

Handling controversial issues

Migrant workers



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Contents

Introduction	Page 3
Activities	
1. Definitions	Page 4
2. Seasonal Workers	Page 5
3. Jobs for migrant workers?	Page 6
4. Questioning a photograph	Page 7-8
5. Interpreting statistics	Page 9-10
6. Whose jobs?	Page 11-12
7. Exchanging views	Page 13
Useful links	Pages 14-17
LEAF Education	Page 18

The activities in this booklet can form part of a whole programme or, at the teacher's discretion, specific activities can be selected for use in class.

Handling controversial issues

Migrant workers



This booklet has been produced to help young people:

- Learn about migrant workers in the UK
- Judge the bias and reliability of different sources of information
- Draw their own conclusions having analysed and reflected on their own current views
- Make informed decisions

When handling controversial issues teachers will need to employ approaches that meet the need for balance and objectivity and to ensure avoiding bias. The Oxfam Global Citizenship Guide on Teaching Controversial Issues (2006) <https://goo.gl/HGNhvs> contains helpful suggestions on appropriate ways of introducing controversial issues and of managing the responses that result.

These include:

- Setting ground rules e.g. showing respect for the views of others, using appropriate language and giving reasons for having a particular view
- Role of the teacher e.g. objective, devil's advocate or declared interest
- Teaching approaches e.g. group discussion, role-play and community of enquiry

Handling controversial issues

Migrant workers



Definitions

Aim

To understand the terms used and some of the issues connected with migration to the UK.

Activity

Ask the students to write down their own definitions of the terms emigrate, immigrate and migrate.

Share some of the definitions.

Now see if they match the following definitions:

All three words originate from the Latin verb *migrare*, “to remove from one place to another.”

Migrate means to move, either temporarily or permanently, from one place, area, or country to another. (We talk about birds migrating in the winter.) The United Nations defined a migrant as someone who moves to another country for at least 12 months.

Emigrate means to move out of a country to settle in another. It implies permanence.

Immigrate is to settle in a country not one's own; to pass into a new place of residence.

Ask the students in groups to list reasons or give examples why people might migrate, emigrate or immigrate. These might include reasons that make them want to leave a place as well as reasons they are attracted to another place.

Migrate	Emigrate	Immigrate

In groups, pupils should suggest both positive and negative impact of migration

- for UK
- for migrant's home country.

Handling controversial issues

Migrant workers



Seasonal workers

Aim

To understand the concept of seasonal work.

Activity

Many migrants are seasonal workers. What do pupils understand by this term?

A seasonal worker is an employee who performs work or provides services on a seasonal basis. Provide copies of the following chart. In small groups students should consider the following job roles: which could be seasonal?

Job role	Always seasonal	Never seasonal	Could be seasonal
Waiter in a restaurant or other food outlet			
Delivery driver			Extra staff needed at
Fruit picker			
Beach lifeguard	Employed in summer sea-		
Teaching assistant			
Worker in parcel distribution centre			
High Street retail staff			
Working at a festival			
Supermarket assistant			
Vegetable harvester			

Handling controversial issues

Migrant workers



Jobs for migrant workers?

Aim

To challenge and further develop students' understanding of the work undertaken by migrants.

Activity

Students should discuss all the jobs they think migrant workers do and then the teacher makes a class list of suggestions.

Why have they chosen these job roles for migrant workers?

See if their suggestions match the reality

[Independent newspaper, 2016 https://goo.gl/kXfpEK](https://goo.gl/kXfpEK)

UK agriculture today employs high calibre workers in many technological and scientific roles where employees are, for example, statisticians, crop scientists and technicians highly skilled in precision farming with Global Positioning Satellites.

However, agriculture also needs people willing to work in the fields hand picking vegetables and packing produce to sell. Not all of these roles can be mechanized or at least not without a considerable amount of investment.

Handling controversial issues

Migrant workers



Questioning a photograph.

