



# *Immigration and the May 2008 Elections*

A Resource for Educators

Suitable for: Key Stage 4

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## **Immigration and the May 2008 Elections: A Resource for Educators**

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## **1. Introduction**

The Jewish Council for Racial Equality (JCORE) has been promoting race equality in Britain for over 30 years. It does this in three ways, through:

- Race Equality Education
- Black-Asian-Jewish Dialogue
- Asylum and Refugee Issues

For more on our work, see [www.jcore.org.uk](http://www.jcore.org.uk)

JCORE has produced this resource to support the campaign organised by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Community Security Trust and other communal organisations to encourage people to vote in the forthcoming London Mayoral, London Assembly and local government elections in May 2008. A low turnout tends to favour parties with policies which include fear-mongering against current immigration policies, an issue that resonates with us historically.<sup>1</sup> This resource provides teachers with some of the necessary tools to educate pupils about the history of immigration in the UK and the significance of this issue in the local and London Assembly elections in May 2008. It highlights the importance of voting and provides examples of what pupils can do to combat voter apathy.

**This activity is suitable for Citizenship and PSHE Key Stage (KS) 4.**

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.boardofdeputies.org.uk/>

## 2. Background Information

- **Elections in May 2008**

On 1st May 2008 **local government elections** will be held in 143 local authorities in England and all Welsh councils. There will also be elections for the **Greater London Authority (GLA), The Mayor of London and Greater London Assembly**.

**Local authorities** and borough councils are the same. Each local authority/borough council is made up of wards. Local authorities are responsible for social services, community safety, crime reduction, education, leisure, environmental services, local libraries and refuse collection to name just a few.

In a **local election**, political candidates stand for election in each ward and the party with the majority of elected councillors governs the local authority, usually for four years.

A **councillor** represents local communities and local people in the local authority area. There are over **20,000 elected councillors** represent their local communities and local people on the **410 local authorities** of England and Wales. They are responsible for making decisions on behalf of the local community about local services such as education, refuse collection and leisure facilities. They also agree the local authority budget and set the policy framework as well as appoint chief officers and make constitutional decisions.

**The London Assembly** is a watchdog for London and can directly question the Mayor and **has the legal power to hold the Mayor to account** at Assembly meetings. It also carries out its own investigations. The London Assembly is made up of 25 Members who are elected by Londoners at the same time as the Mayor. 11 represent the whole of the capital and 14 are elected to represent constituencies – which are made up of two to four London boroughs.

Here are the results of voting for BNP, Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat candidates in the last elections in 2004, where the BNP achieved 4.71% of the London-wide vote in 2004. 5% would have secured them a seat on the GLA.

**London-wide members, % votes of BNP, Conservative, Labour and Lib Dem in 2004 <sup>2</sup>:**

Party	Votes %
British National Party	4.71%
Conservative Party	27.84%
Labour Party	24.43%
Liberal Democrats	16.5%

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.londonelects.org.uk/results/2004\\_london\\_assembly\\_results.aspx](http://www.londonelects.org.uk/results/2004_london_assembly_results.aspx)

- **Definitions relating to race**

**Racism** is a set of beliefs that says that one group of people is superior to another. It is shown by treating someone differently or unfairly simply because they have a different skin colour or they are from a different culture. The term racism is a useful way of discussing the prejudices that people hold, especially against people who are black and from other minority ethnic groups. The term should not mislead us into thinking that human beings belong to biologically separate species.

**Prejudice** occurs when someone pre-judges a particular group or individual based on their own stereotypical assumptions or ignorance.

**Stereotyping** is making broad generalisations about particular groups of people. Although it is a way our brains reduce to organise and simplify the world into categories, stereotyping often leads to discrimination and racist behaviour.

