TEMA

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Topic 45: Great Britain in the Eighteenth Century: Socio-Economic Development and Political Organisation; Cultural and Technical Activity. The Great Novelists of the Period

Gran Bretaña en el siglo XVIII: Desarrollo socioeconómico y articulación política; la actividad cultural y técnica. Grandes novelistas de la época.

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Material de elaboración propia a partir de las fuentes oficiales que se citan al final del tema. No es un temario oficial ni sustituye a la normativa publicada.

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1. INTRODUCTION

"When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford." Samuel Johnson said so to his biographer James Boswell on 20 September 1777, and the sentence captures the confidence of a century in which Britain became a commercial, industrial and imperial power, and in which a new literary form, the novel, found its readers. Welcome to Topic 45: Great Britain in the Eighteenth Century: Socio-Economic Development and Political Organisation; Cultural and Technical Activity. The Great Novelists of the Period. In order to address it, I will divide the topic into six sections. Firstly, I will examine the political organisation of the century. Secondly, I will analyse its socio-economic development. Thirdly, I will review its cultural and technical activity. Fourthly, I will study the great novelists. Finally, I will reflect on the pedagogical implications of the topic within our current educational framework, before drawing some conclusions.

Before moving on, I would like to mention the sources consulted for the preparation of this topic. These include: Paul Langford's A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727–1783, published by Oxford University Press in 1989 as the first volume to appear in the New Oxford History of England; Roy Porter's English Society in the Eighteenth Century, in its Penguin edition; Linda Colley's Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837, published by Yale University Press in 1992; and Ian Watt's The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding, first published in 1957. I have also drawn on the websites of the UK Parliament, GOV.UK, the British Library, the Royal Academy of Arts and the Office for National Statistics, as well as on Encyclopaedia Britannica. As for the legal framework, I have taken into account the LOMLOE (Organic Law 3/2020), Royal Decrees 217/2022 and 243/2022, and Decrees 110/2022 and 109/2022 of the Autonomous Community of Extremadura.