BRITAIN TODAY (I)

I. Public services: crisis and reform

1. Transportation
    a- The Railway
    b- The Underground
2. The Welfare State: the NHS

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INTRODUCTION

Rappel : conventions typographiques :

- *Le vocabulaire thématique en gras. Il existe de nombreux ouvrages de vocabulaire thématique dans le commerce. Il est important d'en faire usage tout au long de l'année pour enrichir votre lexique. Ceci est très important pour la richesse de votre expression à l'écrit comme à l'oral et pour le thème également.*
- *Toutefois, il peut être plus facile de retenir le vocabulaire en contexte, d'où son inclusion ici au sein de phrases rédigées et la proposition qui vous est faite de vous entraîner au thème.*
- *Les informations les plus importantes sont soulignées.*
- *Le vocabulaire en italique est utile pour les essais (mots de liaison, connecteurs logiques etc). Pensez à noter et à utiliser les formulations que j'utilise ; j'emploie notamment de nombreux mots-outils comme « to foster, to trigger, to deem, to contend ». Apprenez-les et « testez » les dans vos copies ; il faut les employer régulièrement pour être sûr de bien les maîtriser.*

Les notes de bas de page :

- *les notes en rouge concernent le vocabulaire et la civilisation*
- *les notes en vert concernent les questions de langue, la grammaire*

For all the figures quoted in this presentation, you may visit the site of The Office for National Statistics.
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_compendia/UK2002/UK2002.pdf

Before I start on thematic presentation, just a general word about today's Cabinet. *My point is* certainly not to judge in any way the achievement of Tony Blair's two successive **terms**. This is not something you are asked either. But I do want to relay the discourse of the press to you. There is one treatment of the character of Tony Blair that has been interesting in the press and that you need to know about; of course this may seem critical, but this is why you need to know about it. The following image of Tony Blair is famous enough for you to be expected to know about it.

Tony Blair first came to power in 1997, when **New Labour** –a term he proposed to break with the old, socialist Labour- won the **general election**. Tony Blair's other famous **catch-phrase** in his **program** is the "**Third Way**", neither the right nor the old left. These terms are essential.

The criticism I was talking about deals with Blair's modernity as a politicians and especially with his strong concern with image. Tony Blair is surrounded by several "**spin doctors**", in the American way –some of them directly come from former White House

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teams; spin doctors are counsellors, who give advice[1] on image, public relations, the appropriateness of such or such announcement. They help determine the Cabinet's policy whereas they have no specific competence in the measures' fields. Blair also works to a great extent with "**focus groups**": people are **polled**[2] to know their opinion on future measures and decisions are taken according to the popularity of a measure. This of course to preserve the popularity of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet.

Finally Blair has been attacked for being a "**control freak**". Someone who wants to be the sole[3] leader. *For instance*, Blair offers the strategic positions in the country to close friends. *This is the case of* **Peter Mandelson**: this former Secretary of Industry and Trade had to resign due to a political scandal. After a few months, Blair dismissed the then-Secretary of Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, to give the position to Peter Mandelson. *Once more*, it was found out[4] that Mandelson had been involved in another political scandal and he resigned again.
Another example is the election of the mayor of London. Tony Blair had decided that the New Labour candidate would be Franck Dobson, a close ally and not **Ken Livingstone**, the former (Old) Labour mayor, his personal enemy, who was nevertheless the most popular. Blair arranged primaries within the party that gave Dobson the official support of Labour. *However* Livingstone, who maintained his candidacy, easily won the election, and is now mayor of London. Another personal failure for Blair.

Blair's position 2004 Update

In the wake of 09.11 and the war in Iraq, Blair has been able to build a strong relationship with Georges W. Bush, through the constant support of Britain of the American decisions to retaliate in Afghanistan and Iraq. At home, Blair has somewhat suffered from his commitment to Bush. In his party especially, his personal closeness to the conservative American president, his obvious reluctance to support Kerry as a candidate, have raised criticism. On a political point of view, Bush's re-election places him, however, as the most efficient spokesman for Britain's interests: the Bush administration both trusts and owes to the British Prime Minister. In spite of the criticism, this could weight in his favour for the possible Spring 2005 general election.

[1] Tout comme "news" et "information", on emploie:
« a piece of advice », jamais l'article indéfini « a ».
Par contre : « The advice I can give you is to never give up » ; on peut employer l'article défini « the ».

[2] To *poll*: sonder / a *poll*: un sondage mais aussi une élection. Attention au contexte donc.

[3] L'unique

[4] *To find out*: découvrir, s'apercevoir que. Cela vous évitera d'utiliser abusivement « to discover ».

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