the course book.

We begin with chapter one – *Getting started* (p. 7 – 15). There are 7 subheadings in this chapter and under subheading six – *Read and retell: Doctor Crippen/Another Murder?* on page 12 and 13 we find a text about the American doctor Hawley Harvey Crippen, who lived with his wife at 39 Hilldrop Crescent in London in 1910, until he killed her and buried her in the cellar of the house. The story tells us about the love affair between Dr Crippen and his secretary Ethel and how he murdered his wife (who he found to be very annoying) and tried to run away with his mistress to Canada. They were, however, stopped by Scotland Yard as their ship arrived in Quebec and both of them were brought back to London. Dr. Crippen was found guilty and was hanged on the 23rd of November 1910. The text about the murderous doctor is 1 page long.
Chapter two – *Up, up and away* (p. 16 – 51) has 5 subheadings. Subheading three – *The road to Oregon* (page 30 – 34) tells us that not all people travel just for pleasure. The text on the pages that follows is about the thousands of people that travelled across America during the 19th century, to find a new home. We learn that between 1840 and 1870 more than 350 000 people travelled west in the covered wagons, all because they had read in a newspaper that there was a wonderful land called Oregon in the north-west. We get to take part of two diary excerpts written by an Iowan farm wife, Amelia Stewart Knight, who travelled with her husband and seven children across western Nebraska, towards Oregon (p. 31). The diary notes are not cheerful; it talks about the slow pace, that food was scarce and that it rained a lot. There is also a diary excerpt from another pioneer, Jane Gould, which describes the horror of the travel more vividly. Gould describes a camp of wagons that has had very hard times on the road and how children lost their parents and were left all alone in the world (p. 34).

The trip to Oregon often cost the travellers their lives, since they had to travel through deserts and mountains. Food supplies were low and then they could encounter Indians. The text also tells us about the American interest in Oregon and how the trip was prepared and made along the Oregon Trail (there is a map drawn on one of the pages of the text). *The road to Oregon* has 4 pages in total, just text.

On page 39, the same chapter and subheading you find a quote from the text about the Oregon Trail, “Families also brought weapons – usually shotguns and rifles – for hunting along the way and for protection against the Indians”. In relation to this quote you find 1 sentence which states that in 1850 war was declared against the Indians.

In chapter five (p. 71 – 75) – *Looking Back* - we find 7 subheadings. Subheading three is an extract from Ernest Hemingway’s book *In Our Time* from 1925 (p. 71 – 75). The extract is called *Indian Camp* since the text is from that very short story published in the book. *Indian Camp* is a story about a young boy, Nick, who follows his father, a doctor, to an Indian camp in northern Michigan. His father was there to help a woman give birth. The text describes vividly how the Indians lived and how simple their lifestyle was. Nick’s father has to do a caesarean without any anaesthetic and with only the help of a jack-knife. Nick helps as best as he can. The woman and child make it, but the father to be can’t stand it and Nick finds him after the birth – he has cut his own throat with a razor blade. The text is 4 pages long.

Subheading six in the same chapter (p. 88 – 93) – *Geometry Lesson* – deals with the author Frank McCourt’s childhood in Limerick, Ireland during the 1930s and 1940s. Frank McCourt wrote the book *Angela’s Ashes*, an autobiography, and this text is an excerpt from that book.
The text tells the reader about one particular geometry lesson that Frank had to endure during his younger years and the master of that class, Mr O’Neill, also known as Dotty. The reason the students called him Dotty was that “he’s small like a dot” (p. 89). The text that follows tells us that Dotty is a control freak, who teaches in the one classroom that has a platform so that he can stand above the students and threaten them with his ash plant and then peel his apple in front of them all. He also says that anyone who doesn’t understand the theorems of Euclid is an idiot. Idiots are what the students all are according to the masters. Mr O’Neill has, however, a very soft spot for Euclid, and when the student question his “idol” because what good is he when the Germans are bombing everything they see, his eyes get a bit watery and he says that without Euclid there would be no airplanes to fight the Germans with. The text is 4 pages long.

