

**Undergraduate Thesis Assessment Rubric**  
**Department of English, Faculty of Education, University of West Bohemia**

Thesis Author: **Hana Šišková**  
 Title: *The North-South Divide in England*  
 Length: 30 pages  
 Text Length: 26 pages

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1. Introduction is well written, brief, interesting, and compelling. It motivates the work and provides a clear statement of the examined issue. It presents and overview of the thesis.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
2. The thesis shows the author's appropriate knowledge of the subject matter through the background/review of literature. The author presents information from a variety of quality electronic and print sources. Sources are relevant, balanced and include critical readings relating to the thesis or problem. Primary sources are included (if appropriate).	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
3. The author carefully analyzed the information collected and drew appropriate and inventive conclusions supported by evidence. Ideas are richly supported with accurate details that develop the main point. The author's voice is evident.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	See comments overleaf
4. The thesis displays critical thinking and avoids simplistic description or summary of information.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
5. Conclusion effectively restates the argument. It summarizes the main findings and follows logically from the analysis presented.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
6. The text is organized in a logical manner. It flows naturally and is easy to follow. Transitions, summaries and conclusions exist as appropriate. The author uses standard spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	See comments overleaf
7. The language use is precise. The student makes proficient use of language in a way that is appropriate for the discipline and/or genre in which the student is writing.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
8. The thesis meets the general requirements (formatting, chapters, length, division into sections, etc.). References are cited properly within the text and a complete reference list is provided.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	

## Final Comments & Questions

The chosen topic contains a great deal of potential with the oft-discussed North-South divide in England, a phenomenon which stretches back at least to the latter half of the 18th century, having assumed a new relevance in recent years in the wake of Boris Johnson's election victory in December 2019, thanks in large part to votes from the so-called Red Wall.

The thesis is logically organised into three main sections and the author doubtlessly makes some salient points. That said, there are passages where the emphasis seems misguided. Far too often the text is cluttered with statistics regarding unemployment rates, house prices and the cost of living in general in various regions of England, all of which would perhaps be appropriate in a thesis written at the Faculty of Economics but makes a somewhat curious impression in the context of an English degree intended to focus more on language and culture.

Another shortcoming contentwise is the treatment of the political dimension. For instance, the author states on p. 19: *To talk about politics in England and what role it plays, if any, in shaping the North-South Divide, it is necessary to identify the political system and how it works.* This is a perfectly legitimate assertion in itself but the way the author follows it up is not particularly enlightening: the reader is presented merely with general information on the structure of the British parliament and its workings, including the role of the monarch – all of which maybe boosts the word count but is totally irrelevant to the discussion. It would surely have made more sense to focus more on the effect of the first-past-the-post system by which members of the House of Commons are elected.

Thirdly, the section on the Red Wall, which potentially could have been the most interesting in terms of contemporary analysis, is very disappointing with its clichéd approach and spurious claims. If a section of the population is defined by the area in which they live, in this case political constituencies, then *[p]eople living in the Red Wall area seem to have one thing in common; the location of their homes* (p. 24) is surely less of a supposition than a self-evident fact. On the same page, the author quotes Mattison (2020) with reference to *people living beyond the Red Wall*, but it is not clear who exactly these people are or what relevance they have in the argumentation. Either way, the author seems to be taking issue with Mattison here, but without support from any other serious sources. It would certainly be interesting to know where the evidence stems from that *most [Red Wall voters] still remember the good old days when the North and the Midlands were an important part of the economy and the factories employed thousands of people* (p. 24), given that Thatcher's devastation of Britain's manufacturing industry occurred over 40 years ago.

In terms of style, the overall impression of the work is hardly enhanced by inappropriate use of direct questions, especially the three in one paragraph on p. 8 – the last of which, incidentally, leaves one wondering who exactly is meant by 'we'. Other examples of inappropriate questions are: *So what exactly are the main functions of Her Majesty?* (p. 20); and *Who was Margaret Thatcher and what were the main ideas of Thatcherism?* (p. 21). For the sake of completeness, it may be added that *Here the question arises as to why the traditional Labour voters decide to change the habit of a lifetime and switch sides?* (p. 25) is an indirect question, so the problem could be solved by replacing the question mark with a full stop.

In fact, there are various other issues with punctuation. For instance, there is no obvious justification for the enclosure of *with Bristol on the southern bank and Cardiff on the northern one* in semi-colons (p. 2); on the other hand, *The first mention of this dividing line may be traced back to the industrial revolution between the years 1760 and 1840 however some sources claim that it existed even before that* (p. 4) would have benefited from the inclusion of a semi-colon before 'however' (and a comma after it). Then there is the issue of references appearing after the full stop concluding a sentence, e.g. (p. 24) on p. 2; (2018) on p. 3; (Lee, 1979) on p. 7.

Some basic errors could surely have been eliminated with more diligence in proofreading the final version: *New Ireland* (p. 19) and *Queen Elisabeth* (p. 20) are two glaring examples. Possibly the author might even have spotted the discrepancy between *The political system in England allows the two main actors, the Conservative or the Labour Party, to control and guide the development of the country* (p. 19) and *The political system of the United Kingdom consists of two dominant parties, the Liberal Party and the Labour Party* (p. 19).

Recommended grade: **dobře**

Supervisor: Andrew Tollet

Date: 7th June 2022

Signature: