

KS4

Lesson GCSE

Ugandan Asian Migration



Curriculum links:

GCSE History



AQA GCSE History. Migration, Empires and People

- Part four: Britain in the 20th century
- The legacy of Empire: migration from Asia and Africa, including the role of Amin in Uganda

Edexcel GCSE History. Option 13 Migrants in Britain

- c1900–present: Migration in modern Britain
- The experience of migrants in Britain: including their relations with the authorities and the existing population, including anti-immigration movements

From East to West



Ugandan Asian Migration to the UK from the 1970s

Ugandan Asian Migration to Britain in the twentieth century



In this lesson you will learn about the experience and impact of Ugandan Asian migration to the UK after 1972.

Many of the sources in this lesson are the voices of Ugandan Asians in oral history interviews conducted in 2022 – 23.

You can listen to recordings and watch videos of all the interviews here:

[Interviews - Ugandan Asians](#)

Ugandan Asian Migration to Britain in the twentieth century



This lesson covers:

Part 1

Empire

What was the link between Uganda and Britain?

Part 2

Migration

Expulsion from Uganda

Part 3

Resettlement

Coming to the UK

Part 4

Exam practice

Historical skills



Part 1: Empire

What was the link between Uganda and Britain?

What was the link between Uganda and Britain?



- By the late 19th century, Britain had established colonies within the Indian Ocean world. Britain planned a railway in Kenya and Uganda to make it easier to **exploit** the countries for trade. They planned a railway to link the interiors of the countries with the coastal port city of Mombasa.
- In 1896, the first **indentured** labourers were 'imported' to Africa from India, by the British. They built the railway between by 1901, but 2,493 indentured labourers, (10% of those employed), died in the dangerous work and living conditions.
- The British were disappointed that most surviving indentured labourers returned to India. Only 6,724 of the original labourers remained in Africa. They settled in towns along the railway route to work in trade & business – but not farming, as the best farmland was reserved for Europeans.
- Britain's attempts to use indentured labourers to colonise East Africa failed. However, those who remained had an impact on the future of Ugandan Asians. Although indentured labourers became a minority of the Asians settled in East Africa, their history was used to create a **myth** of Ugandan Asians as "uncivilized" due to their supposed lack of education and poor background.

What was the link between Uganda and Britain?



Mayur: [my family came to Uganda] with the railways. Kenya wanted railways between the two countries, people from India were invited, my great grandparents went there [around 1908] and they stayed there. They had a business and ... just didn't go back to India and opened a business and I was born there [in Uganda].



Shenaz: My father was in India, in Bombay, and my mother was in India too, but the economic situation in India wasn't [great] so a lot of people migrated to Africa. My dad's mum passed away in India, so he went to a boarding school. So then after that when he was about 18, he migrated to Africa ... set up a business ... in a tiny village called Nabusanke, he was completely on his own. So, then mum and dad got married ... about 1950 ... It was a nice little village and ... my dad ... was a school headmaster ... I was born in 1960



Jyotika: My dad was born in Uganda, [my grandad] came to Africa I don't know when. But they were invited by the British to work as tailors because they needed a lot of uniforms to be sewn for railway [workers], for police. [The British] were inviting people from India who were skilled in those areas. So that's why he came by ship to Mombasa from India, from Gujarat ... the men always went first and then they worked, got a house, had a bit of money and then they would kind of call upon their families.



Jaswant: My father was born in India, he went to Uganda because one of his brothers had been fighting in the Second World War for the British Army and then he went and bought land [in Uganda] and started growing sugar [cane] and then invited all three of his brothers to [come and he] opened up a factory for making sugar. So my father was born in India, my grandparents were born in India.

What was the link between Uganda and Britain?



