

**ENGLISH EXAM GUIDE****HIGHER ENGLISH CLOSE READING 2003****PASSAGE 1**

*The first passage is an article in The Herald newspaper in June 2002. In it journalist and broadcaster Ruth Wishart offers some thoughts on attitudes to immigration to Scotland.*

**CAN BRITAIN AFFORD TO KEEP TALENTED IMMIGRANTS OUT?**

If you hail from Glasgow you will have friends or relatives whose roots lie in the Irish Republic. You will have Jewish friends or colleagues – whose grandparents, a good number of them Polish or Russian, may have fled persecution in Europe. You will eat in premises run by Italian or French proprietors. It is a diverse cultural heritage enriched now by a large and vibrant Asian population and a smaller but significant Chinese one. It was not always thus.

The city census of 1831 found 47 Jewish citizens, a community which grew and prospered as it became an integral part of Glasgow's merchant growth. The first Asian immigrants were no more than a few young men, largely from poor and rural backgrounds, whose early employment as door-to-door salesmen gave no hint of the entrepreneurial flair their heirs and successors would bring to so many trade sectors in the city.

The early Italians found the route to Glaswegian hearts through their stomachs as they set up chains of chip shops, and ice-cream parlours: The Chinese too helped the local palate become rather more discerning when they began to arrive in numbers half a century ago.

All of these immigrant populations have two things in common: they were economic migrants and their effect on their adopted homeland has been, almost without exception, a beneficial one. That is a lesson from history some of our more hysteria-prone politicians would do well to ponder as they devise ever more unfriendly welcomes for those who would come here today to live and work.

This week the Home Secretary was assuring his French counterpart that Britain would clamp down even more severely on those working here illegally. At the same time plans are advanced for "accommodation centres" which will have the immediate effect of preventing natural integration, while children of immigrants are to be denied the harmonising effect of inter-racial schooling. Meanwhile, ever more sophisticated technology is to be employed to stem the numbers of young men who risk their lives clinging to the underside of trains and lorries, or are paying obscene sums of money to the 21st century's own version of slave traders – those traffickers in human misery who make their fortunes on the back of other's desperation.

Yet at the heart of this ever more draconian approach to immigration policy lie a number of misconceptions. The UK is not a group of nations swamped by a tidal wave of immigration. Relatively speaking, Europe contends with a trickle of refugees compared with countries who border areas of famine,

desperate poverty or violent political upheaval. The countries of origin of the highest numbers coming here change from year to year depending on the hotspots of global conflict. A significant proportion of refugees want nothing more than to be able to return to that homeland when conditions allow.

But, whether they are transient or would-be settlers, they face an uphill battle trying to find legal employment. People with real skills and talents to offer us find themselves in the black economy, or unemployed, because of a sluggish system of processing applications, allied to regulations which preclude the legal marketplace.

Surely the most sensible way to "crack down" on illegal workers is to permit legal alternatives. Not just because of woolly liberalism – though that's a perfectly decent instinct – but because of enlightened self-interest. Recently, I was reading an analysis of what was happening to the economy in the Highlands and Islands. The writer welcomes the fact that the population of that area has gone up 20% in one generation. But he goes on to say that "labour shortages of every kind are becoming the biggest single constraint in the way of additional economic expansion".

He adds "In principle the solution to this problem is readily available in the shape of the so-called asylum seekers or economic migrants that our country, like most countries, seems determined to turn away. While, for the most part, immigrants to the Highlands and Islands have recently come from England, the future lies in casting the net much wider. That would be, after all, yet another Scottish solution to a Scottish problem, given that this nation regularly suffers from population loss, exporting tranches of economic migrants all over the world every year. It's been something of a national hobby, which is why there is almost no corner of the globe where you won't stumble over a Caledonian society enthusiastically peopled by folks – who will do anything for the old country bar live in it.

Yet Ireland has managed to attract its young entrepreneurs back to help drive a burgeoning economy. We must try to do likewise. We need immigrants. We cannot grow the necessary skills fast enough to fill the gap sites. We need people with energy and commitment and motivation, three characteristics commonly found among those whose circumstances prompt them to make huge sacrifices to find a new life.

Round about now, families all over Scotland will be waving their newly graduated offspring off on the increasingly popular gap year between university and real life. Most of them will have a ball, finding enough work to keep the adventure on the road as they travel. Some of them won't come back at all, having found a good job or a soulmate elsewhere. Provided they stay on the right side of the law, very few of them will be harassed by customs officials, locked up in detention centres while their papers are

checked, or deported for overstaying their welcome. If you're one of us and sort of solvent, come into the parlour, there's a welcome there for you.

