

KS2 Topic: Windrush Day. Summer 2, week 4.

L.O. To develop knowledge and understanding of a significant time in British history.

BIG QUESTION: What is the Windrush migration and how has it influenced British life today?



In **1948**, Britain was just starting to recover from **World War II**. Thousands of buildings had been bombed, loads of houses were destroyed and it all needed to be rebuilt.

In the Caribbean, lots of young men and women had **served in the British armed forces** because at the time, many Caribbean countries were still under British rule and not yet independent. After the war, some of these **people answered an advert** to come to Britain where there were lots of different jobs opportunities to help support Britain's recovery. When people move from one place to another place to

live, this is called **migration**.

Other people just wanted to see Britain, which they had heard so much about. They got on a ship - **the Empire Windrush** - which left the Caribbean to travel thousands of miles across the Atlantic.

It was **22nd June 1948** when the **Empire Windrush arrived at Tilbury Docks in Essex**, 71 years ago. This was the first time so many Caribbean people had come to live in Britain. Many more arrived in the following years - approximately 500,000 between the 50s-60s. Here's an informative video sharing more info on the Windrush migration: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/43793769>

This video shows the **poet John Agard** reading his brilliant poem **Windrush Child** <https://vimeo.com/34658318>

Britain in 1948

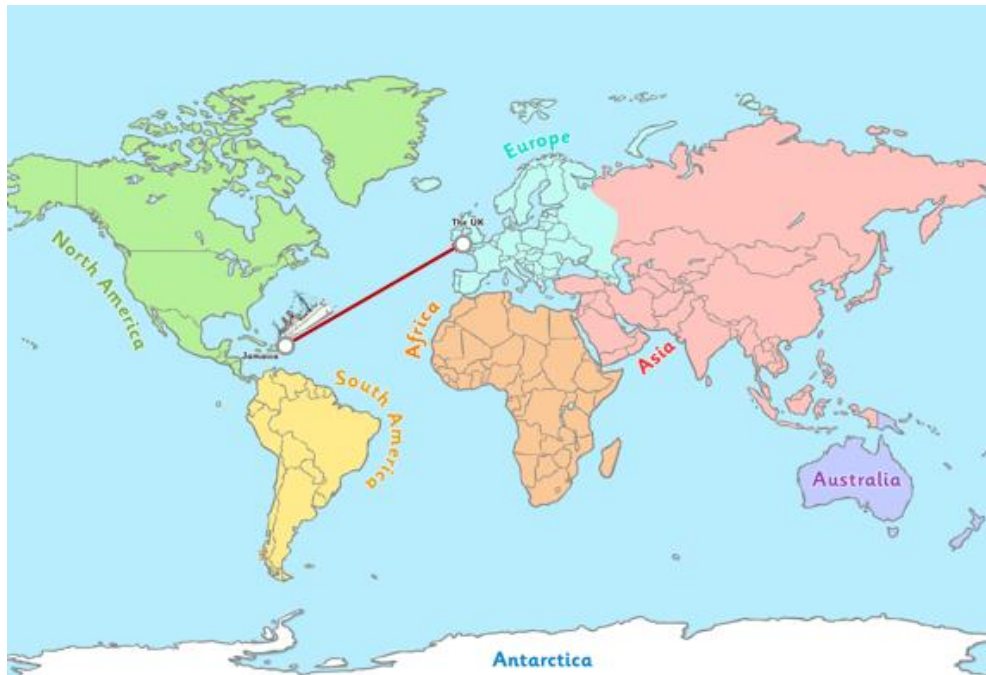
Just after World War II ended in 1945, the first groups of post-war immigrants from the Caribbean began to settle in Britain.

From the 1950s into the 1960s, there was a mass migration of workers from many English-speaking countries in the Caribbean, particularly Jamaica, who settled in Britain.

These immigrants were invited to fill labour requirements in London's hospitals, railways and other areas of work. They are widely viewed as having been a major contributing factor to the rebuilding of the post-war London economy.

The passengers had a wide variety of skills to offer. There were nurses, cleaners, mechanics, carpenters, former RAF airmen, and lots of other jobs that were needed in Britain.

Many of these passengers settled in the area of Brixton, in London, which led to the development of large Caribbean communities who have contributed to life in Britain ever since.



What Was it Like to be a Windrush Passenger?

Passengers on the Windrush were told that they would all be welcome in Britain, the 'mother country'. Was this their experience after arriving?

John Richards

"I knew a lot about Britain from school days but it was a different picture from that one, when you came face to face with the facts. It was two different things. They tell you it is the 'mother country', you're all welcome, you all British. When you come here you realise you're a foreigner and that's all there is to it. The average person knows you as a colonial and that's all. You cut cane or carry bananas and that's it. Anybody wants to diddle you they say I just come off the banana boat and things like that."

Mr. Oswald 'Columbus' Denniston

"It was common knowledge that there was work in Britain, just after the war. I had no ties. I wasn't married or anything like that. I come from Montego Bay, Jamaica. I knew no one in England, I had travelled before to America and Panama. I had no idea what I was coming to. I can remember some of the people I travelled with, if I see them, but I don't know where they are now. All in all it was a good journey to Britain for me, yeah it was."



Vince Reid

"My parents brought me on the Windrush - I had no choice in the matter. They didn't have to - they came in search of a better life, better opportunities. It was quite a devastating experience. I was thirteen when I arrived so I wasn't a man, I was a boy. Most of the people on the Windrush were men. I had never been out of Kingston so it was quite an experience. I went to school in Kings Cross. I had never associated with white people and then at school I came across real hostility. I mean to say I had no friends for several years, that wouldn't be far from the truth."

At 13 years old, Vince Reid was one of the youngest passengers on The Empire Windrush. It is Vince Reid who inspired John Agard's poem *Windrush Child* ([link above](#)).



KS2 Topic: Windrush Day. Summer 2, week 4.

Task 1:

Look at the sources below. Can you infer from each source how the Windrush generation supported Britain in recovering from World War 2?



What jobs did they have?
What skills did they bring with them?
How did they help the moral in Britain at the time?

BIG QUESTION: What is the Windrush migration and how has it influenced British life today?

Britain in 2020

In the 21st century, **Britain is a multi-racial society**. The huge contributions made by the various immigrant communities to Britain's economic and social development since the Second World War are beginning to be more widely recognised, but there is still a lot of work to be done.

Windrush Day is an annual celebration that commemorates the arrival of the **Empire Windrush**, its passengers and descendants who made a huge contribution to the UK over the decades; including: Politics, Football, Formula 1, Boxing, Athletics, Children's books, Notting Hill Carnival, NHS, Transportation, Food, Poetry, Fashion, Philanthropy, Film and the list continues.



BIG QUESTION: What is the Windrush migration and how has it influenced British life today?

