

**Agrégation interne d'anglais**

**Session 2023**

**Épreuve EPC**

**Exposé de la préparation  
d'un cours**

**EPC**

**360**

Ce sujet comprend 3 documents :

- Document 1 : Jonathan Coe, *Middle England*, Penguin Books, 2018.
- Document 2 : J.C.R. Colomb for the Imperial Federation, *Map of the British Empire*, Boston Public Library, 1886.
- Document 3 : Seán Moncrieff, "The myth of plucky little England struggling to free itself from the yoke of Europe", *The Irish Times*, Sat Oct 26, 2019.

Compte tenu des caractéristiques de ce dossier et des différentes possibilités d'exploitation qu'il offre, vous indiquerez à quel niveau d'apprentissage vous pourriez le destiner et quels objectifs vous vous fixeriez. Vous présenterez et justifierez votre démarche pour atteindre ces objectifs.

**Document 1** : Jonathan Coe, *Middle England*, Penguin Books, 2019, pp. 390-391.

They followed the path that wound itself around the perimeter of the school buildings – most of them dating from the redbrick inter-war era and all too familiar, some of them much more recent, and oddly unfamiliar: most prominent among these was the new prayer centre, built to  
5 accommodate the thirty percent of King William’s boys who now practised the Islamic faith. Soon they reached the grassy bank that led down to the playing fields, where the rugby posts rose up spectral and imposing in the summer twilight, like unexplained monuments from an ancient civilization. They sat down on the grass, just as they had done almost forty years ago,  
10 on a hot summer afternoon at the end of their final term, when Doug had brought cans of lager for them to drink but Benjamin had abstained, primly conscious of his responsibilities as a prefect. The memory of this afternoon made him smile now, and sent him off on a reminiscent trail.

‘Do you remember,’ he said, looking north towards the wall that enclosed the outdoor swimming pool, tucked behind the school chapel, ‘how they used to make us swim with nothing on if we forgot our swimming trunks?’  
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‘Oh yes,’ said Phil.

‘The amazing thing,’ said Steve, ‘is how our parents let them get away with it. Nowadays that would be a case for the police and social services. At least you’d hope so.’  
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‘True,’ said Phil. ‘So much of what we took for normality in the seventies would be defined as abuse today.’

‘Well, we emerged unscathed, at any rate,’ said Benjamin, to which Doug merely replied, ‘Did we, though?’ and for a while the question hung in the air, unanswered and unanswerable.  
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‘It’s nice to look back sometimes,’ Benjamin said at last, in a defensive way.

‘Nostalgia is the English disease,’ said Doug. ‘Obsessed with their bloody past, the English are – and look where that’s got us recently. Times change. Deal with it.’  
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‘Well, *you* don’t,’ said Benjamin

‘Excuse me?’

35 'You don't change much. Still making huge generalizations about the English national character, I see. "Subtlety is the English disease," was what you said last time.'

'What? When did I ever say that?'

'You said it here, forty years ago, when we were arguing about a headline in the school magazine.'

40 'I said "Subtlety is the English disease"?' 'Yep.'

'I remember that,' said Phil 'It was when we did that story about Eric Clapton going all Enoch Powell during his gig at the Odeon.'

45 'How can you remember something that happened so long ago?' said Doug. 'This is my point exactly – you guys are obsessed with the past. You remember it way too well and you think about it way too much. It's time to move on. We have to focus on the future.'

**Document 2** : J.C.R. Colomb for the Imperial Federation, "Map of the British Empire", Boston Public Library, 1886.

Document iconographique également consultable sur la tablette multimédia fournie.



**Document 3** : Seán Moncrieff, “The myth of plucky little England struggling to free itself from the yoke of Europe”, *The Irish Times*, Sat Oct 26 2019.

Isn't Brexit supposed to be happening next week? Maybe not. So surreal have the last few years been that from day to day, minute to minute, it's become impossible to predict what's going to happen.

5 It feels like we've lost our collective capacity for surprise, for identifying the strange. It's been beaten out of us. Everything is strange now, which means nothing is. [...]

10 Our experience of reality, our trust in it, is based on expectations. When you go to sit down, you trust that the seat you just saw is beneath your backside. If it suddenly disappears, it forces you to question all the other assumptions you've made, which in turn exposes you to every other crazy possibility. What before you discounted as not being real, might actually exist.

15 It's one of the ways stage mentalists work. By continually subverting expectations, they lead audiences to infer the possibility of extra sensory powers, of magic and myth.

20 Myth has been a huge driver in the Brexit catastrophe, barging its way past facts, history, compassion and common sense. This is the myth of plucky little England, struggling to free itself from the yoke of European oppression. Yet at the same time – because contradiction has no power here – it's also the myth of Britannia, the world power. A man interviewed by Sky News on his way into a Brexit Party meeting said he wanted Brexit at the end of this month so “we can get back to being the British empire”. It's the spirit of Dunkirk, conveniently forgetting that at Dunkirk, the Allied forces were running away.

25 It's easy to sneer at the deluded Brexiteers – and given that this will hurt us as much as it hurts them, it is one of the few compensations we have. Yet the truth is that we all live within myths. As individuals, we have our origin stories and every country has its founding tale. Ireland's is an uncomplicated line of resistance to British rule, where our heroes are virtuous, their leaders villainous. Everyone supported the push for independence, to create an Ireland completely scrubbed of all colonial influence.

35 Or at least that's the story we used to tell ourselves. As we grew up as a country, we (mostly) came to accept that the push of history is far messier; and during the Troubles we witnessed how our founding myth could curdle.

40 The row over our relationship to Northern Ireland was about those different myths. We wanted to leave our old one behind so as to continue to create a new version of ourselves, while Britain – at least the Brexiteer part of it – wanted to resurrect a moribund myth of the imperial past. Post-colonial versus colonial: fundamentally contradictory and near impervious to creative ambiguity.

45 The only certainty we have now is further uncertainty – for us, and particularly for them. Brexit, I suspect, is only the start of a process for Britain. For some years, the French have been publicly ruminating on how they are no longer a world power. Britain has yet to have that conversation with itself. All we've seen so far are the beginnings of a massive identity crisis, an attempt to make time stand still, and perhaps the beginnings of a culture war. The fractures in British society are going to get much worse before they get better.