**Ethnic/Ethnicity** is a sense of cultural and historical identity based on belonging by birth to a distinctive cultural group. Ethnic is problematic as it is often misused as a synonym for 'non-white' or 'non-western.' There is frequently an implication of exotic, primitive, unusual or non-standard.<sup>3</sup>

### **Political Parties' Immigration Policies:**

Below is a summary of the immigration policies of the BNP, Conservative Party, Labour Party and the Liberal Democrat parties.

**BNP:** believes that all further immigration should be halted, and that criminals and illegal immigrants should be deported. A system of voluntary resettlement should be introduced, whereby immigrants who are here legally will be given the opportunity to return to their country of ethnic origin. Financial assistance to both individual and country in question will be provided.<sup>4</sup>

**Conservative Party:** will build a dedicated police force to protect Britain from illegal immigrants.<sup>5</sup>

**Labour Party:** believes in strong and protected borders, welcoming legal migrants who can benefit Britain and in providing a safe haven for refugees.<sup>6</sup>

**Liberal Democrat Party:** believes in promoting integration of immigrants, that the asylum policy should be based on UK obligations under international conventions and that border controls should be strengthened.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Anti Racism: An Educators' Resource, JCORE  
<http://www.jcore.org.uk/resources.php?mid=3&sid=9&src=ab>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bnp.org.uk/sms-news-texts/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.conservatives.com/tile.do?def=safer.greener.page>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.labour.org.uk/asylum\\_and\\_immigration](http://www.labour.org.uk/asylum_and_immigration)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.libdems.org.uk/news/lib-dems-back-plans-for-immigration-reform.13176.html>

### 3. Activity: Immigration and the May 2008 Elections

**Age:** 14-16 upwards

**Time:** 120 mins

#### National Curriculum Links

##### Citizenship KS4

- Knowledge and understanding of becoming informed citizens
- Develop skills of enquiry and communication<sup>8</sup>

##### PSHE KS4

Pupils to investigate the electoral process and the role of local government <sup>9</sup>

**Resources Needed:** Time line cards and Benjamin Zephaniah poem, (which appear in 4 of this resource), four computers with internet access.

#### **Aim (students should be taught):**

About the diverse nature of contemporary British society

To understand how local elections work and the significance of the forthcoming ones in May 2008

About the key political parties taking part in the election in May 2008

#### **Learning outcomes (students should have learnt):**

The significance of local elections

Difference between morality and legality when dealing with issues such as racism in politics

How to respond to political parties whose ideology they are morally opposed to

#### **Part 1: Diversity in Britain**

**Time:** 60 mins

##### **1. Truly British**

**[10 mins]**

*Teacher asks:*

Can we come up with a common idea of what Britain or British is?

Is it history, people, food, culture?

If I asked your parents these questions, would they come up with the same answers?

*Divide into groups (4-5 people) and try to explain what Britain/British is to you. Teachers help the pupils to articulate their views. Pupils will stay in these groups throughout the activity.*

*Pupils come back together and facilitator reads out the following:*

Harrods department store blurb:

***What makes Britain truly British? Marmite and Minis? Bobbies and black cabs? Perhaps, but that's not even the half of it. The truth is that today's true Brit loves bhangra as much as bangers and is as likely to be from the West Indies as the West Country. True Brit or Truly British?***

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.explore.parliament.uk/Parliament.aspx?id=362>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_1953.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_1953.aspx)

Teacher gives examples of previous outcomes when this exercise was done with a group of young people – one group talked about the history of Britain, one came up with a list of ‘things’ and a third came up with sentence explaining a connection to the ideals of the country.

Teacher asks pupils: what did they come up with?

## 2. Who is British?

[20 mins]

Benjamin Zephaniah Poem (see section 4 of this resource)

Teacher asks one of the pupils to read out the poem.

Timeline cards (see section 4 of this resource)

Split into groups of 4-5, and arrange the cards into correct timeline. Pupils then come back together and feedback.

