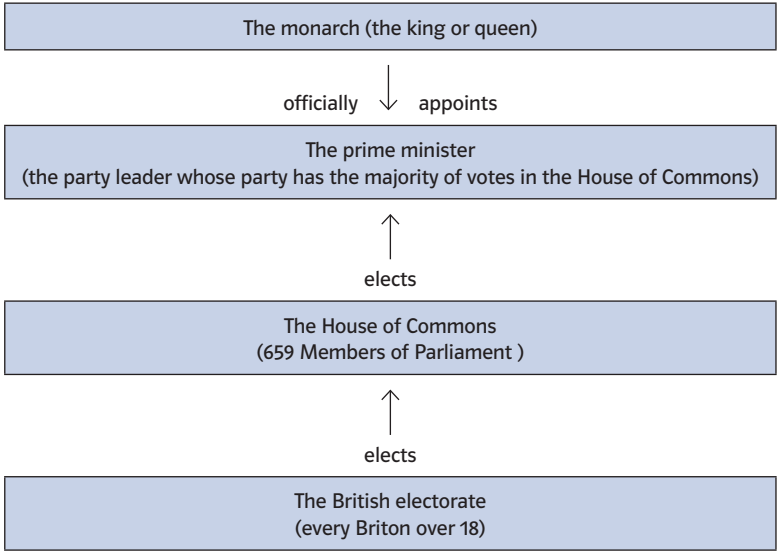


In theory, the British prime minister is just a “primus inter pares” (the first among equals) and much of the prime minister’s actual power depends on his/her strength and his/her authority as a party leader: As long as he/she enjoys the support of parliament, he/ she can decisively shape the nation’s policy. Dominant prime ministers such as Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair imposed strict party discipline, forcing the members of their parties to invariably support the government’s policies and proposals if they did not want to be excluded. Thus Tony Blair became the most successful Labour prime minister. For the prime minister it is essential not to lose the support of parliament. When Tony Blair came under increasing pressure from Labour MPs, he announced his resignation.



No. 10 Downing Street, the residence of the British prime minister  
© Getty Images, München / Tim Graham

The British electoral system



Civil Rights Organisations

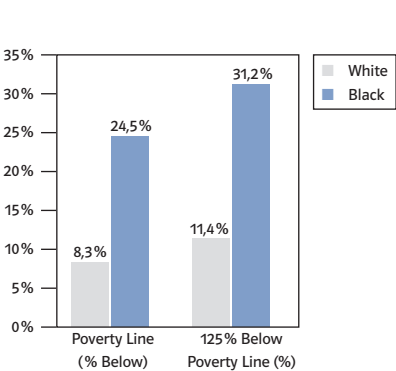
In 1909 a multiracial group of activists founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). When subsequently more organisations to promote equal rights emerged, some groups such as the “Southern Christian Leadership Conference” under their charismatic leader Dr Martin Luther King adopted a policy of non-violence while militant groups, for instance the Black Panther Party advocated armed resistance in their fight for equal rights.

The situation of African Americans today

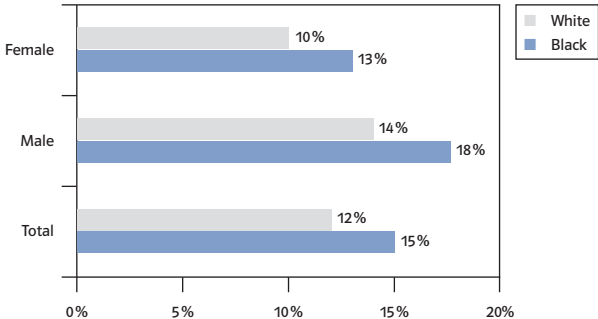
Undoubtedly substantial progress has been made over the last four decades: there is an increasing number of immensely successful African Americans, among them black politicians holding high offices. Yet statistics clearly indicate that African Americans still do not enjoy equal status as their white counterparts:

- Housing defines the quality of life, for instance by determining the schools which the children attend. While 76 percent of white families in America own homes, only less than 50 percent of black families do so since it is more difficult for them to obtain credit.
- According to the National Urban League Equality Index, Blacks are receiving significantly longer felony sentences than Whites.
- Blacks are more likely to be the victim of a violent crime, and five times more likely to be the victim of a murder than Whites with most crimes against Blacks being committed by other Blacks.
- The median income of Whites is still higher than that of Blacks.

Racial inequality is also reflected in the percentage of those living in extreme poverty (125% below the poverty threshold) and black males still had the highest rate of High School Dropouts.



High School Dropouts – Not Completed or Enrolled



(Figures based on “The National Urban League Equality Index” by Rondel Thompson and Sophia Parker of Global Insight, Inc. In: *The State of Black America 2007*, New York: National Urban League, 2007)

Data based on *The State of Black America 2007*, New York: National Urban League Equality Index, 2007.

We were first equal Mary and I  
with same coloured ribbons in mouse-coloured hair  
and with equal shyness,  
[...].

