

IN ENGLISH Education

AT POZNAŃ UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



POLISH WEEK at PUT

Every semester, a week before the beginning of the term, the Centre of Languages and Communication (former Department of Foreign Languages) runs Polish Week for international students who come to Poznań to study at Poznań University of Technology, benefitting from the European Erasmus Programme.

Polish Week is a splendid opportunity to get to know fellow students, break the ice and learn about Polish culture, history and geog-

raphy. Students take part in different cultural events, enjoy the sightseeing of Poznań and the city neighbourhood, and discover the beauty of Poland.

The recent Polish Week was held between September 24 - September 28, 2012. There were 88 students, participating in different cultural activities, exploring historical sites and architecture of Poznań and Wielkopolska. They came from almost all over Europe: Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Hungary, Turkey, Ireland, Germany but there were also students from Morocco, India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

They enjoyed everything that had been planned for them but it was the guided tour of the old Fort No.3 in Poznań that they found extremely interesting.

The fort is just one of 18 artillery forts that surrounded Poznań. It was erected between 1877-1881 by the Prussian army and is very well preserved. While watching the barracks, bunkers and the blockhouse, the students were treated to lunch (typical soldier's food: pea soup with sausages served in the open air). After lunch, the sightseeing was continued in the Poznań Citadel, including a visit to the Museum of Armaments.

A large collection of military equipment was found most enjoyable.

The Old Town with the Town Hall, the Parish Church and the Cathedral impressed the students very much, too. While taking photographs, they promised to come back to the Old Market Square to discover and admire its beauty in a more detailed way.

The trip to Wosztyn turned to be the most fascinating - to see steam engine locomotives working was an unforgettable experience. The only roundhouse in Europe that is still active today is to be seen in Wolsztyn only! No wonder the engineers-to-be were thrilled and excited to explore the garage of the roundhouse and the technical infrastructure that is related with the use and maintenance of the engines.

The evenings during the whole week were spent on different social activities - city games, karaoke parties, clubbing and just on making friends.

The time and joy shared together will never be forgotten.

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US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

„I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States¹.“

This is the oath which is spoken out loud by elected American presidents when they take over presidency. Yet, in order to become President of the United States, the candidate has to successfully pass the first phase of the elections, namely, win the nomination of the party which he (or 'she' in the future - who knows...) is to represent. Although there are numerous parties in the United States (Green Party, Libertarian Party, etc.), only two of them should be considered important. These are the Democratic and Republican parties. The other phase of the national presidential elections is the actual election. Therefore, the president, who is elected directly by voters every four years and is to represent the whole nation, is in fact burdened by doctrines and views of the party he is supported by. In order to understand the importance of the presidential elections, one should examine what makes the two parties different and the very role of the president in creating American reality.

Popular belief states that the Democratic and Republican parties do not differ significantly. It is true to an extent that both parties house members who often have common views on certain issues. Yet, the parties differ greatly in their philosophy of ruling the United States, their outlooks on social issues, business, taxation, or on some crucial ideas related to the way the USA should progress and develop. The Democrats (President Obama) are perceived as liberals who believe in progressive taxation and favor minimum wages. They claim abortion should not be made illegal and oppose death penalty in their majority. In terms of military - they support increased spending. On the other side of the barricade there are the Republicans (Mitt Romney), who are conservative and in favor of increased spending on military. They also claim there should not be progressive taxation, the minimum wage should be set by the free market and are against making abortion legal. Of course there are many more issues the Republicans and Democrats do disagree on. Finally, there is the

president, who is independent in his legislative initiatives. However, his policies must be approved by the House of Representatives and the Senate. As a result he must negotiate and frequently compromise with the Congress to win approval for his point of view. Only then his ideas can become law.

American presidential elections are most likely to attract attention of vast numbers of people all over the world. One might ask whether it is because of the fact that Barack Obama, who is the first Black President in the history of the USA, is going to defend his position in the White House, or perhaps it is due to the fact that American presidents have always been major players on the chess-board of the world issues. I personally think that the reason why the forthcoming elections are interesting for both the most influential circles and the world's public opinion is that should there be a replacement in the White House, there will certainly be a substantial reset in the philosophy of leading the United States, revolution in domestic policy, and a dramatic change in the approach to global issues.

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Sources:

Stevenson, D.K., American Life and Institutions, ErnstKlett (1998)
<http://www.politics1.com/parties.htm>
http://www.diffen.com/difference/Democrat_vs_Republican

CHRISTMAS QUIZ

How much do you know about Christmas traditions in the USA? Check yourself!

The answers are given at the bottom of the page.

1. What is the most popular holiday plant decoration in the United States?

- a. Mistletoe
- b. Poinsettia
- c. evergreen boughs
- d. Holly

2. What season immediately precedes (comes before) Christmas?

- a. Advent
- b. Epiphany
- c. Lent
- d. Pentecost

3. Which of the following places is NOT a real U.S. city or town?

- a. Snowflake, Texas
- b. Noel, Missouri
- c. St. Nicholas, Florida
- d. Santa Claus, Georgia

4. What major U.S. facility provides up-to-date information every Christmas Eve on the flight path of Santa Claus?

- a. The U.S. National Weather Service
- b. North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD)
- c. The U.S. Geological Survey
- d. International Arctic Research Center

5. What drink was adapted to become the American Christmas drink 'Egg Nog'?

- a. The Scandinavian drink 'Glogg'
- b. The Austrian drink 'Gluhwein'
- c. The German drink 'Biersuppe'
- d. The French drink 'Lait de Poule'

6. Which U.S. President began the custom of giving Christmas gifts to the White House domestic staff?

- a. Chester A. Arthur
- b. Woodrow Wilson
- c. Abraham Lincoln
- d. Rutherford B. Hayes

7. What is the most popular thing to put on top of a Christmas tree?

- a. A candle
- b. An angel

- c. a mistletoe
- d. A bauble

8. What is the best selling Christmas song of all time?

- a. White Christmas
- b. All I want for Christmas
- c. Last Christmas
- d. Happy Christmas

9. Elvis Presley recorded a sad Christmas song in the fifties. What was the title of his song?

- a. Green Christmas
- b. Black Christmas
- c. Blue Christmas
- d. White Christmas

10. What was Brenda Lee doing around the Christmas tree?

- a. Rockin'
- b. Layin'
- c. Dancin'
- d. Walkin'

Answers: 1B 2A 3A 4B 5D 6D 7B 8A 9C 10A