### Immigration Timeline Card – answers

25,000 years ago	Homo Sapien (end ice age)	1840s	Irish
600BCE – CE50	The Celts (iron age)	1880 – 1910	Ashkenazi Jews
CE 43 – 410	The Romans	1914 – 1921	Belgian refugees
1066	The Normans	1948	Afro-Caribbean Community (“Windrush” Generation)
1656	Sephardi Jews	1950s	South Asians
1685	Huguenots	1979 – 1984	Vietnamese
1740 – 1807	Black slaves	1997	Tamil refugees
1750s	Italians	2002	Iraqi refugees
		2005	East Europeans

## 3. Who isn’t British?

[30 mins]

a) Teacher gives very brief of history of immigration control in Britain (10 mins) .

Today, we live in a society where immigration is governed by a complex web of passports, visas and quotas. But until 1905, except in times of war, anyone was free to settle in Britain. The huge social, economic and technological changes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought an increasing number of migrants. In their wake came mounting fears about the immigrants’ impact on society, and a government response that framed immigration as a problem, whose effects could be controlled by the law.

During the last hundred years, there were three major phases in the development of immigration law, that increasingly defined and limited immigrants rights.

From the 1880s until the end of World War II, the emphasis was on stopping the unrestricted entry of any foreigners who were deemed unsuitable, with an anti-alien campaign that was largely aimed at restricting entry of Eastern European Jews.

World War I till 1960 – focus on restricting immigration of commonwealth citizens e.g. from Caribbean, Kenyan and Ugandan Asians....

Focus on reduction of refugees and asylum seekers since 1970.

b) 1951 Refugee Convention

Post World War 2: Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

Article 14: Everyone has the right to ask for and enjoy asylum if they fear persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, social group or political view.

28 July 1951, The Convention clearly spells out who is a refugee and the kind of legal protection, other assistance and social rights he or she should receive from states parties to the document. Equally, it defines a refugee's obligations to host governments and certain categories of persons, such as war criminals, who do not qualify for refugee status.

This first instrument was limited to protecting mainly European refugees in the aftermath of World War II, but a 1967 Protocol expanded the scope of the Convention as the problem of displacement spread around the world.

United Nations High Commission for Refugees currently helps 19.2 million people and the Convention, which has proved to be remarkably flexible in rapidly changing times, continues to be the cornerstone of refugee protection.

**Discussion**

**[20 mins]**

Morally: who should be allowed to settle in Britain?

On a practical level, who should be allowed to settle in Britain?

Is immigration about the immediate benefit to society or do you need to look a few generations ahead?

As a political party, what do you think they would need to take into account when developing a policy on immigration?

When would such a policy be racist? (see section 1 of this resource for race-related definitions)

**Part 2: Radio Election Debate on Immigration**

**Time:** 60 mins

**Trigger:**

**Brainstorm: Local Government and Greater London Authority**

**[15 mins]**

*Teacher to show pictures of councillor of local authority and (if school is London-based) of Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone.*

*Teacher to ask pupils following questions:*

- What is a local election?
- What is a councillor?
- What is a local authority?
- What is the London Assembly and power of the London mayor?
- Who are:
  - the BNP?
  - the Conservative Party?
  - the Labour party?

- the Liberal Democrats?<sup>10</sup>

Teacher writes the key points on the board, clarifying each of the terms  
See section 1 for background information.

### **Local Election Radio Debate**

[35 mins]

The teacher explains that they will be taking part in a debate on immigration, to be broadcast on the local radio station. This is in preparation for the **local government election or London Assembly election**. The programme will consist of a panel made up of a councillor from the BNP, Conservative Party, Labour Party and Liberal Democrats, as well as a participating audience in the form of the party members. At the beginning of the programme, each councillor will have to state his/her party's position on immigration. It will then be open for discussion.