(From: Liz Lochhead, "The Choosing", in: *Dreaming Frankenstein & Collected Poems*, Edinburgh: Polygon, 1984, p. 151)

### Assignment A:

Twenty years later, Mary and Liz meet again. Write a short story in which you describe their encounter. (You are supposed to write a short story, so your text should contain some typical features, for instance you might begin without an introduction. You may choose the narrative perspective since nothing is said about the narrator.)

#### Some ideas:

Where do they meet?	at the supermarket, a concert, the library, on the bus, ...
When do they meet?	a grey December morning, on the way home from work, during the rush hour
What do they look like now?	still mouse-like, elegant, tired and exhausted, self-confident, ...
How do they react?	happy, awkward, impatient, pleasantly surprised, ...
What do they talk about?	their career, the past, future plans, their families, problems, ...
What has changed?	Back then ..., now ...
Do they go somewhere?	no/yes: a cafe, ...
Conclusion?	Tension: nothing more to say to each other? depressing, a reminder of dreams abandoned, will see each other again, ...

### Assignment B:

You were among the first Jamaican immigrants arriving on the *Empire Windrush* in 1948 to start a new life in Britain.

On finding this photo you start to remember ...

Write a diary entry in which you describe your sensations, recollections, etc.

- Since this is to be a personal account you have to adopt the perspective of a first-person narrator. Mention the date or find another way of indicating that this is to be a diary entry.
- Remember to describe "your sensations" and "your recollections".

#### Sensations on finding the photo:

Seeing the photo filled you with joy, longing, melancholy ... since it reminded you of ... You might begin by describing the situation which forms the background of your narrative: What were you doing when you found the photo?

#### Recollections:

dreams, hopes, fears, expectations, smell, sound, visual impressions

#### Some ideas:

your life in Jamaica, the situation on board of the *Windrush*, the journey, your arrival ... Create an identity. Describe your life.  
Find an appropriate conclusion to round the story off, for instance a personal reflection or comment.



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## Different forms of poetry

### ■ The sonnet

A sonnet is a poem consisting of 14 lines and following a strict rhyme scheme. While the Italian sonnet usually comprises two parts, eight lines with the rhyme pattern *abbaabba* followed by six lines with the rhyme pattern *cdecde* or *cdcdcd*, Shakespeare for instance always used the rhyme scheme *abab cdcd efef gg*, as in his famous sonnet 18.

### ■ Limerick

This kind of poem is always comic and sometimes even absurd. It consists of five lines and has a distinctive rhyme and rhythm.

A smiling young lady of Riga  
Went out for a ride on a tiger.  
They came back from the ride  
With the lady inside,  
And the smile on the face of the tiger.

### ■ Concrete poetry

In concrete poetry the very shape of the poem reinforces the theme or the poem's arrangement itself makes a picture as in Ian Hamilton Finlay's "Wave/Rock" (from: I. H. Finlay, *Poems to Hear and See*, New York: The Macmillan Company / London: Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1971, no page numbers. – © Ian Hamilton Finlay, 1971).

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?	a
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:	b
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,	a
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.	b
Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines,	c
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;	d
And every fair from fair sometimes declines,	c
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd:	d
But thy eternal summer shall not fade	e
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st	f
Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade	e
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.	f
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,	g
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.	g

### ■ Free verse

Free verse is poetry which is free from conventional elements such as rhyme or rhythm (e.g. Hugh MacDiarmid's poem "Perfect").

wave  
wave  
wave  
wave  
wave  
rock  
rock  
rock  
rock  
rock

## Motif in Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman*

The American Dream is one of the central themes in *Death of a Salesman*. Willy Loman, a mediocre salesman, dreams of success but it is his brother Ben who "has made it": "That man was a genius, that man was success incarnate." (A. Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, Stuttgart: Klett, 2001, p. 28) While Ben embodies success, Willy is a low-man, a failure. To escape from reality, he often retreats into a dream-like state lost in his memories of Ben. Often carrying a valise and an umbrella (pp. 31, 60) Ben is/was clearly a widely-travelled man. His appearances on stage invariably follow a fixed pattern:

- Idyllic music can be heard, which is referred to as "Ben's music" in the stage directions (pp. 31, 60).
- Ben never has time, always having to catch a train or a ship thus he is a constant reminder of the passing of time.
- The words "When I was seventeen I walked into the jungle, and when I was twenty-one I walked out. [...] And by God I was rich" (p. 33) are a phrase repeated whenever Willy thinks of his brother.

Together these elements form a recurrent motif highlighting the differences between the two brothers and exploring and varying the theme of the American Dream.

## Themes in Aldous Huxley's novel *Brave New World*

Since *Brave New World* is a novel of ideas Aldous Huxley discusses a number of themes in exploring abstract concepts such as

- science and technology
- experimenting with human embryos and genetic engineering
- mass production and consumerism
- totalitarianism: stability and the freedom of the individual
- propaganda
- conditioning human beings
- advertising
- drugs
- love and sexual satisfaction.