

# ПРОЕКТНАЯ РАБОТА ПО ТЕМЕ

*«КРАСНЫЙ ЦВЕТ В РАЗНЫХ КУЛЬТУРАХ»*

*THE COLOUR RED ACROSS CULTURES*



Выполнила работу: ученица 7 «Г» класса,  
Битяйкина Елизавета  
Руководитель: учитель английского языка,  
Лазарева С.В.

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## Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. What does “Red” mean in different cultures?	5
3. “Red” in English and Russian languages	9
4. How can the colour “Red” effect on people?	10
5. Conclusion	12
6. References	13
7. Enclosures	14

*The theme of my project work* is “The colour red across cultures”.

*Тема* моей проектной работы «Красный цвет в разных культурах».

*The aim of the project work* is to find out the meaning of the colour red in different cultures.

*Цель проектной работы:* выяснить значение красного цвета в разных культурах.

To gain the aim I solved the *following tasks*:

1. find out the meaning of the colour red in different cultures;
2. compare the most common-use English and Russian idioms containing the concept “red”;
3. find out the similarity and difference of the colour red in England and Russia;
4. learn the impact of the colour “red” on the health of people .

*Задачи исследования:*

1. проанализировать значение «красного» в разных культурах;
2. сравнить наиболее употребляемые идиомы со словом «красный» в русском и английском языках;
3. выяснить сходство и различие употребления «красного» в Англии и России;
4. изучить влияние красного цвета на состояние людей.

*The hypothesis:* suppose the colour red has different meanings in different cultures and can effect on people.

*Гипотеза:* предположим, что «красный» имеет разные значения в разных культурах и может влиять на состояние человека.



**Introduction**

Last year I made a project “The colour red in English life”. I found out that in English culture red is really of great importance. You can see the red colour almost everywhere in Great Britain. I also studied a lot of the idioms with the concept “red” that are widely used for description of different phenomena and situations in human life in Great Britain. I did the survey of the students of our lyceum and found out that 95% of them think that colours have different meanings in different countries and cultures. So I decided to know more about it.

In this project work I’d like to find out the meaning of the colour red in different cultures, because colour plays an important role in the world in which we live. Colour can sway thinking, change actions, and cause reactions. It can irritate or soothe your eyes, raise your blood pressure or suppress your appetite. Colour is a powerful and important communication tool, and it is tied to religious, cultural, political and social influences. When used in the right ways, colour can even save on energy consumption.

The colour “red” is frequently associated with fire, the sun, human blood. Red is usually associated with extreme emotions. People tend to associate red with love, rage, and embarrassment. It’s very energetic, hot, exciting colour. That’s why this colour always causes the strongest feelings. But does it mean the same in different cultures?



**What does «Red» mean in different cultures?**



A single colour can have many different meanings in different cultures. Colours can symbolise a rite of passage, differentiate a premium from a discount brand, and distinguish between fun and serious, young and old, male and female. In addition to all the traditional meanings associated with colours in various cultures (those linked to birth, weddings, funerals or even the colour of the mailbox), there are also those layers of meaning brought about by international marketing and communication.

Every country and culture attaches certain symbolic values to colours. There are various sources where these symbolic meanings are listed.

If it's so important then, what does the color red mean? Well, it depends. Red actually conveys different meanings not only from culture to culture or from era to era, but within our own culture and time.



### Colour Symbolism per Country

REGION/ COUNTRY	SIGNIFICANCE	EXAMPLES
North America United States and Canada	Excitement, warning, sex, passion, adultery, safety rescue, hot, spicy	Color of Canadian flag and dress uniform of Royal Canadian Mountain Police
Latin America Mexico	Sunny, religion, compass, vibrancy, intensity, death	Aztec color for north, used in national flag
Caribbean Bahamas, Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico	African roots, nature, animals	Flowers, birds
South America Argentina	Craftsmanship	Baskets, pottery
Western Europe	Sexy, love, romance, vigor, optimism, strength, caution	Clothing, cars, traffic signs
<i>England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland</i>	Power, authority, government, visibility, temper	Mailboxes, red hair, buses, telephone booths

