

The Windrush generation

1. Your country

- a) Think of two things that you really like about your country.
- b) Think of two things that you would miss very much if you went to live abroad
- c) What sorts of things attract visitors or new immigrants to your country?

2. Going away

Imagine that you or your parents have decided to try life in a new country.

- a) Name two things you would definitely take with you.
- b) Think of two possible difficulties on arrival.
- c) What are the main reasons for people changing countries?
- d) Do you know anyone who has moved abroad?
 - Why did they go?
 - Was it a positive experience?
 - Were they homesick?
 - Did they stay?

3. A poem

Listen to this poem about a ship and its passengers. The ship is called the Empire Windrush.

- a) Where is it going to?
- b) What do we learn about their country?
- c) What is their nationality?
- d) Which period in history does the poem refer to?

It was an invitation.
An invitation to come
"Help re-build the Mother country"
It seemed like an opportunity
Jobs for everyone
A better future for our children
Then home again
Just a few years

We left the blue skies
The sun, the sea, the light
And then the shock
The cold and damp
The grey skies
The cold stares
The cold grey stares

The ship arrived on June 22nd 1948
No band played a welcome
492 hopefuls stepped ashore
Hopefuls
With our British passports in our hands
We thought the journey had ended
It was just beginning

We came for a few years
We stayed a lifetime and more
Hopefuls with our British passports in our hands
They didn't think we were British
And now our children know no other
This is their home
And ours

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4. Interpretation

Circle the words best describe the feelings of the person writing the poem?

Joyful

confused

bitter

sad

angry

happy

nostalgic

other

- How old is the narrator at the start of the poem?
- How old is the narrator now?
- Who invited the passengers to the Mother Country?
- What do you think they were looking forward to?
- How do we know that some things disappointed the new arrivals?
- Why do you think the new arrivals were not accepted as British?

5. Black Britons

Read about the life of someone who lives in Britain today.

- How old is this person?
- What do they do?
- Where did their family come from?
- What is their contribution to life in Britain today?

Tell your groups about the person in your text. Ask each other questions.

6. Finish the poem

Now you know more about Black people in Britain today. Finish the poem with another verse in your own words.

*But now we live...
Our children...*

Our lives have...

7. The letter home

Imagine you are a new immigrant and have just arrived in your country.

- Write a letter home to your cousin and tell them about
 - The journey
 - Your new life
 - People you have met
 - Your first impressions
 - Other...

8. Cultural identity

Apart from a passport, what other things help you define your culture?

- What makes someone British, French, Spanish or German?
- What is your cultural identity?
- Think of three things which help describe your identity?
 - is it the language you speak?
 - Is it where your parents were born?
 - Is it the region where you live?
 - Is it the religion your practise?
 - Is it the type of food you eat?
 - Is it your taste in music?

9. The English-speaking world

The spread of English around the world is part of the history of the Windrush Generation. Jamaicans and other people who came from the West Indies were British passport holders. These countries were once British colonies and their inhabitants were encouraged to think of Britain as the 'Mother Country'. The colonies are now independent nations, but many continue to use English as their main language or second language.

- List all the countries where you think English is spoken.
- Do you know anything about them?
- Have you ever visited one of these countries?
- Which one would you like to visit?

10. Project

Choose a country or place you are interested in. Find out about the country

- Make a list of the things you associate with the culture of that country.
 - Do you think the description refers to all people who live there?
 - Think of the possible stereotypes that people might have about this country or its people.
 - Present a short description to your group.