

Step 2: The rise of Reform and the question of immigration

Document 4: video - [UK tightening border controls: Concern about increased immigration in the country](#)



1. Anticipation:

Can you guess why this woman is holding a sign that reads “Crowborough says NO!”?

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.....

.....

2. After watching the video:

What is the population opposed to?.....

.....

.....

Is the protest in this town an isolated event or does it reflect a wider movement?.....

.....

.....

What has Keir Starmer done about immigration and why?

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.....

Why do people living in Pakistan want to live in the UK?.....

.....

What are the expressions for “prendre de la vitesse » and “un débat tendu” ?.....

.....



In a speech given in January 2023, _____ pledged to “Stop the Boats”. **What do you know about (legal and illegal) immigration to the UK?**

Document 5: www.reformparty.uk/policies (visited on 9 Feb 2026)

1. Stop the Boats

- Illegal immigration is out of control because politicians choose not to enforce the law, and let foreign courts rob British citizens of a border.
- A Reform government will stop the boats by immediately leaving the ECHR¹, restoring full control of our borders, intercepting and detaining all illegal arrivals, and deporting them.
- There will be no loopholes, no delays, and no endless appeals.
- We will also end Britain being treated as a global welfare system. No more free housing. No more benefits. No more taxpayer-funded incentives for illegal migration. An end to NGOs facilitating illegal migration. Detention and deportation will be the only outcome.
- Britain is a welcoming country. But it must be a country with borders, laws, and consequences.

2. Secure and Defend Our Borders

- Border control is national security.
- A Reform government will establish a fully integrated border command, including a UK Deportation Command, with the legal authority, manpower, and technology to stop illegal entry by land, sea, and air.
- We will withdraw from or disapply every international treaty that prevents this country from being able to secure its borders.
- We will restore deterrence, enforce the law, and ensure that anyone who enters Britain illegally is removed swiftly and permanently.
- A nation that fails to control its borders is not a nation.

3. Deport Illegal Migrants [...]

- a) What sort of document is this?
- b) According to Reform UK leaders, what is the impact of immigration and what vision do they have of migrants?

¹ European Convention on Human Rights

Document 6

Two-thirds of UK voters wrongly think immigration is rising, poll finds

Alexandra Topping and Peter Walker, *The Guardian*, 10 January 2026

A large majority of UK voters believe immigration is increasing despite sharp falls in the number of people entering the UK, according to exclusive polling shared with the Guardian.

5 Voters also say they have no confidence in the government’s ability to control the UK’s borders, according to the poll by More in Common. The results will come as a blow to Keir Starmer’s administration, which has taken an increasingly hardline stance on immigration in recent months.

10 Net migration to the UK fell by more than two-thirds to a post-pandemic low in the year ending June 2025, but 67% of the people polled thought it had increased. Among Reform voters, four in five thought immigration had grown, and more than three in five (63%) believed it had “increased significantly”.

15 The home secretary, Shabana Mahmood, promised “the most substantial reform to the UK’s asylum system in a generation” in November, and proposed a series of hardline policies to make the UK less attractive to migrants and refugees.

Under new plans those with refugee status could wait 20 years to become British citizens, asylum claimants could have their assets confiscated, family reunions could be curbed, and refugees returned if conditions improved in their home countries.

20 But despite the measures, which some Labour MPs fiercely oppose, confidence in the government on immigration has plummeted. Three-quarters (74%) of voters said they had little or no confidence in the government on the issue, up from 70% in May last year. Only 18% of voters had confidence, down three percentage points. The biggest drop in confidence came from those who backed Labour in 2024, where confidence dropped by 17%.

25 “The Labour government is facing a growing credibility gap on migration ... That tells us that numbers alone are not enough,” said More in Common’s executive director, Luke Tryl. “Until that credibility gap closes, Labour’s migration migraine will persist.”

30 The highly visible issue of small boats remains critical to public perception of migration, he said. According to the polling, 79% of voters wanted the government’s focus to be on stopping the vessels, with only one in 10 believing that reducing legal net immigration should be its top priority.

35 In the year ending June 2025, 43,000 people arrived on small boats, up 38% on the previous year but fewer than the 46,000 peak in 2022. Those arriving on small boats make up only a tiny proportion of the overall number of people coming to the UK – less than 5% in 2025, according to Guardian analysis.

Chapter 4 : The Disenchanted United Kingdom

The polling revealed a persistent and “broad public cynicism” around migration, but a lag in perception could result in voter opinion changing in the coming months, said Marley Morris, from the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). “Labour have been doing a lot to emphasise a tough line on migration because they want to try to challenge that perception, but it’s quite ingrained,” he said.

In further disheartening news for the government, when given accurate migration figures fewer than one in five credit the government for the decline, with a similar number attributing the drop to the previous Conservative government.

