

History

History demands students become active participants in the reading process as they are routinely asked to use information (both primary and secondary) to assess nuances, discern bias and make judgements on the purpose and content of what they read. Therefore, to be critically literate is an essential and consistently used skill.

Critical literacy link to Key Stage 3 programme of study

- **Understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses**
- **Teaching should equip pupils to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments and develop perspective and judgement**
- **Understand the complexity of people’s lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time**
- **Understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed**

Case study – Year 9 Windrush scandal lesson at George Mitchell Secondary School, Waltham Forest

The national curriculum specifies the need to teach a unit on the ‘challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world, 1901 - the present day.’ Grace interpreted this theme by addressing the experience of immigrants to Britain in the 1950s. The unit began by addressing the reasons why Caribbean families moved to Britain, analysed the experiences of black people living in Britain in the 1950s and finished by weighing up how far racism in Britain has changed over time with a specific case study of the Windrush scandal and Stephen Lawrence’s murder.

Students were presented with the headline “Up to 63 Windrush citizens may have been wrongly deported from the UK admits Home Secretary”. Students began by independently annotating the statement and discussing their questions and findings in small groups. Their initial thoughts centred on ideas such as “**they are British citizens who are being sent away**” and “**this is unfair**”. In the first instance they had clearly taken the statement as fact

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and were simply delving into a surface level analysis of the event. Grace prompted her students to engage with critical literacy by stating that “all your comments are assuming this statement is true, do you fully trust the statement or are there issues with it?” From this small comment a much deeper and more insightful discussion was raised. Students began to pick individual words and phrases from the headline and could infer not only the meaning behind the choice of language, but also the headline’s legitimacy as a whole. The number 63 was questioned:

“Where have they got this number from? Is it accurate?”

“The use of 63 minimises the problem as it makes you feel like it’s not that many, was this done on purpose?”

In addition the duality of the phrase ‘Windrush citizens’ was questioned. Students suggested this implied citizenship was only existent as a result of ‘Windrush’ and not a stand-alone right. They created a list of questions they wanted to ask the headline:

“Where did you get this evidence from?”

“How reliable was your source?”

“Is it biased?”

From this critical position they then began the next research activity. Students went on to research with sources immigration laws and wrote a final piece debating the accuracy of the headline they were initially presented with.

By engaging the students with the concept of critical literacy, Grace forced them to think critically about the statement in front of them and thus lift their attainment and higher level thinking skills, as demanded by the national curriculum.

Initial thoughts:

- They are British citizens who are back to go back to a country they have never been
- It is not fair as they contributed to the economy and society.
- They are sending them back because the country no longer needs them, they are being sent back.

→ Their citizenship is dependent on the fact they are Windrush citizens - not British citizens

→ emphasising the fact that it's a minority - might be minimising actual problem

→ Tentative language to lead you to believe or question whether should be

→ Persuading you to doubt.

→ What records have been used to base this information on?

'Up to 63 Windrush citizens may have been wrongly deported from the UK admits Home Secretary'

headline is on an angle - Government - Do they care?

if they truly believed it was wrong they would have referred to them as British citizens.

Could be trying to gain money - attention rather than accurately presenting the facts

Questions to ask of the headline:

- Where did you get this evidence from?
- How reliable was your source?
- Is it biased? If so, what perspective?

Contributed by Grace Fagan, History Teacher and More Able Coordinator at George Mitchell Secondary School.

History example lesson plan

Unit: How racist was Britain in the 1950s?	
Learning objective	
WALT: To critically analyse a newspaper headline through identifying supporting or contradicting evidence.	
Learning outcome	
LO1: Interpret and question a media headline.	
LO2: Analyse source based evidence to judge the legitimacy of the headline.	
LO3: Argue whether the Windrush scandal was accurately and fairly portrayed in the media.	
Time	Activity
7 minutes	<p>Starter/LO1:</p> <p>Students are presented with the headline 'Up to 63 Windrush citizens may have been wrongly deported from the UK admits Home Secretary.'</p> <p>Students should annotate the statement with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Questions they want to ask of the statement. - Potential problems with the statement. - What extra evidence or information they will need.
10 minutes	<p>LO1: Student discussion</p> <p>Students to report and discuss what problems there are with the headline.</p> <p>Teacher to probe students to consider what biases it initiates within the reader and the hidden inferences behind the statement.</p> <p>Eg: The '63' acts to minimise the problem in the reader's mind as it indicates a small number.</p>
3 minutes	Afl: Students to summarise in their own words what the headline is stating.
5 minutes	<p>LO2: Source analysis</p> <p>Students are given a range of visual and written sources to provide evidence for the Windrush generation's journey and entrance into Britain.</p> <p>Students to complete table in book that shows evidence that 'citizens were wrongly deported' on one side and evidence that 'citizens were not wrongly deported' on the other.</p> <p>They should write the source on the correct side of the table with a summarised justification.</p>
5 minutes	<p>Afl: Group discussion</p> <p>In small groups students to discuss what they have discovered about the entrance into British society nature of immigrants status as 'citizens.'</p>
10 minutes	<p>LO2: Comprehension Task</p> <p>Students to independently read article 'The Windrush Generation: British Citizenship and Mobility Control'.</p> <p>Students to add evidence to their table – e.g.: British Nationality Act 1948 is evidence that citizens were wrongly deported as they were given citizenship.</p>
10 minutes	<p>Afl: Class discussion</p> <p>Class question and answer with discussion about the evidence provided from the sources. Students encouraged to criticise the headline with specific evidence.</p>
10 minutes	<p>LO3: Written Task</p> <p>Students to complete a written response to the question: Has the Windrush scandal been wrongly represented in the media?</p>