- By the 1930s, Ugandan Asians were a permanent feature of colonial Ugandan society. South Asians owned more farmland as European immigration had declined. Ugandan Asians also made advancements in politics. But amidst growing inequality, the success and visibility of the Ugandan Asian community created increased resentment from the indigenous population.
- By 1945, colonised people around the world had a renewed consciousness and sought representation and greater autonomy. Indian independence in 1947 attracted the attention of the South Asian population and also Africans. **Decolonization** seemed a possibility for other colonies and helped to advance the cause of Ugandan independence. This triggered a crisis, for the British but also the South Asians who had benefitted substantially from the colonial system.
- Racial tensions in Uganda increased, as did the anti-colonial movement. Uganda won independence in 1962, and its leader Milton Obote presided over a difficult time, where Indian traders were openly blamed for economic issues. Idi Amin took over in a military coup in 1971.

Can you predict how these factors might affect the future for Ugandan Asians in 1971?



January 1971: Britain, USA and Israel triggered a coup where Idi Amin became leader in Uganda

Asians were increasingly visible as an elite as European migration to Uganda tailed off

Ugandan National Congress founded

Decolonisation

Increased inequality between indigenous Ugandans and Asians

Growth of independence movements

Ugandan Asians become wealthier



Part 2: Migration

Expulsion from Uganda

Turning point: Idi Amin 4th August 1972



Addressing a military regiment, Ugandan President Idi Amin declared that Uganda had no place for the 80,000 Asians who were 'sabotaging Uganda's economy and encouraging corruption'.

By the 9th of August, Amin declared that all non-citizen Asians must leave Uganda within three months and that those who dared remain would be 'sitting on fire'.

Extract 1:

As soon as he'd won the election [Idi Amin] there was a change you could feel in the atmosphere that something was not quite right, things were changing ... a fear that started to creep into people's lives, that this person is not the right person, that we may [lose] the freedom that we had, persecutions may come in. But no one ... ever dreamt that he would make this announcement, people thought that ..we're here for life, and that was it.

Bharat, grew up in Uganda and was 10 in 1972

Extract 2:

Oh my god we were scared, when we knew that we had to leave, and it was just like we were counting days to get out because all these armed officers with rifles were roaming around on motorbikes frightening people to get out as soon as possible: 'don't wait for 30 days'.

Tarla, who grew up in Uganda and was 13 in 1972

.....

Extract 3:

People didn't eat fish from the River Nile, because we lived at the source of River Nile, because they found [body parts], watches in the fish. When they finished dumping bodies on the street then they started dumping them in the river, so all that fear! And you knew that your life didn't mean anything.

Jaswant, was born in Uganda and was 18 in 1972

President Idi Amin and the Ugandan Asians



January 1971:

A military coup led by General Idi Amin removed President Milton Obote from Uganda. Amin declared himself president and starting removing potential enemies. The targeted deaths of many Ugandans followed.

August 1972:

Amin announced that all Asians who were not Ugandan passport holders would be expelled from Uganda in 90 days. The British Government reluctantly agreed to accept migrants who held British passports.

Approximately 28,000 Ugandan Asians (who had British passports) came to Britain in 1972.



Part 3: Resettlement Coming to the UK

The first evacuation flight organised by the UK Government landed at Stansted Airport in September 1972, carrying 193 passengers.



© Alamy Stock Photo



The first man to disembark from the aircraft bringing the first batch of Ugandan Asians to the UK was Mr Lhanji Kanji. He is seen suitably dressed for the cold weather that greeted him at the threshold of a new life.





Make a short timeline in your book of the events leading to, and then arrival in the U.K. of Ugandan refugees.

Date	Important events

Arrival in the UK



We were all taken to a Royal Air Force barracks. We ended up in the one in West Malling ... in Sevenoaks, Kent and that's where we stayed ... it was basically a barracks ... massive dormitory type rooms that were portioned off for different families, so we'd just have beds there and ... a bedside cupboard. We were there for seven months. We got there on the 7th of November 1972 and we were housed in June 1973.

It was a lovely stay from my perspective. Obviously from my parents' perspective it was very different, especially my dad who'd lost all his businesses, all his properties.

But for me, as a child, it was a really nice experience because we had a purpose built school on the campus so we'd go to school there, we'd get taught, we had lovely teachers. And then we had to go to the mess hall where we had all our meals. So we had breakfast, lunch, tea, and dinner. I very fondly remember the tea when we always used to have shortbread biscuits with a cherry on top and that was really a lovely experience.