2.2.2 Short Cuts 2

The textbook contains a total of 255 pages, wordlist at the back included. Each page has approximately 20 – 25 sentences depending on if the page has a picture in it or not. Obviously you also have to take into account that some pages are written with dialogue and therefore they might have more sentences, but the average page has approx. 20 – 25 sentences. 39 ½ pages and 1 sentence in the book contains references to history in some way. In total, 15 % of the book has references to history.

These 39 ½ pages you can find in 2 chapters in the book, from a total of 7 chapters, so there is not a wide spread of information in the course book. The information is situated in particular chapters.

We begin at chapter five – Classics- that has 16 subheadings. Every one of these subheadings contains information about history since they address authors and texts from the Renaissance until the Victorian period, literary history. The whole chapter contains a total of 68 pages (p. 93 – 161).

It starts off with William Shakespeare, short facts about his life (how and when he lived and what he wrote) and his Sonnet 18, as well as an extract from his comedy As you like it (p. 93 – 101) You can also find a listening comprehension exercise that is said to
to the CD) describe the Globe Theatre, in Shakespeare’s time and in present (p. 100) This is a total of 3 pages.

Following Shakespeare is Samuel Pepys, a businessman who wrote a diary from 1660 – 1669 where he recorded every aspect of his life (p. 102 – 106). Pepys diary is considered of great historical importance since everyday life and social conditions are described in it. The diary of Pepys was not meant to be public, but now it is – right or wrong? An extract from the diary follows, describing January 12th 1668 where Samuel Pepys is wondering about his wife’s peculiar behaviour towards him. The text is 1 ½ page long.

Next is Daniel Defoe (p. 107 – 111). We get a short presentation of the man and his life, like the fact that he was almost 60 years old when he wrote Robinson Crusoe and that people actually believed that it was an autobiography because it was so detailed in description. After Robinson Crusoe, Defoe wrote another “autobiography” of sorts, Moll Flanders, the confessions of a female criminal. After the facts about Defoe, a short extract from the novel Robinson Crusoe is presented. In the extract Crusoe has just arrived at the Island that came to be his home for many years, and he was wondering which the best site for habitation would be. Following the extract is a small info box with information about the “real” Robinson Crusoe, the man that is said to be the inspiration to Defoe, while writing the novel. The text is 2 pages long.

Then we have Jane Austen and her novel Pride and Prejudice (p. 112 – 118) The text starts off with facts about Austen and her work. How she is known now for her realism when describing her characters and their social classes during her time, plus the irony that flourishes in her novels. There is also an extract from her novel Pride and Prejudice, taken from the very beginning of the novel with the famous quote: “It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife” (p. 113). You get to know Elisabeth Bennet, her sisters and her parents, especially her mother who desperately wants to marry of her daughters. The text is 3 ½ pages long.

Following Jane Austen are two of the Brontë sisters; Charlotte and Emily (p. 119 – 130). Just like with the other authors the text starts off with facts about them, how they were brought up by their aunt in a remote village when their mother died. They lived quiet and isolated lives and found their refuge in writing. The text following the facts is an extract from Wuthering Heights, Emily’s novel. The main character in the novel is Heathcliff, who is brought to
Wuthering Heights by the Old Mr Earnshaw, to live with his family. Old Mr Earnshaw has two children, Catherine and Hindley. Catherine and Heathcliff grow to love each other passionately, but when Old Mr Earnshaw dies Hindley takes over the house and uses Heathcliff as a servant, rather than an equal. This text is 6 pages long.

After the extract there are two listening comprehensions, one about Charlotte Brontë and one is an extract from her novel Jane Eyre. This text is 1 ½ pages long.

Edgar Allan Poe is next (p. 131 – 139). The section also begins with facts about the author, how he published his first poems when he was only 18. Poe failed, however, to earn a living by writing and only got his literary reputation after his death. The author is also known for his dark and twisted short stories which explore the dark side of being human. Following the facts is the short story The Tell Tale Heart by Poe. The story is about a first person narrator who insists that he is sane even though he has murdered a man who he claimed had a “vulture eye”. The text is 5 ½ pages long.

