

Jamiacans in England

text G1 *The London Chronicle, 1773*

- what is the main idea – the proposal – in this little newspaper article?

text G2 *A School History of England, 1911*

- what is the view on the the black race in the West Indies?
- they have a suggestion concerning the British Empire; which? - and where did they get the idea?
- how does the author think the Britain has behaved towards the people of its numerous colonies?
- comment on the last sentence

text G4 *Black Testimony – Voices of Britain's West Indians, 1978*

- account for each of the five 'Black Testimonies' – what are their views on life in Britain?
(You may want to split them up between you)

1. Sonny Peterson, aged 39
2. Jamie Pinkerton, aged 13
3. Juanita Cole, aged 48
4. Payton Comwell, aged 13
5. Georgina Pointer, aged 58

- are there any similarities?
- we have roughly two generations here. What is the difference in views between these two age groups?



Brixton Riots 1981 (and 1985)

April 1981

The battle between police and residents in Brixton in April 1981 was the most significant outbreak of civil disorder in 20th century London.

In 1981, Brixton's Afro-Caribbean community comprised roughly 25% of its population. It was an area of high unemployment, particularly for Black men, where rates were as high as 50%.

Brixton was also an area of high crime, and in April 1981 the Metropolitan Police initiated 'Operation Swamp'. Within six days, a massive police presence on the streets had led to almost 1,000 people - mostly young Black men - being stopped and searched.

Police were operating under the 'sus' law. In order to stop someone, police needed only 'sus', or suspicion, that they might be intending to commit a crime. The police were exempt from the Race Relations Act, and seemed to some to be operating the 'sus' laws on the basis of racial prejudice.

On 13 April 1981, Police tried to assist a young Black man who had been stabbed in the back. A rumour circulated that the police were trying to arrest the injured man, rather than take him to hospital. Tensions rose. The following day, the arrest of another man outside a minicab office sparked violence. Within hours, the streets had become a battle zone. People threw petrol bombs and set light to police cars. Police in riot gear arrived, as did firefighters.

Buildings were torched, including a school in Effra Road, the Windsor Castle pub, and the post office. Most of the violence was concentrated along Railton Road, the 'front line'. Looting began in the evening of the 14 April. By 10pm, the police had begun to regain control of the area, but fighting and looting continued.

By the time hostilities subsided, over 360 people had been injured, 28 premises burned and another 117 damaged and looted. Over 100 vehicles, including 56 police vehicles, were damaged during the disturbances. The police arrested 82 people.

Following the riots, a public enquiry was held, under Lord Scarman. His report, published in November 1981, was heavily critical of the Metropolitan Police. Scarman emphasised that policing in a civil society can succeed only with the consent of the community. His report prompted new thinking about policing; the creation of the Police Complaints Authority; and a new outlook on police recruitment and training. Despite these measures, violence broke out on Brixton's streets again a few years later.