Sutinder, born in Uganda, came to UK aged 10 in 1972.

Ugandan Asian refugees at Plasterdown
Camp Dartmoor Devon 1972



© Alamy Stock Photo

Settling into life in the UK

1: Challenges



[Death Threats to Black kids, England 1970's - YouTube](#)

© BBC Panorama

Bharat Joshi, oral history interview 2022

Bharat was a Ugandan Asian refugee who came to the UK aged 10 in 1972



At that time you had Enoch Powell a Conservative politician who was so far-right and making speeches about the Rivers of Blood he was stirring up. This was a mainline Conservative party MP talking about, what was going to happen if [the government] let all these people come into the country, and the newspapers obviously jumped on that and they were spreading that hatred. I don't think either of the political parties really wanted to take us, it was because of pressure from within the country from a lot of the population that they felt they had to, and also because it was from a Commonwealth country they felt that they had to. ...It was very much to show that we care, because they didn't want us, they really did not want us.

In those days there was safety concerns because you had the National Front, you had the skinheads. So when you were going out you were always fearful ... I felt it on a few occasions, coming home from school on my own. There were skinheads that didn't beat me up badly but kicked me, punched me, and these were older children.



Source A:

A photograph published in a daily newspaper



Opinions of the protesters:

People at the protest:

Target of the protest:

Politicians' views at the time:

Sep. 09, 1972 – Anti Ugandan Asian March in London

Sutinder Nagi, oral history interview 2022

Sutinder was a Ugandan Asian refugee who came to the UK aged 10 in 1972, with her family.



My dad .. was an architect, and ... a really successful businessman, [he] had a lot of wealth and lots of connections ... So, I think it really affected him a lot ... to start from scratch again. We had nothing, ... and my parents had to find a job and the only job he could find was factory work. Although he was an architect, he couldn't get a job because ... he was a foreigner. So he ended up having to work in a factory and he did his time, he was very good, [he] kept the house going and he used to travel, get up at the crack of dawn and travel a long way to get to work and come back. He even did shift work for years and years just so we could manage.

Do you think Ugandan Asians expected these experiences in the UK?

Settling into life in the UK

2: Successes



Using the next four slides, you will write about ways in which some Ugandan Asians had more positive experiences of migration

Mayur Seta, oral history interview 2022.

Mayur was a Ugandan Asian refugee who came to the UK aged 7 ½ in 1972, with his family.



England gave us a home and I've kept my Indian culture, I've got the best of both worlds. Living in the UK it's a fantastic country, what British people have done for us ... Edward Heath was the Prime Minister at the time in 1972 ... so I'd like to thank all of them who were in the Conservative party at the time who took us in, all the British people, all the help we got. 63 organisations came out to help us in the camps, Salvation Army, Red Cross, you name it, all of them were there helping us and every single one of them they've done a fantastic job. We left a country where we could've been killed and we came to this country and apart from the racism it's been fantastic I think racism is gone now we faced old racism but it made us stronger, definitely made us stronger, so like I said we could never repay the British public for what they've done for us.

Now look more closely at what Mayur says:

Mayur Seta, oral history interview 2022.

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Q. Do you think other Ugandan Asians would feel the same as Mayur? Explain your answer using what you've learned about experiences arriving in Britain.

Mayur Seta, oral history interview 2022.

Mayur was a Ugandan Asian refugee who came to the UK aged 7 ½ in 1972, with his family.



The Ugandan Asians played a massive, massive part in where the UK is right now.

I was told £6million was invested in the Ugandan Asians of 1972 I reckon that is the biggest return of [an] investment by the UK. Because if you look at the Ugandan Asians they have become in all professions, doctors, pharmacies, dentists you name it every single profession, businesses, they have absolutely played a massive part. All the shops in the 80s with Ugandan Asians opening long hours and the British have caught onto that with the Sainsbury's, the Tescos all the shops now are 24 hours, some of them, so the Ugandan Asians have played a massive part.