The teacher clarifies the key terms found on political parties' website and writes them on the board. These include:

BNP:

- indigenous – being originally from a particular place/geographical location
- North Atlantic
- millennia – thousands of years
- civil liberty – freedom of speech and action, for the good of the community.<sup>11</sup>

Labour:

- constitution – principles by which a state or organisation is governed.<sup>12</sup>
- civil partnership – legal union (similar to marriage) of two people of the same -ex
- stakeholder – person who affects or is affected by an action
- policy – principle of action developed and/or followed by an organisation
- legal migrant – a person who is allowed by the law to live temporarily or permanently in a place where he/she was not born.
- asylum system – public system which manages asylum seekers and refugees in their country of destination (in this case the UK).
- appeal – in law, to apply to a higher court to change a legal decision made by a lower court.

Conservative:

- manifesto – a public declaration (in this case of a political party) of aims and policies.
- Illegal migration – process of an individual crossing international borders and going against the

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<sup>10</sup>The **Labour Party** was founded in 1900 and first formed a government in 1924. It developed out of the Trade Union movement and in the twentieth century replaced the Liberal Party as one of the two largest parties in the House of Commons. The party has formed the Government since 1997.

The **Conservative Party** is one of the three leading political parties in Britain. The world of finance and the management of industry have tended to support the modern Conservatives. The Conservative Party has was last in government from 1979 to 1997.

The **Liberal Democrat Party** was formed in 1988. Despite being a new party it has a long political tradition. The party was formed out of the Social Democratic Party and the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party can trace its roots back to the eighteenth century. The Liberal Democrats are the third largest party in the House of Commons.

Source: <http://www.explore.parliament.uk/parliament.aspx?id=1>

The **British National Party** (BNP) is an extreme right political party founded in 1982. It currently has 48 councillors in local government but is not represented in national government. Its leader, Nick Griffin joined the BNP in 1995. He edited *The Rune*, an anti-Semitic quarterly and believed that the BNP should prioritise denying the Holocaust to schoolchildren.

Source: <http://www.stopthebnp.org.uk/>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.askoxford.com/concise\\_oed/civilliberty?view=uk](http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/civilliberty?view=uk)

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.askoxford.com/concise\\_oed/constitution?view=uk](http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/constitution?view=uk)

- immigration laws of the country he/she is entering; or overstaying his/her visa.
- skilled immigrants – foreign-born workers with university or post-secondary training.<sup>13</sup>
- international migration – crossing of international borders for a certain minimum period of time (not a holiday).<sup>14</sup>

*The teacher divides the class into four groups, ideally with the same number in each. Each group will represent one of the four political parties: BNP, Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrats. One person per group will represent an individual standing as councillor or London Assembly Member of the party, the rest of the group are party members.*

*The four groups have 30 minutes to research their political party and its position on immigration on the Internet. The teacher should support them through this process. Together, they will prepare their political party's statement (to be made by the person standing for councillor) on immigration and 2 questions to ask one or more of the opposing political parties.*

*The debate then takes place with the teacher acting as the presenter, initiating the discussion by asking each candidate to state their party's position on immigration.*

### **Discussion**

**[10 mins]**

*Pupils should be encouraged to justify their political opinions during the discussion.*

Did any of the arguments influence your opinion on immigration?

If so, how?

Did you feel that any of the arguments threatened diversity in the UK?

*Teacher explains that this is an important issue, the focal point for a party like the BNP. Its policies do influence people. For example, the BNP achieved 4.71% of the London-wide vote in 2004, 5% would have secured them a seat on the GLA .*

Should you try and combat this if so how?