France	Blood, passionate love, lust, virile	Lipstick, clothing
Scandinavia Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland	Strength	Eric the Red, father of Leif Ericson , first European on North American continent
Italy	Light, fidelity	Italian flag, restaurant decorations
Eastern Europe Greece	Love, Autumn	Wine, flowers
<b>Russia</b>	Communism, revolution, beauty	Red Square, Metro station signs, Russian word for "beautiful" sounds same as English word for "red", Russian wedding color
Africa	Death, bloodshed;	Mourning clothing
Asia Pacific China, Hong Kong, Taiwan	Communism, celebration, government, fire, summer, good luck, joy, fertility, good fortune	Wedding dresses, lucky money envelopes, red ink used in obituaries
South Korea	Good luck, blood	Festive clothing
Indonesia	Anger, celebration	Wedding dress
Japan	Blood, passion, self-sacrifice, strength	Public phones, paint, cherries
India	Birth, fertility	Wedding dress, bindi, henna color in hair
Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines	Sun	Sunset, scarves, soil

*For Englishmen the colour red is a warm and positive as for the most Europeans.*



The colour associated with the most physical needs and the will to survive. It exudes a strong and powerful masculine energy. It excites the emotions and motivates to take action. The colour signifies a pioneering spirit and leadership qualities, promoting ambition and determination, such as love on the positive side or revenge and anger on the negative. Englishmen are often used red to express love.

So, for *Englishmen* positive keywords of red include: action, energy and speed, attention-getting, assertive and confident, energizing, stimulating, exciting, powerful, passionate, stimulating and driven, courageous and strong, spontaneous and determined. As for negative keywords of red, they include: aggressive and domineering, over-bearing, tiring, angry and quick-tempered, ruthless, fearful and intolerant, rebellious and obstinate, resentful, violent and brutal.

To most *Asians* Red means happiness and prosperity. In India Red is a symbol of life-



giving purity. Red, corresponding with fire, symbolizes good fortune and joy for people from such countries as *China and Japan*. Red is found everywhere during Chinese New Year and other holidays and family gatherings. A red envelope is a monetary gift which is given in Chinese society during holiday or special occasions. The red color of the packet symbolizes good luck.



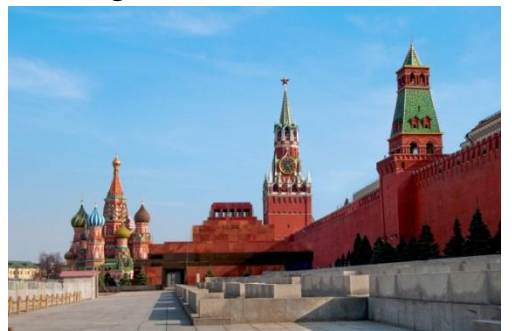
Red is generally called "aka (赤)" in Japanese. There are many traditional shades of red. The Japanese gave each shade of red its own elegant name in the old days. In some culture the color of the sun is considered yellow (or even other colors). However, most Japanese think

that the sun is red. The Japanese national flag (kokki) has a red circle on a white background.



Red refers to the most important colours in *African countries* (red,gold,green). It's used in flags and other emblems of various countries and territories in Africa and the Americas to represent Pan-Africanist ideology. But in South Africa red is a colour of mourning.

But in the *Middle East* the color symbolism Red is Danger and Evil.



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Red is a prominent color in *Russian culture* and history. The Russian word for red, krasni, was, in the past, also used to describe something beautiful. Today, krasni is used to indicate something that is red in color, while krasivi is the modern Russian word for "beautiful." However, many important sites and cultural artifacts still reflect the combined usage of the word, and a name that incorporates this root may still be considered something elevated in status. Red Square, or Krasnaya ploshad, is one of the most famous examples of the red/beautiful dichotomy.



A red corner, krasni ugol, in Russian culture is the icon corner, which was present in every Orthodox household. This was where the family's icon and other religious accoutrements were kept. In English, the krasni ugol is translated either as "red corner" or "beautiful corner" depending upon the source.

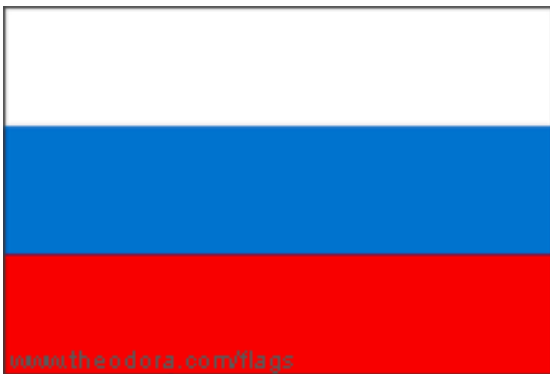




Red, the color of blood and life, features prominently in Russian folk costumes. That's why the Old Russian bride's dress was red.