Then we have William Wordsworth, the poet (p. 140 – 143) William turned to nature for inspiration when he wrote, in particular his native Lake District, which was a calm and beautiful place. His poems bore a resemblance to medieval ballads. Wordsworth wrote the famous poem Daffodils in 1804 commemorating an excursion he had with his sister Dorothy at one time. The poem is included in the text, after the facts about him. Also included in the text is an extract from Dorothy´s diary, her thoughts on the excursion in question. The text is 1 ½ page long.

Following Wordsworth we have Charles Dickens (p. 144 – 149). We get to know that he worked at a factory from the age of 12, 12 – 14 hours a day. He became a famous serial-writer in news papers and later began to write novels. One of which is included in the chapter, namely Great Expectations. In the extract the main character Pip comes across a convict with his feet in irons. They meet in a churchyard and Pip is scared for his life. The text is 3 pages long.

Emily Dickenson wrote her poems about herself and from them you can tell how her restricted life made an impact on her (p. 150 – 152). Her father did not approve of here reading novels and she only had a few poems published while alive, even though she wrote a
great many more. After the facts about Dickenson´s life there are 2 of her poems included; I never... and I’m Nobody! Who are you? The text is 1 page long.

Oscar Wilde is the last author in this chapter (p. 153 – 161). He was born in Ireland but moved to London later on in his life. The texts say that he was a homosexual and he was not afraid to speak his mind. Even though he had a wife and two children he got arrested and imprisoned for 2 years due to his homosexual relationship with a son of a well-known aristocrat. In the text we can read an extract from Wilde´s play The Importance of being Earnest, about Jack who sometimes pretend to be “his brother” Earnest. This leads to many a complication when his best friend also uses Earnest as an escape from his own identity. In this particular extract Jack is on his way to propose to his beloved Gwendolen, when her mother suddenly appears. This starts a long discussion. The text is 5 pages long.

Chapter six – Big Cities (p. 162 – 194) has 7 subheadings. The first one- The San Francisco Earthquake- is a description of the 1906 earth quake made by famous author Jack London, who was there (p. 165 – 169). London describes how the earth quake began at a quarter past five a Wednesday morning and that just a few minutes later the fires started. They spread and there was no stopping it. The people in the city were not organized and didn’t communicate with each other. By afternoon, the same day, the city centre was gone. The author was surprised though, because there was no hysteria, no disorder among the residents – they just grabbed what they could and started walking away from their homes. London was also surprised by what devastation 30 seconds of earth quake could bring, nothing worked anymore. The text is 3 pages long.

Subheading six – City Profiles: Sydney/Montréal – is a description of the two large cities (page 188 -193). Starting off with Sydney, we find out that Sydney got its name from the British Home Secretary Sydney Cove, when the British brought prisoners there to build a settlement. The area known as Sydney was first inhabited by the British in 1788. Before that the Aboriginal people lived there for more than 50 000 years. When the British came the natives responded with a mixture of indifference, resentment and curiosity. If they would have wanted to resist, it was no use – they didn’t have the same use of weapons. Many of the natives died from European diseases or simply moved away. Others were reduced to drunkenness and beggary. To begin with the society of Sydney was extremely unruly, with the eastern side being quite calm and the western side really bad. The western side was the
home of many ex convicts and had a lot of bars and whorehouses, which resulted in many bar fights. In 1842 the city of Sydney was established and free settlers started to immigrate. The World War II brought many of New Australians to Sydney, looking for a new start or some kind of refuge. The text is 2 pages long (p. 188 – 189).

Montréal was named in 1535 by the first European to visit the area, a French man named Jacques Cartier. The name is a slightly changed form from Mont-Royal (the royal mountain) which is the name of the mountain around which the city lay. Montréal was once a fur-trading outpost that came under British rule in 1760. In 1775, the Independence war began in America and the city was momentarily invaded by American troops. After just a short while the first wave of English-speaking immigrants arrived, Americans who still wanted to be govern by Britain. In the early 19th century they were followed by newcomers from the British Isles, especially from Ireland. Then the French-Canadian population grew due to the high birth rate and all of a sudden the English – speaking population was a minority in the city. The text is ½ page long in total, but resides on 2 different pages (p. 191 – 192).