### **Campaign**

Teacher introduces the recent "Racism – It's Not Kosher" campaign to encourage people to vote. For further information regarding the cross-communal response to the local and London elections in May 2008, pupils can contact [admin@fight-racism.co.uk](mailto:admin@fight-racism.co.uk)

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<sup>13</sup> [http://www.choosetocompete.org/downloads/Newsletter\\_2007\\_April.pdf](http://www.choosetocompete.org/downloads/Newsletter_2007_April.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=3020&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php-URL_ID=3020&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

## 4. Resources:

The next three pages contain:

**Immigrants Time Line Cards**

**The British by Benjamin Zephaniah poem**

## Immigration Time-line cards

**Name:** *Homo Sapien*

**Coming from:** The marshy regions exposed by the thawing of the Arctic snow.

**Information:**  
These settlers may have been cannibals!

**Name:** *The Celts*

**Coming from:** Gaul

**Information:**  
Names like Avon, Thames and Leeds are Celtic. They were skilled iron workers.

**Name:** *The Romans*

**Coming from:** Rome

**Information:**  
The Romans first invasion failed and they waited almost 100 years before they were successful.

**Name:** *The Normans*

**Coming from:** Scandinavian Vikings who invaded France

**Information:** William the Conqueror and his heirs build many of the great castles and cathedrals we admire now – the Tower of London, Windsor Castle and Durham Cathedral.

**Name:** *Sephardi Jews*

**Coming from:** Spain

**Information:**  
This group of Jewish immigrants were allowed into the country by Cromwell as refugees fleeing the Spanish Inquisition.

**Name:** *Huguenot (Protestants)*

**Coming from:** France

**Information:**  
When the Bank of England was founded, nearly 10% of its capital was from Huguenot merchants.

**Name:** *South Asians*

**Coming from:** India, Pakistan and Bangladesh

**Information:** This was not the first time that Asian had lived in Britain but there was a great increase in Immigration at this time. Asians now form the largest minority group.

**Name:** *Vietnamese refugees*

Coming from: South Vietnam

Information: The exodus from Vietnam was so great that the UN takes action. The people who came to Britain were settled mainly in rural areas. Many then moved to major cities.

**Name:** *Tamil refugees*

**Coming from:** Sri Lanka

**Information:**  
Approx. 800,000 Sri Lankans are refugees, mostly in India. About 71,000 Sri Lankans came to the UK, most live in London.

**Name:** Iraqi refugees

**Coming from:** Iraq

**Information:**  
There are about 55,000 Iraqi refugees living in the UK, about half of them are Kurds. Iraq has been one of the largest 'producers' of asylum seekers for four years.

**Name:** Eastern European

**Coming from:** Poland, Czech Republic and other Eastern European states

**Information:**  
After the expansion of the European Union, many immigrants came to work for a few months in the UK from Eastern Europe (referred to as European accretion countries). In 2005, 49,000 Polish citizens came to the UK, planning to stay less than 12 months. The new European accession countries provided a £4bn between April 2005 and November 2006.

Source: GuardianUnlimited, 2006

Poem: **The British** by Benjamin Zephaniah

The British

Serves 60 Million

Take some Picts, Celts and Silures  
And let them settle  
Then overrun them with Roman conquerors.

Remove the Romans after approximately 400 years  
Add lots of Norman French to some  
Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Vikings, then stir vigorously.

Mix some hot Chileans, cool Jamaicans, Dominicans, Trinidadians  
and Bejans with some Ethiopians, Chinese, Vietnamese and  
Sudanese.

Take a blend of Somalians, Sri Lankans, Nigerians  
And Pakistanis,  
Combine with some Guyanese  
And then turn up the heat.

Sprinkle some fresh Indians, Malaysians, Bosnians, Iraqis and  
Bangladeshis together with some Afghans, Spanish, Turkish,  
Kurdish, Japanese and Palestinians  
Then add to the melting pot.

Leave the ingredients to simmer.

As they mix and blend allow their languages to flourish  
Binding them together with English.

Allow time to cool.

Add some unity, understanding and respect for the future.  
Serve with justice  
And enjoy

Note: All the ingredients are equally important. Treating one  
ingredient better than another will leave a bitter, unpleasant  
taste.

**Warning: An unequal spread of justice will damage the people  
and cause pain.**

**Give justice and equality to all.**

By Benjamin Zephaniah

## 5. Acknowledgements:

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