**PASSAGE 2**

*The second passage is adapted from an essay in The Guardian newspaper, also in June 2002. In it Anne Karpf explores past and present press coverage of immigration issues and tells the story of one family from Kosovo who sought asylum in Britain.*

**WE HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE**

There's a melancholy little game that staff at the Refugee Council sometimes play. They show visitors press cuttings about refugees and asylum seekers from the 1900s, 1930s and today, and ask them to guess when they were published. Most people get it wrong. They assume that Jewish refugees were welcomed, at least in the 1930s, with a tolerance that has traditionally been seen as a beacon of Britishness. They're shocked to discover that rabid intolerance has a strong British pedigree.

And the press has persisted in peddling incorrect figures about immigration. One newspaper's assertion in 1938 that there were more Jews in Britain than Germany ever had, was plain wrong. Similarly, the tabloids' current depiction of Britain as an international magnet for asylum seekers is totally misleading. Most of the world's refugees do what they've always done: they move from one poor country to another, usually a neighbouring one. Only a tiny percentage make it to the richer countries: 5% to Europe, and less than 1% to Britain. A regular peruser of the press today, however, with its loose talk of "swamping" and "floods", would be stunned to learn that, of 15 EU countries, Britain stands at number 10 in the number of asylum seekers per head of population.

The asylum seeker has become a composite, almost mythical figure. Despite the allegedly vast numbers of them now in the country, most British people have never actually met one, making it all the easier to dehumanise them.

But what does real asylum-seeking feel like? Thirty-one-year-old Arberore arrived with her husband, Petrit and their two-year-old son Norik from Pristina, Kosovo, in 1995 as illegal asylum seekers. Petrit, a travel agent, had been questioned and threatened on many occasions by Serb police, while Arberore, an architecture student, could no longer attend the university because it was closed to Albanians. "We felt that we were in danger," she says, "but it was a very difficult decision to leave because we were a very close-knit community."

They arrived in Britain on false papers. "It was very scary – it was the first time in my life that I lied like that, I felt terrible. Petrit's hand was shaking when he handed over the papers." Upon arrival, they went straight to the Home Office to tell them that they'd entered with false

papers. "They didn't threaten to deport us, because we had a child," says Arberore, "but we were scared. We spent the day waiting in the Home Office. I felt so happy that I wasn't any longer in Kosovo to be frightened, but I felt like a beggar that day. We had to be fingerprinted. I thought I was going to prison." It took them two years to get legal asylum.

I showed Arberore, now a student at Middlesex University, some press cuttings on asylum seekers. She was particularly shocked by one headline: A DOOR WE CAN'T CLOSE. She said, "It makes me feel like vermin." And of another, GET THEM OUT, she demanded. "Who wrote that? It makes me feel as if I'm no-one. I can give something to this country. But I want to say to these reporters we're all human beings and who knows when British people might need someone's help? We left everything there, we had a job, a huge house and a garden: we had a nice life. But the most important thing was our freedom."

Rabbi Hugo Gryn once said: "How you are with someone to whom you owe nothing is a grave test." At the moment, Britain is failing that test, especially in its press coverage. The reporting of pre-war Jewish asylum seekers is shocking because we know how that story ended. But instead of using hindsight to idealise, we can use it to illuminate. Let us learn this much at least, hostile reporting of asylum seekers dispossesses them yet again. Refugees seek asylum from hate or destitution, and then run into it once more. As the daughter of postwar Polish Jewish asylum seekers, I'm stupefied by how the collective memory can be so short, bigotry so blatant, and how, with all the recent interest in the Holocaust, basic connections can fail to be made. Are we doomed always to stigmatise the stranger? Must compassion only ever be extended after the event?

**QUESTION**

**Which passage has given you a clearer understanding of key issues concerning immigration and asylum seeking? You should refer in your answer to the main ideas in both passages.**

This is worth 5 marks and is coded U/E. Here you need to explain why you think what you think.

To get the marks you need to pick out ideas from both passages; quoting to support your answers, and make an effective comparison.

You can use ideas that have come up in your previous answers but don't be fooled – it is a hard question and is looking for detailed quotation and comment from both passages.

To get all five marks you will have to venture an opinion and back it up from the passages themselves. Try to show a genuine personal response to the passages.

**Revise****Practise****Test****Review**

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