After the text about Sydney and Montréal there is a listening comprehension exercise about Auckland and how the British came to acquire the city, amongst other things (p. 194). The exercise is ½ page.
3 Analysis of the course books

The majority of the texts in the course books are factual, based on facts from history with 65 pages of facts against 57 ½ pages of fiction. The texts that are fictional are there to give a taste of what kind of literature they wrote during different times. The authors of the course books do not give any explanation for the choices of these fictional texts. One can only guess as to why they have chosen these texts and authors to represent that era in literature. For me, personally, some of these authors and texts are given in a course book and others not, like for example Shakespeare and his Romeo and Juliet. Some of the texts and authors are more well-known than others, but I think that might be the reason as to why they are in the course books in the first place. You want to introduce the reader to something new, but also something familiar – something they have heard about before. The countries mentioned in the course books are: the USA, Great Britain, Ireland, India, Jamaica, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Some African countries are mentioned in passing, but there are no real information given about them other than how they came to speak English in that part of the world and how they have “changed” the English language to suit them.

The reasons as to why these countries are included and not every English speaking country, I think, is the amount of space you have in the course books. If you would include every country, the course book would probably be extremely thick and hard to digest for the students. This is just my opinion, when thinking about what a course book would look like, had all the countries´ and their history been included.

Referring back to Höglund and DiMattia/ Svensson, I think that it seems too hard to include all of the history of all of the countries in one or two course books. Because, the history of the country´s native people is one part of the history, but then you have to include the history of the “new comers” or settlers as well. Their history, from which ever country they originally came from, probably gives us the clue as to why they came to this “new” country in the first place (as the Irish coming to the USA). The course books would then only include these facts and nothing more, or they would be so thick that the students would gasp at the sight of them – and perhaps never want to open them.
The course books that I have looked at failed this mission as well as the course books that Höglund and DiMattia/Svensson looked at, probably for the reasons stated previously, about the amount of space the course books have to offer, in number of pages. How can we prevent that? I will discuss my view on this matter later on in the analysis.

All of the course books contain texts about the USA and Ireland, but the USA is the country that has most pages dedicated to it of these two countries, approx. 27 pages versus 19½ pages. These 27 pages are referring to a total all of the three areas that I have looked at in these course books, namely the countries´ history, literary history and language history, all incorporated into one.

It is quite extraordinary that the country, which is the one of the youngest English speaking countries in the world, should be the country that is the largest common denominator between these 4 course books. Could it be that the authors of the books wants the youth that are reading and working with the books should feel a sense of recognition? The USA is a force to be reckoned with in today´s society and the country which the youth is most exposed to – through television and cinema. Many young students might dream about living there and be a part of the American life, as seen through the TV-screen. Will this make them more curious to the country´s history? Is that the motive behind the choice of texts? What of the original English Speaking country, the one that actually “gave” America its language? I can only speculate as to why the authors’ hasn’t written anything in the course books explaining why they have chosen this particular country and these particular texts, but I think that the reason is that the USA is a country that is frequently mentioned on TV and in TV-series. It is a country that we are exposed to every day of our lives, in one way or another. This might help when it comes to reading about the country’s history. That it is more familiar to the students already and therefore it is more interesting to find out about.

This fact, that I found when looking at the course books, supports the prevailing order of power in the world. The USA is a factor of power in the world today and this image is transferred into the course books.
How Ireland came to be in all four course books, before Great Britain, I don’t quite understand either. Such as small country get so much coverage, that is remarkable. I will, at first, look at the USA and the texts about that country.

What images do the texts about the USA give the reader of the course books? The images that is shown is that the authors might think that the USA is the most important country in the English speaking world and that it is the country which will spark the interest of most young students today. The other countries that are represented in the course books are, perhaps, of a lesser importance when it comes to the history of the English speaking countries and not as interesting as the USA.

There is a mix when it comes to the texts about the USA. There is a short factual text about New York City in one of the course books and the text also mentions several buildings in the city and their history. You also get facts about the millions of immigrants from Europe that arrived at Ellis Island between 1891 and 1943. There is a text following this one with more facts about, specifically, the Irish and their immigration to the USA during the great famine in their home country. The text describes their journey and the state they were in when they arrived to The Promised Land.