Many place names in Russia contain the root word for "red" or "beautiful." Krasnoyarsk (red slope) and Krasnodar (beautiful gift), and Krasnaya Polyana (red valley) are examples.

Red is also one of the third colours of Russian national flag, as the flag of the UK. I found out that 34% of students think that "red" has the different meaning in English and Russian cultures and languages, 47% -similar, and 19% don't think about it.



### **"Red" in the English and Russian languages.**

Idioms are like "cuts" of languages diachronic development. Connotative meaning of idioms reflect the public consciousness of nations, as well as peculiarities of their mentalities. Looking at the similarities and differences between idioms in English and Russian, four main factors appear: traditional-historic, semantic-homonymic, semantic-evaluating and perception-stipulated factors.



Let's compare the connotative meaning of colour red within the English and Russian cultures and languages. Symbols of color usually are deeply connected with national, political, historical and religious aspects.

It was interesting to know that only 59% of students know some English and Russian idioms with "red".

Historically, the Russian word "red" had a homonym meaning beautiful, "fine." Russians still understand and use idioms connected with this understanding of red. The Russian language uses red to describe a bonny lass, a glorious summer, a witticism, a new paragraph, etc.

«Красное словцо» in Russian means rather clever remark. «Пройтись красной нитью» means express main idea of the composition.

Often the colour red is used to characterized the person. E.g. "redneck" means «деревеньщина, неотесанный мужик». When in *Russia the word red became the synonym of the word "beautiful"* In fact, Russian word for excellent - *prekrasni* - shares the root *kras* with these other words (e.g. "красна девица", "красна изба пирогами", "Владимир Красно Солнышко"). Russians show their love of country with the words «На чужой стороне и весна не красна».



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In English "redcoat" means an ingenious and amusing person, in spite of in Russia the red clothes always means beautiful and nice. In old times red clothes could wear only the king. In both languages the colour red is often used to express the affection. In Russian we say "as red as a lobster"- *красный как рак*, but in English in the same situation they say "to go as red as a beetroot". Taking the "red eye" means flying overnight, the same meaning it has in Russian.

It's interesting to note that the word "red" in English is used to describe not only the holiday, but also is considered a fantastic and memorable event. E.g. red-letter day means in Russian- day off, «красный день календаря». To "paint the town red" means to celebrate and have a party.

There are several idioms that describe the mostly negative meaning of the word "red" only in English. Being "in the red" means being in debt and comes from accountants using a red pen for negative figures. Being caught in "red tape" means slowed down by unnecessary details. If a criminal is caught "red handed" it means the evidence is obvious. "Seeing red" is commonly used to describe people who are uncontrollably angry.

So, there are more expressions and idioms with the colour red in English language than in Russian.

## How can the colour “Red” effect on people?

Just looking at the colour red by itself has been proven by researchers to stimulate brain wave activity. For some people, it can even increase the heart rate and elevate blood pressure. And a pulsating red light can trigger convulsions in people suffering from epilepsy.



The meanings of red and people’s reactions to it tend to be fairly consistent across all age groups and cultures. Psychologists and researchers agree that red is a color which stirs up passion, with both negative and positive colour meanings.



Colours have deep subliminal meanings that affect our thinking and rational. They have symbolic meaning that changes amongst different cultures and countries. We are faced with colour choices all the time. I found out that 63% of our students know about the influence of the colour on people, 15% don’t know and 22% don’t think about it.

The first crucial decision of the day usually comes in the morning when deciding what to wear. Often times we will choose our clothes based on the colour of the mood we are feeling or wish to portray that day. Even more important than choice of wardrobe is the colour selection for your brand or website. Colour research and planning is a vital part of the design process. Before you even begin a design you must choose the appropriate colours that are effective in re enforcing the brand, message and overall tone.

Some researchers maintain that colours are associated with certain images. The red colour can stimulate the appetite, often being used in restaurants for this purpose. It also increases craving for food and other stimuli. Being surrounded by too many red things a person can become irritated, agitated and ultimately angry. Too little quantity of the colour can lead to becoming cautious, manipulative and fearful.

A survey was conducted among high school students in 20 countries, asking them to rate 7 colours in 12 semantic differential items. The results were reported for the dimensions of evaluation and activity. Red was the most active colour.

It's interesting to note that there is a special science called *Colour Therapy*, that studies the influence of different colours on man, his emotions and feelings. I ascertained that 93% of students don't know about Colour Therapy and only 7% know. The colour red enhances positive feelings in study, earlier research suggests the meaning of a colour depends on its context. Red is also strong-willed and can give confidence to those who are shy or lacking in will power. Being the colour of physical movement, the red colour awakens physical life force. It intimates passions in people, such as love on the positive side or revenge and anger on the negative. Englishmen are often used red to express love.