And if you look at all the kids the 3rd, 4th, 5th generations all of them are all educated. In my time 3/10 went to university, now it's like 95% of them go to university, the first question you ask is "Oh which Uni did you go to?" expecting them to have gone to Uni. So, they've all gone to University all excelled in whatever they've done. So that 28,000 [Ugandan Asians] who came is a big family now and they have provided a massive income to the UK, the GDP, that £6million is probably worth a thousand times over.

Bharti Dhir, oral history interview 2022

Bharti was a Ugandan Asian refugee who came to the UK aged 12 in 1972, with her mother.



[Britain] didn't want, Ugandan [Asian] refugees, but now we've suddenly turned deserving, and I read somewhere that Ugandan Asians are the most successful group and have contributed millions to this economy because they've ...[created] businesses, especially in Leicester.

When I talk to women who left Uganda, there is one thing we are all agreed on, and that is that leaving Uganda was [good] for many women. In Uganda the gender role was very defined and, yes girls did study and ... even went university, but [not for] a degree and pursuing a career ... Since coming to England I've done two degrees, I've got a career ... England has been liberating for women. I've got friends ... in the LGBT community who are female, and they have said they would probably never have been allowed to be gay or express their sexuality in Uganda, they would've been forced into marriage and that would have been it.

Q. Describe some of the positive experiences of Ugandan Asians in Britain.



Part 4: Exam practice

Historical skills

Q1: How useful is Source A to a historian studying the experience of Ugandan Asians migration to Britain?



Explain your answer using Source A and your own knowledge.
[8 marks]

This question asks you about the impact and experience of migration to the UK – and what the source tells you about that.

Make sure you mention the provenance of the source and what that tells you (eg date). Firstly, look at the date. It is from the time when the first Ugandans were arriving – most would come after this date.

So in terms of impact, it can tell you about how some people in Britain felt. It might suggest what experiences would await the Ugandan Asians. At this point, the 28,000 Ugandan Asians will not have encountered the people in the photograph and vice versa.

Does this source contradict / support what you know about Ugandan Asian experiences of arrival? Make sure you add your own knowledge.

Sep. 09, 1972 – Anti Ugandan Asian March in London

Source A

A photograph published in a daily newspaper



Q1: How useful is Source A to a historian studying the experience of Ugandan Asians migration to Britain?

Explain your answer using Source A and your own knowledge.
[8 marks]

Sep. 09, 1972 – Anti Ugandan Asian March In London: Members of the Immigration Control Association (against Ugandan Asians), took part in a protest march in London. They marched from Victoria to Hyde Park, past the home of Mr Enoch Powell, Downing Street, and Buckingham Palace, where protest notes were handed in.

Sep. 09, 1972 – Anti Ugandan Asian March in London

AQA

Target Analyse sources contemporary to the period (AO3a)

Evaluate sources and make substantiated judgements (AO3b)

In analysing and evaluating sources, students will draw on their contextual knowledge to question critically the content and provenance of the source (for example, the context of the time in which source was created, place, authors situation, knowledge, beliefs, circumstances, access to information, purpose and audience).



7-8 marks

Level 4: Complex evaluation of source with sustained judgement based on content and provenance Extends Level 3. Students may progress from a developed evaluation of the source by sustained, balanced judgements of the source supported by factual knowledge and understanding related to the enquiry point and the broader context of the thematic study.

5-6 marks

Developed evaluation of source based on content and/or provenance Extends Level 2. Students may progress from a simple evaluation of the source with extended reasoning supported by factual knowledge and understanding related to the enquiry point and the broader context of the thematic. This may evaluate utility either on the basis of content and/or provenance.

3-4 marks

Level 2: Simple evaluation of source based on content and/or provenance Students may progress from a basic analysis of the source by reasoning supported with factual knowledge and understanding.

1-2 marks

Level 1: Basic analysis of source Answers may show understanding/ support for the source, but the case is made by assertion/basic inference Students identify basic features which are valid about the source related to the enquiry point