The Vikings are mentioned as great explorers that travelled to the coast of America, 500 years before Columbus, calling the country Vinland. Who discovered America? That is the title of one of the later texts in the course books, describing how the Inuits and Indians lived in America before the Europeans invaded their land. You get a short history of were these people might have originated from and how their numbers reduced drastically when the “white” man came, due to diseases and alcohol consumption. Not only this, but their rights have been questioned the whole time, like they were not people like anyone else.

The texts also speak of the hard life in the Wild West, the earth quake of San Francisco 1906 and of two strong, black leaders.

Most of these texts gives the reader the impression that the USA is a good country that survives hardship and give the “small” people a chance to be heard, even the black. Then there are at least 2 texts that focus on the hardship for the Natives, which is good for the
The text about the Wild West and the hardship for the travellers on the road to Oregon does not give a glorified picture of the country and the cowboy lifestyle, but it describes the feeling of fear that the travellers had, the fear of diseases and of the Indians. Ironic, since it was the white man that made the Indians move and took over the country as we can read in one of the other texts in the course books. The text about the Oregon Trail does not bring up the Indians’ problems with the white taking over; it just focuses on the white people and their hardship. But the next text, *Who discovered America?* lets the students know some of the hardships the Native Americans had to go through when the “white” people arrived in the country. One thing that is positive about the first text is that it is written from a female point of view, which might not be so common otherwise. The text shows the women and their thoughts and fears, not the men. Following the text about the Oregon Trail is a text about the Native Americans, or Indians, and their life during the 1920s. It does not say anything about the history of the Native Americans, but it shows how it was then. Seeing how it was in the early 1900s you can get a small idea of what the Indians had been through in the past, which had them living in camps around the country.

The texts about Malcolm X and Martin Luther King tell the stories of these two prominent black “leaders”, from birth to the grave. One that, at first, wanted a black and a white America, separated, and one wanted them integrated. The first one changed his mind later on in life. The things they had in common being that they were black, fought against injustice and that they both were murdered. These texts show the hard truth for the black people in the USA and what 2 people can do to change that, be it that they died for the cause, but still.

When it comes to literature history there are some American writers that are mentioned in the course books, such as Emily Dickenson, Mark Twain, Raymond Chandler, Jack London and Edgar Allan Poe. The writers are mentioned with a short text of facts about them and often there is an extract from one of their works. The texts about the writers occur in the course books that are aiming for the English B – course students. This is true except for one, the text written by Ernest Hemingway. The choices of these authors and texts we can only speculate about, since we can never be sure as to why they were chosen before others.
Other choices of authors and texts could be deliberate, looking at their work and fame, but it could also be a way to try and balance the information. With this I mean that the British authors should not be the only ones mentioned in the course books, that they want the readers to know that there were authors from the USA and Ireland also during the history of literature.

In second place, when it comes to being represented in the course books, is Ireland. The green island is mentioned in all four course books but the information is not as vast as the information is about the USA. It is therefore in second place in this analysis.

The image given about the country, through the texts in the course books, is that Ireland comes secondary to the USA. Ireland is perhaps not as important as the great country in the west, according to the authors of the books. How else would you explain the choice of texts? This is very sad, because I think that all countries are equal when it comes to history, no matter when or what happened there.

Ireland, which is one of the countries that have had a lot of emigrants travelling to America, is not as important as the country to which they travelled, apparently. You get practically no information about the country and its history in general, just a few sentences here and there (for the most part). There is only one text that is factual and long at the same time, and that is the text by Frank McCourt. Otherwise the texts are short or written in dialogue.

The texts about Ireland tell the reader about the fight between Catholics and Protestants and also about how people emigrated from Ireland during the 1840s to the Promised Land of America. They also tell them what great storytelling traditions they have in Ireland and that the Irish is a very superstitious people. Also, the readers can read about how it was to grow up attending a Catholic School in Ireland during the 1930s and 40s.