Net migration to the UK peaked at a record 944,000 in the year to March 2023 but fell by more than two-thirds to 204,000 in the year to June 2025, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Visa applications to the UK also fell sharply in 2025. Monthly migration statistics published on Thursday showed skilled worker applications were down by 36% and health and care applications down by 51%. [...]

“Net migration is at its lowest level in half a decade, and has already fallen by more than two-thirds under this government after it was allowed to explode to nearly one million in recent years,” [Mike Tapp, Migration minister] said.

Kim Johnson, the Labour MP for Liverpool Riverside, said the polling revealed the “cost of mimicking Reform” – a rise in racism and a steep decline in work visas, which risked leaving the health and social care sectors in crisis.

“The government must present a positive alternative vision, one that supports the rights and dignity of those who moved to Britain to work and build homes and families,” she said. “Otherwise we will continue to see the impact of the divisive rhetoric, including at the ballot box, where such narratives are fuelling – not muting – the Reform vote.”

1) Understanding words and references

- a) What are “poll” (title), “net migration” (l.9) and “the home secretary” in the UK (l.13)?
- b) Say whether these words express an increase or a decrease: “sharp falls” (l.5), “be curbed” (l.19), “has plummeted” (l.20), “drop” (l.22;43)

2) Understanding the text

- a) What has been Starmer’s position concerning immigration (name some measures)?
- b) True or False, justify by quoting the text
 - i) A majority of people who vote for Reform UK believe immigration has skyrocketed.
 - ii) Net migration is on the rise.
 - iii) Fewer foreigners are coming to work in the UK.
 - iv) Kim Johnson supports the government’s decisions concerning immigration.
- c) What are the issues raised by Kim Johnson (l.52 – 58)?

Document 7

The Guardian view on Conservative immigration policy: the threat of mass expulsions is abhorrent [Editorial](#)

The Guardian, 23 October 2026

It is too early to declare Sir Keir Starmer’s “one in, one out” migration deal with France a failure, but nor can the government claim that it is working as intended. This week, the Guardian revealed that one of the first people deported under the treaty had found his way back to the UK via a small boat. On the same day, Home Office data revealed that
5 the number of people who had made the journey so far this year – 36,886 – had surpassed the total for 2024. The usual partisan recriminations followed. Opposition parties accuse Labour of failing to grip the problem; ministers say they are burdened by a long legacy of Conservative mismanagement. Both things can be true.

For all its deficiencies, Sir Keir’s deal with France recognises two facts that his Tory
10 and Reform UK opponents cannot accept. First, engagement with EU states is a sine qua non of functional migration policy. Second, without some legal mechanism for accepting refugees, desperate people will always gamble on the illegal ways.

Kemi Badenoch and Nigel Farage are too committed to vilification – casting France as the enemy and refugees as criminals – to engage with those propositions. They refuse to
15 acknowledge the humanity of people who put their lives at risk to enter Britain illegally. Worse, they have policies to undermine the position of millions of people who have settled in the country by legal means.

The target for both Reform UK and the Conservatives is indefinite leave to remain (ILR) – residency status that confers rights and access to state services short of the privileges
20 of citizenship. Mr Farage proposes scrapping ILR and imposing tougher conditions on those currently on track to qualify. The Tory policy is much more extreme, retroactively revoking ILR from anyone who has claimed any form of state benefit or fallen below an annual income threshold of £38,700. This would strip residency rights from hundreds of thousands, quite possibly millions, of people, thereby making them liable to be
25 deported.

The result would be removals on an epic scale. In terms of total number and as a proportion of overall population, the displacement would exceed the expulsion of Ugandan Asians by Idi Amin’s military dictatorship in 1972. The comparison is not one that many Conservative MPs welcome. Some appear to have been unaware until this
30 week that their own policy is that monstrous, discovering its content only when Katie Lam, a junior shadow Home Office minister, spelled it out in a newspaper interview last Sunday. But the ILR revocation regime was proposed in an opposition “draft bill” presented to parliament in May.

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35 Ms Lam’s interview clarified that the motive for removing so many apparently undesirable people, regardless of whether they call Britain their home, would be “cultural coherence”. There are fringe parties of the far right that are less explicit in their intention to engineer demographic homogeneity by means of mass expulsion. There is also, thankfully, no evidence that the British public supports such an ambition.

40 The political pressure to deal with illegal migration across the Channel is real and Labour will pay an electoral price if it fails on that score. But a policy of redefining millions of people’s neighbours, friends and family as illegal migrants in order to drive them out of the country should disqualify the party proposing it from debate in a civilised democracy.

Read the text and prepare questions for your classmates to check their understanding.

Document 8: UK immigration, emigration and net migration (www.gov.uk)