Blood is the most important factor for determining what the colour red means to us. Very often the colour red represents danger. The most basic meaning behind this is that if you are in danger, you might bleed and you want to avoid things that make you bleed. Because of this, you see red used in things like stop signs and stop lights. It's also the colour of the red circle and slash that means no. For instance, a store that doesn't want you to have food and drinks may have a red circle and slash in front of a graphic of a cup and burger that means No food or drinks. Although that's a far cry from blood, the original reason for it is still the same. So red is used in order to warn people off.

Another meaning for red is hot and its counterpart for cold is blue. Just as with danger the original meaning behind this is blood. When a person is alive, blood that has been infused with oxygen pumps through his arteries. When blood is full of oxygen, it turns red. Although the red colour of blood has nothing at all to do with temperature, they are associated because the other main thing that happens when blood is pumping through the veins is that it gets warm due to the friction of moving through the body.

Yet another meaning that is ascribed to the colour red is passion. This can refer to love or anger but is probably more associated with love. Yet again the reason for this is blood. When a person becomes passionate, his heart rate goes up and his skin flushes as blood is pushed outward to the surface. This causes the entire body to become more reddish. Love is also associated with the heart, which of course is red and full of blood. The heart is the very thing that moves the blood through our body and is the one organ most closely associated with it. Because a person's skin becomes





reddish when enflamed in the throes of passion, red is associated with passion, anger and love.

The colour red has powerful influences on people. It can increase the heart rate, respiratory rhythm, blood pressure. This colour has a vitalizing effect and bring us energy. It also makes our heart and circulation of the blood stronger.



### **Conclusion**

Many languages use names of colours to express moods and feelings. In all languages there are numerous expressions in which colour red plays an important role. The colour red has the important part both in the English and Russian languages and cultures.

When people communicate, they don't only use words. They use symbols, body language, colours. In literature, the colour red symbolizes passion and emotion. With the help of *Colour Therapy* we can even enhances positive feelings in study, increase the heart rate, respiratory rhythm, blood pressure by using red.

To sum up, I came to the conclusion that the colour red can represent different things in different cultures. The colour red in the Russian and English languages and cultures has many similarities and differences, which can be explain by traditional-historic and semantic factors.

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**Enclosure №1 Questions for survey  
“THE COLOUR RED ACROSS CULTURES”**

**1) Do colours have the same meanings in different countries and cultures?**

a) Yes    b) No

**2) Does “red” have similar meaning in Russian and English culture?**

a) Yes    b) No    c) I don't think about it

**3) Do English and Russian idioms with the word “red” similar?**

a) Yes    b) No

**4) Can colours influence on people?**

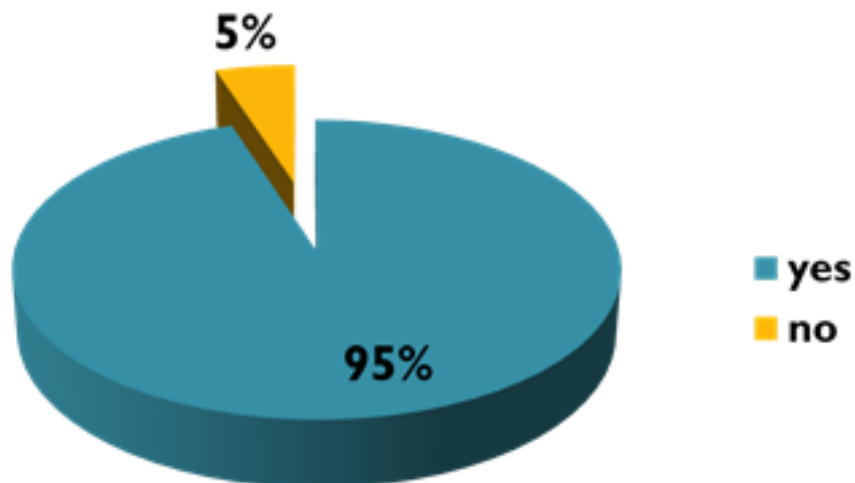
a) Yes    b) No    c) I don't think about it