The image conveyed about Ireland is that the country has a troubled and violent past, also how bad it was for the students at a Catholic School. The image that I get from reading the text is not the best, even though the text about storytelling and superstition gives you, as a reader, a feeling that the Irish is a people of folk tales and legends. This comes off as quite romantic, at least in my eyes.
The texts do, however, kind of explain why there are so many people in the USA that has Irish heritage, which is good. This because then the students who read the course books might get the right idea of the USA, namely that it is a country built by Europeans and Native Americans, from the start at least. The readers also get an insight in the conflicts that have raged Ireland for a very long time and why it is still a touchy subject, namely the subject of religion. How people who have been neighbours for years, even friends, suddenly can want to kill each other. This is not from a movie or a far away country; this is Europe, our own backyard.

There is a short text about the language history and that the English that they speak in Ireland today is influenced by their original language, the Celtic language. This makes the Irish English more characteristic and it stands out more from other English’s.

The text about supernatural stories refers to the Irish people and their oral tradition due to the legends and folk tales that their history contains. This is something that they are known for, throughout the world.

Three Irish authors are mentioned in the course books, namely George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde and William Butler Yeats. The three authors are known for different reasons; Shaw was a playwright, Wilde was a playwright/author and Yeats was poet. After the short factual texts about each author you also get an extract from one of their works, just to see what kind of texts they wrote and to get to know them. All of these authors are presented in the course books aiming for English B students. It is also very good to get different kinds of texts, not only fiction – but also poetry and texts written for a play. This gives the reader diversity when it comes to literature, and they might find a different genre of text interesting enough to explore that genre a bit more.

Third in the order of the countries mentioned in the course books is Great Britain. Great Britain, the original English speaking country, is not the country which is most referred to in Secondary English course books today. Why I cannot say, but perhaps for the reasons previously stated, that other countries are more known to the target group for thses course books.
What picture of Great Britain is shown by the choice of texts? The King, Henry VIII, married 6 times and beheaded two of the wives, divorced two, one died in childbirth and one outlived him, all of this for the yearning for a son. A king who killed 2 of his wives because they couldn´t give him a son and, of course, because they were unfaithful to him. That was what he claimed anyway. When he finally got his son (Edward VI), the mother died and later on also the son, leaving the throne open for Henry´s two daughters – Mary I and Elizabeth I. The text also tells us how the Roman Catholic Church, at first, liked him. But when he wanted to divorce his first wife they excommunicated him, leaving Henry to make himself head of the Church of England (the Protestant Anglican Church). The text show us as readers that the King was a troublemaker when it came to the Catholic church, and that he, perhaps, wasn´t the best husband.

The two texts about when the British came to Australia and New Zealand do not convey a good picture of the British people. They came to a new continent, to new countries, and claimed them as theirs under the British flag and treated the natives very badly. They shot them at sight and kidnapped their children to “turn” them into more civilized people. For their own good no doubt! The picture of the British is painted with them as a barbaric people. I mean, surely not all of them were that horrible!

The text about the Vikings, which I mentioned before under the text about the USA, also contains some information about how the Vikings arrived and settled in the British Isles and that this brought some Scandinavian words (from Old Norse) to the English language that still exists today.

Doctor Crippen was a real doctor, living in London in 1910. He murdered his wife so that he could live with his secretary instead. Both of them were arrested when they tried to sail away to Canada. Not such a happy ending I would say, but one person should not bring down the views of a whole country. So, this text is not important in whole.

A chapter in one of the course books contains the information about language history, which is the history of the English language and how it came to be like it is today. The same chapter integrates the literary history as well, as some writers in history has great significance to the development of the language. The text guides the reader from the time before the Vikings until the 21st century, stating the Old English, Middle English and Modern English. In doing
so they also mentions the writers Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, Samuel Johnson, Jane Austen, Sir Walter Scott, William Wordworth, Charles Dickens, Dylan Thomas, the Brontë sisters (except Anne), Mary Shelley, H.G Wells, Samuel Pepys and Daniel Defoe, not in that particular order. The different authors are presented, in one of the course books, under different subheadings, referring to the historical time when they lived and worked (*Streams 2*). In the other course book (*Short Cuts 2*) they are presented in a time line, beginning with the earliest (Shakespeare) and ending with the latest (Dickens). The difference between the two course books, which both aim for course B in English, is that one of the books really writes about the period in which the authors lived and worked (*Stream 2*), while the other book doesn´t, or not to the extent of the first course book.

