

Elizabeth and the Blackmoores

SOURCE A from the National Archives website, Black Presence in Britain 1500-1850

From the 16th century, the numbers of Africans and Asians working became increasingly common in England. Wealthy - and not so wealthy - people in the country might have one or two Black servants, footmen or musicians. Whether they were slaves or free is often unclear in the documents. However, there were certainly free Black people in a variety of jobs. Queen Elizabeth I employed Black musicians. In one painting from around 1575, a group of Black musicians and dancers is depicted entertaining Queen Elizabeth and the people at her court. The queen also had a Black maidservant.

Activity 1 - Think, Pair, Share

You have 1 minute to write down what surprises you about this source

You have 2 minutes to discuss it with your neighbour

You have 2 minutes to discuss it with the people on your table

SOURCE B from the National Archives website, Black Presence in Britain 1500-1850

But while Elizabeth may have enjoyed being entertained by Black people, in the 1590s she tried to expel them from England. In 1596 she wrote to the lord mayors of major cities saying that there were **'of late divers (different) blackmoores brought into this realm (country), of which kind of people there are already here too manie...'**. She ordered that **'those kinde of people should be sente forth of the land'**.

Activity 2 - comprehension

Read the quote from Elizabeth and write it in your book in modern English

SOURCE C from a proclamation (statement) by Elizabeth, 1601

"The Queen is highly discontented to understand the great number of Negroes and blackamoors which are (living in England); who are fostered (supported) here, to the great annoyance of her own people who are unhappy at the help these people receive, as also most of them are infidels (non-christians) having no understanding of Christ and the Gospel.....Casper van Senden should be helped in taking these Negroes and blackamoors to be transported"

Caspar van Senden was a merchant who had been given a licence by Elizabeth, in 1596, to deport 89 Black people to Spain and Portugal, in exchange for 89 English prisoners

Activity 3 - ranking

- 1) Make a list of reasons why Elizabeth might want to repatriate (send back to Africa) the blackmoores.
- 2) Rank them in order of importance and explain why you placed them in this order

Hotseating - Elizabeth and the blackmoores

Your task is to act out a conversation between John Blackmoor, an African servant living in London and his friend Simon, "a man blackamore [who] laye in the streete" (he is a beggar)

You need to discuss the following issues:

- 1) There have been many poor harvests recently
- 2) There has been a big increase in the number of beggars
- 3) How do they feel about being blamed for the problems in England?
- 4) How do they feel about being sent back to Africa?

You might want to start like this:

The scene takes place on the Fulham Road, where there have been many beggars sleeping rough and trying to get help from the people working by the river



John: Is that you Simon?

Simon: Yes. Who are you?

John: It's John Blackmoor, I am working for the Bishop of London in Fulham Palace. What has happened to you?

Simon: I remember now, we used to be servants together at Lord Burghley's house in Hammersmith. Have you any food for me?

John: I hardly have enough for myself. There have been a lot of problems recently with the harvests and there is not enough wheat and barley being grown.

**YOU NEED TO FINISH THIS
CONVERSATION OFF**



Hotseating - Elizabeth and the blackmoores

Your task is to act out a conversation between Queen Elizabeth and one of her court advisers, Lord Burghley.

You need to discuss the following issues:

- 1) There have been many poor harvests recently
- 2) There has been a big increase in the number of beggars
- 3) One of the possible solutions to solving the problem is to send the blackmoores back to Africa
- 4) Negotiations need to be made with Casper van Senden

You might want to start like this:

The scene takes place in Hampton Court, the Royal Palace built by Elizabeth's father Henry VIII. Elizabeth is sitting on her throne, with a few courtiers and servants waiting on her. She is not in a very good mood.



Elizabeth: Please send for Lord Burghley

Burghley: Your majesty, I am here, how can I be of help?

Elizabeth: Burghley, I am worried about the harvests. There have been a lot of problems recently with the lack of rain and there is not enough wheat and barley being grown.

Burghley: I am aware of this your highness, and the result is that there are lots of beggars and vagabonds on the streets of our great cities.

**YOU NEED TO FINISH THIS
CONVERSATION OFF**