Aim

To encourage pupils to generate questions for research and discussion

Resources

Copies of images. You might find some of the images on these pages useful as a stimulus for discussion:

Farmers Weekly, 2014 <https://goo.gl/hkAoEj>

FarmingUK, 2016 <https://goo.gl/zJ6Zev>

Guardian newspaper, 2013 <https://goo.gl/VIsJ6N>

- a. Distribute images to groups of students
- b. Students to jot down words on sticky notes to describe first impressions of the images
- c. Then as a group divide the sticky notes into positive, negative or neutral impressions

Handling controversial issues

Migrant workers



Questioning a photograph



Handling controversial issues

Migrant workers



Interpreting statistics

Aim

To consider the subject of migration using statistics and to practise interpretation of these.

Activity

Look at these extracts to find out the numbers of migrants to the UK and answer the questions connected to each extract.

Migration Watch UK, 2016 <https://goo.gl/MQru71>

1. Why might seasonal workers not appear in the net migration statistics?

(Because they are not here for 12 months or more.)

2. How are net migration figures calculated?

(International Passenger Survey used to count immigrants to UK staying 12 months or more minus emigrants leaving the UK for 12 months or more. Then add numbers if asylum seekers.)

3. Looking at the graph, what has happened to migration figures since 1975?

4. Can you identify three periods when immigration has seen the greatest increase?

5. Use the tool under “Migration by citizenship” to create your own graphs for a particular citizenship group and be prepared to explain your findings.

Office for National Statistics, 2016 <https://goo.gl/zql2yK>

(Continued)

Handling controversial issues

Migrant workers



Interpreting statistics

6. What remains the main reason for long term immigration?

(*Work.*)

7. What percentage of long-term immigrants had a job to go to?

(58%)

8. The number of which two nationalities have reached a high point?

(*Romanians and Bulgarians.*)

9. Why are migration statistics collected?

(*For resource allocation and to manage the economy. Also to monitor progress against the government's aim to reduce net migration.*)

Handling controversial issues

Migrant workers



Whose jobs?

Aim

To consider job roles and whether (and why) students feel they are suited to UK or migrant workers

Activity

Print out and cut up the statements on the next page.

Students to sort these reasons into two lists showing why it is claimed UK workers are not interested in these jobs and why they might be attractive to migrant workers.

Handling controversial issues

Migrant workers



Whose jobs?

Not enough people interested in this work

Remote locations

Unsociable hours

Many vacancies seasonal

UK workers prefer permanent work

UK benefit system does not work well for seasonal workers when contracts end

Higher wages than accustomed to

High unemployment in many EU countries

Agricultural wages higher in UK than average EU and most eastern European countries

Handling controversial issues

Migrant workers



Exchanging views

Aim

To generate discussion about a controversial issue and encourage listening to the opinions of others

Resources

Articles representing a range of viewpoints (see “Useful links” pages 14-17.)

1. Divide class in half. One half will consider (in small groups) the pro-migrant viewpoint while the other half reads about anti-immigration views.
2. Provide pairs or small groups of students with one or two links from the “Useful links” section.
3. Drawing on the source information, students list points of view from their articles.
4. Students listen to views from each perspective.
5. Discuss the results as a class.

Handling controversial issues

Migrant workers



Useful links

In order to get readers' attention, the media often use attractive, provocative, and attention-catching words in their headlines aiming to catch the readers' attention, while perhaps unconsciously compromising the value of information. The lexical choice of a journalist is however very important, since newspaper headlines "express the major topic of an article" (van Dijk, 2000:42). Yet, the competitive nature of the business can lead to a focus on 'selling' rather than 'informing'. This can be problematic, since some of the newspaper readers may not want to read every single article, but only the headlines.

There are studies that support this claim. For example Marquez (1980) found that some newspaper readers may read the headlines only and form their opinions on these alone.

Extract from: Izabela Pompova, Migrants and Society , 2015
<https://goo.gl/EcGaFe>

Latest statistics and reactions

BBC News, 2016 <https://goo.gl/r2Cgai>

(Teachers are advised to check statistics via the web to ensure most up to date figures are used.)

Pro-migration

The following case studies demonstrate why farmers and growers rely so heavily on migrant labour

Scroll down to find case studies of farmers who use seasonal workers:

Farmers Weekly, 2016 <https://goo.gl/i5oGBg>

Case study of pumpkin grower

NFU, 2016 <https://goo.gl/RzHDDn>

"The majority of English unemployed are too lazy to do a day's work. The Czechs and Polish do work!" (Scott, 2012:465).