The chapter about language history gives the reader the knowledge about how important the British were and still are when it comes to the language and the development thereof. Also how important the authors from this country are for bringing literature forward in history. The texts about the authors, no matter which country they originate from, gives me as a reader only positive vibes. How can you think anything else, since there is nothing “bad” presented in these texts?

Not all countries were included in each course book, which is sad. As a teacher you buy a course book that you feel can help the students reach the goals for the curriculum in English A or English B. Sometimes you can´t buy the books you want since funding can be scares at the schools. This means that, if you just use the course books in your teaching, your students can never fully reach all the goals of the curriculum. You will have to look outside the books to find that information and you have to invent new tasks by yourself so that you can give the students what they need to have to finish the course.

As an attempt to answer the question that I mentioned earlier in the analysis; how can we prevent the students from not fulfilling the goals of the curriculum in the courses English A and English B by using the course books, I have come to this conclusion. It might be hard for the publisher of the course books to include this much facts in each course book, but then why not create one or two books on the side (that are still included in the book package that the schools buy) that can help fulfil these goals in the curriculum? Facts and tasks about English speaking countries history and social structure (and not just the USA, but also the other countries that are mentioned in this work), literature from other English speaking countries than the USA, Great Britain and Ireland. This way the students will get a more complete picture of the English speaking world, and not just acquire what is shown on TV.
3.1 Conclusion

So, to look at my research questions and simplifying my results of the analysis I have done as follows:

The amount of pages and sentences dedicated to the English Speaking countries history is individual, depending on which course book you are looking at. The things that they have in common, when it comes to the amount of pages dedicated to history, is that the two course books aiming for the course English B has more pages about history than the two course books aiming for the course English A.

In Streams 1 you have 14 ½ pages referring to history, in Streams 2 you have 58 ½ pages. In Short Cuts 1 you have 14 ½ pages referring to history and in Short Cuts 2 you have 39 ½ pages.

Looking at the course books in a whole, the course book with the highest percentage of history included is Streams 2 with 32 % of the total of pages. That the course books aiming for the course English B has more pages about English history is probably due to the fact that they have included literary history since that is also a part of a goal for that course. The course books aiming for the course English B has not much of the literary history. As a matter of fact just one of the two course books aiming for English A has it (Short Cuts 1), and that text is of a factual nature – namely an extract from an autobiography.

The countries that are included in the course books are as follows: the USA, Ireland, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India, Jamaica, the Caribbean Islands and countries on the African Continent. Some of these countries are more frequent than others in the course books, for example the USA and Ireland, which are mentioned in all four of the course books.

The history which is brought up in the texts is mainly “real history” (65 pages in total), such as for example the life in the Wild West, King Henry VIII and his wives, the Indian caste system, the British treatment of the natives in both Australia and New Zealand and an eye witness account of the San Francisco earthquake in 1906. You as a reader get a certain view of the different countries, depending on weather the texts bring up a positive or a negative event in history. If we look at the texts about for example Australia, the image that you get is
that the British people were bad people, when it came to the natives on that island. That the British brought diseases and weapons, that they didn’t understand the Natives and therefore treated them as animals which they could shoot on sight. The effect of this is that you instantly feel bad for the natives and perhaps turn against the British, feeling resentment towards the British people.

Other countries are presented in a different light, such as the USA, that is both the Promised Land and the home of two strong black leaders (even though they are dead today). The USA is the land of opportunity! Not presented entirely as “dark” as Great Britain. The effect could be that you as a reader favour the USA over Great Britain because of the texts.

Looking back through my thesis you find that the discourse practice, looking at production and consumption of the texts in the course books, has not really helped in changing social relations and power structures. The USA is the most powerful English Speaking country in the world, and when you look at the course books, I would say that that view has not changed. You get the sense that the authors know this and perhaps have done it deliberately, including facts about the USA that are not so “bad”, but it could just as easily been done unconsciously. Since the USA is an influential country the authors might have thought of that country first, when thinking about the English speaking countries. That the texts about the USA are mainly positive is also a valid point when looking at this through the discourse practice. This also strengthens the role of the USA as a strong representative for the English Speaking countries in the world.
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