

Reading Comprehension

Sample Question for BCS Written

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Read the following passage and answer the following questions:

Now that the dust has settled on the EU referendum results, we can take stock of the full extent of the damage. Not only has Brexit had political and economic repercussions, it has had social implications with frightening consequences, namely a sudden increase in xenophobic and racist attacks. The most recent being the assault in the small town of Harlow on 40-year-old Polish Arkadiusz Jozwik, by a group of British youths, resulting in his death. The police are treating this attack as a hate crime. Latent Euroscepticism and anti-EU sentiment have been simmering in the political underbelly of UK politics for some time, with its supporters becoming far more bellicose in the past decade.

So when David Cameron promised the nation an in/out referendum on the UK's membership of the EU in 2013, he thought he was healing the Tory party for the upcoming general election and buying the time and the platform from which to secure a deal which would silence the EU's detractors. Little did he or any of us realise what the referendum would unleash. It has not only divided the nation but also brought to the surface and almost given licence to bigotry and racism across the country. Leading up to and following the referendum, the number of racist attacks, ranging from verbal abuse to destruction of property and actual physical violence, has significantly increased. The brunt of the racial violence post Brexit is being directed at the East European communities with the Polish at the top of the list. Almost overnight people who were considered part of the local community became social pariahs.

Just a week before the referendum and even before the results had been out, Jo Cox, a young MP was shot and then stabbed to death by a 52-year-old man who allegedly chanted 'Britain First' when he brutally killed her. Cox was known for her strong pro-immigration stance. Far from an edifying discussion on the pros and cons of EU membership and a serious debate on the longer term political, economic, demographic and ecological implications of remaining, throughout the run up to the referendum, we were subjected to a tidal wave of misinformation and fear mongering from both sides. The Remain campaign tried to scare people into voting to stay within the EU out of fear of impending economic disaster. The Leave Campaign or Brexit

team initially focused on reclaiming money and jobs from the Brussels kleptocracy then changed track and centred their campaign on the negative impact of immigration and free trade. Their whole campaign was based on misrepresentation and dishonesty.

Anti-immigration rhetoric used by the Brexit camp has been fundamental to the way people ultimately decided to vote with many of the population feeling threatened by foreigners and immigrants. The propaganda used implied that not only were immigrants taking their jobs but also implementing their local culture and customs thereby eroding the British way of life. Current British Prime Minister Theresa May known for her hard line on immigration may have fanned the flames of prejudice during her time as Home Secretary. The controversial billboard campaign by the Home Office consisting of vans carrying messages saying "Go home or face arrest" were thought to be both offensive and divisive.

Similarly with Brexit slogans such as "We want our country back" and "Let's make Britain Great again" the inferences were that immigrants were responsible for the current economic climate and needed to be expelled from the UK. Of course what they failed to mention were inconvenient truths such as the fact that according to the Office for National Statistics EU migrants contributed 2.5 billion more in taxes than they received in benefits and State services (1999/2000). Over the last few years, Islamophobia and hate crimes against Muslims have been on the rise. Particularly affected have been women in hijabs and niqabs, facing abuse on a regular basis. Mosques and community centres have also been vandalised and attacked. But Brexit has expanded the net and included anyone who appears to be 'different' whether in appearance, religion or speech. You no longer need to look 'foreign', you just have to sound 'foreign' to be targeted.

Those who previously might have kept their racist views to themselves seem to have become emboldened and empowered by the results of the referendum. Verbal abuse towards foreigners has risen sharply and we now hear and read about reports of excrement being put through letter boxes, people being told to "go home", laminated cards with "No more Polish vermin" written on them being distributed, a Polish community centre being vandalised with racist graffiti, a fire bombing of a halal butcher shop, to name a few incidents. There were even requests in restaurants by customers not to be served by "foreign waiters".

What is frightening is these types of racist views are held not only by adults but have filtered down to school going children. In one case a child told his teacher he was not going to be told what to do by a foreigner, another case a black woman was taunted on the bus by a boy calling her a 'monkey'. Racial slurs such as 'Paki' which encompasses people of South Asian origin seems to have made a reappearance. A few days ago my son was on his way home when he saw a man stumbling towards him. When he asked out of concern if the man was alright, the response was "Move on, Paki". It is unacceptable that people should have to now live in fear of being abused or assaulted on the streets, their place of work and even in their homes. Sadly this

kind of bigotry and xenophobia is a step backwards in the UK's social development and might just have taken the "Great" out of Great Britain.

Part A

01. Answer the questions below. Do not copy any sentence from the passage above. Write the answers in your own sentences having your own wording and phrasing. 3 10 = 30

- a. What are the threatening outcomes Brexit can impose?
- b. What hate crime has happened of late as a result of Brexit? How are the political activists reacting in recent times?
- d. What has the referendum given birth to?
- e. Why was Jo Cox killed?
- f. What did the Remain Campaign want people to do?
- g. What did the Leave Campaign focus on?
- h. Why do the British fear immigrants?
- i. What is Theresa May's stance on immigration?
- j. What are on the augment in Britain?

02. Guess the meanings of the following words/expressions using contextual clues (the words are underlined in the passage). 1 5 = 5

- a. Repercussions
- b. Frightening
- c. Xenophobic
- d. Bellicose
- e. Unleash

03. Fill in the table by putting words in the empty cells according to parts of speech. 1 5 = 5

Noun Verb Adjective

- (a) Erode
- (b) Line

- (c) Receive
- (d) Word
- (e) different

04. Join the sets of sentences into one sentence. 2 5 = 10

- a. The British people have voted for Brexit. They started implementing hate crime.
- b. The immigrants in Britain have contributed to the economy. The British people have counted otherwise.
- c. Some people were there. They highlighted the negative aspects of the immigrants.
- d. The people wanted a verdict. David Cameron figured out a possible referendum.
- e. The intention of the British people was sound. Brexit seems to end up being something else.

05. Write a sentence with each of the following words/expressions. Copying of any sentence from the passage above must be avoided. 10

- a. Bigotry
- b. Pariah
- c. Edify
- d. Kleptocracy
- e. Propaganda
- f. Erode
- g. Encompass
- h. Taunt
- i. Vandalize
- j. Embolden