Ha

Handling controversial issues

Migrant workers



"It is a problem with staff in this job because the English people, they don't want to sort of bend their backs, you know, these days I'm afraid" (Scott, 2012:465).

(Extract from Izabela Pompova, Migrants and Society, 2015 <https://goo.gl/EcGaFe>)

Guardian newspaper, 2016 <https://goo.gl/wIXpTC>

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-migrant-workers-insight-idUKKCN12D1H6>

"Evidence showed that overall,migrants have had positive impact on the British economy since the year 2000. Moreover, the fiscal contribution of these migrants has been positive, which means that these migrants have contributed substantially more to the British welfare system than what they have received in state benefits and tax credits. Furthermore, their contributions (in relative terms) in the period from 1995 until 2011 were higher than those of the native citizens. In addition, as evident from other studies, some employers in food, horticultural and healthcare industries seem to be almost dependent on Eastern and Central European migrant labour."

(Extract from Izabela Pompova, Migrants and Society, 2015 <https://goo.gl/gZokmo>)

Seasonal Workers – Stocks Farm, Suckley, Worcestershire

We farm 100 acres of hops and 100 acres of apples for supermarket sale and for cider. We have 3 full-time staff plus 3 partners working in the business and 3 part-time office staff.

From March to August we need 8 seasonal workers to string hops, train hops, prune trees, thin apples, manage disease, plant new hops or apple trees and generally undertake all the jobs that cannot be mechanised.

From December to February we need 8 seasonal workers to prune apple trees.

During our harvest in September and October we need 13 hop pickers and up to 60 apple pickers.

Handling controversial issues

Migrant workers



The work is always outside, is weather dependent (for example we cannot pick apples in the rain as they bruise) and often means working in all weathers. We recruit our seasonal labour from Poland and through an agency that brings us Bulgarian and Romanian workers. We advertise every year locally but often fail to get a single application except perhaps for supervisors.

Today unemployment stands at 4.8% nationally, in our area it is between 1% to 1.6% ([Worcestershire County Council, 2016 https://goo.gl/ezJmZN](https://goo.gl/ezJmZN)), so the workers are not there to recruit. In addition the UK is no different to any other first world economy. USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Poland all recruit workers from other countries to pick their fruit and veg.

We have a great team that come every year from Poland to help us – they are very much part of our team. Two of the men have been back this year for their 18th year and some are back this year for their 10th and 12th years.

Our business could not survive without seasonal workers prepared to come in, work and go home again.

Anti migration

Huffington Post, 2014 <https://goo.gl/8i3smD>

Government minister's statement

“Migrants DO take our jobs: Britons losing out to foreign workers” (Express, 2014)
“EU migrants could be required to register with police on arrival to the UK” (MailOnline, 2014)”

“Jobless migrant to be DENIED housing benefit: Minister insists UK’s generous welfare system will no longer be a magnet for citizens of other EU states” (MailOnline, 2014) “The truth about East European migration: One in 30 Latvians are living in Britain, one in 60 Poles are also over here - and statistics don’t even show latest influx” (MailOnline, 2014)

Handling controversial issues

Migrant workers



“Britain must say ‘no’ to European workers” (The Telegraph, 2013)

([Extract from Izabela Pompova, Migrants and Society, 2015 https://goo.gl/qZokmo](https://goo.gl/qZokmo))

[Home Secretary vows to reduce numbers of migrants taking jobs British people could do https://goo.gl/0E7oW7](https://goo.gl/0E7oW7)

Migration leading to extremism in Europe

Spectator newspaper, 2016 <https://goo.gl/oFMrOm>

Views on UK attitudes regarding free movement within the EU

<http://whatukthinks.org/eu/explore-by-topic/migration-and-freedom-of-movement/>

Teachers are recommended to update links with fresh content as the public debate moves on.

Handling controversial issues

Migrant workers



LEAF Education

LEAF Education works with school communities to help children and young adults understand the connection between farming and their daily lives.

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