**5) Do you know about Colour Therapy ?**

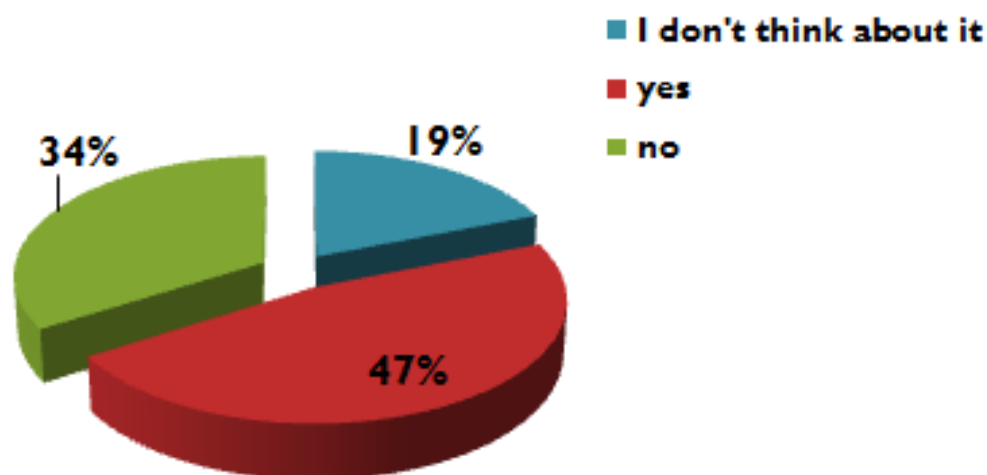
a) Yes    b) No

**Enclosure №2 The results of the survey.**

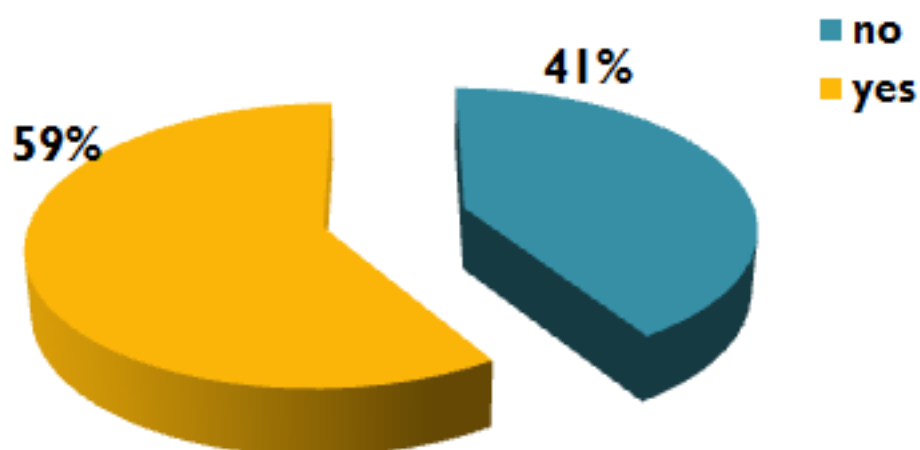
**Do colours have the same meanings in  
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## Does “red” have similar meaning in Russian and English culture?

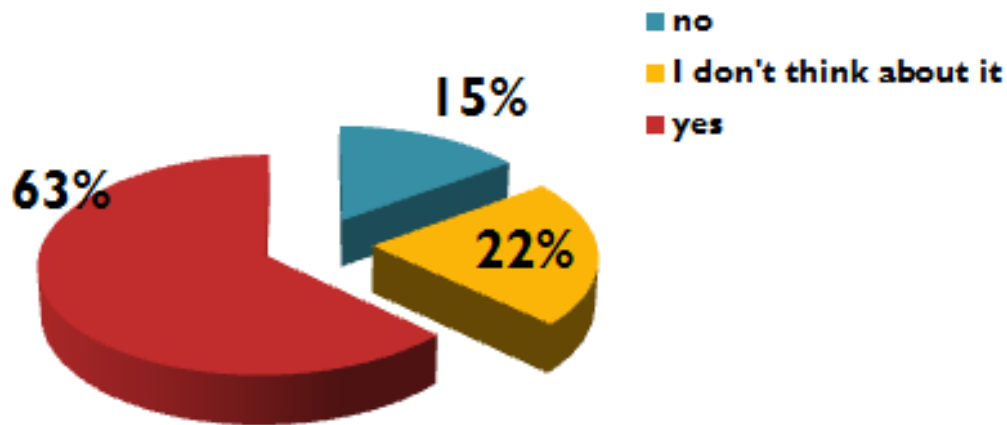


## Do English and Russian idioms with the word “red” similar?





## Can colours influence on people?



## Do you know about Colour Therapy?

