

NAME:

Teacher Instructions – White Australia Policy

DO NOT GIVE TO STUDENTS

ACTIVITY 1 – DICTATION TEST

Below are two examples of the dictation test that was used as part of the White Australia policy. Read one of these passages to your students and have them try to write the passage down as you go. The passage should only be read once, to simulate the real conditions of the dictation test. Once you have read the passage, display the correct passage on the board so students can see how they went. It is very unlikely that anyone will not make any errors!

“Ice and snow cover the Poles, which are not farther from the sun than we are, but the sun’s rays reach them slantwise, and are stopped by such a thickness of air that not enough of them reaches the surface of the earth at the Poles to keep them warm.”

“The hairy adornment of the lion renders him more formidable in appearance. But the plain fact is that the tiger’s head and jaws are more solid, heavy and powerful than the lion’s. We can only tell the difference when examining the skeletons of the two animals with a skilled anatomist.”

Any misspelt words or grammatical errors meant the person could be refused entry to Australia.



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Students can then reflect on this activity using the following questions:

1. Were you able to pass the test after only hearing the passage read once?
2. What did you find difficult about this test?
3. Imagine you are a migrant whose first language is not English. What chance would you have of passing this test? Do you think this is fair? Explain why/why not.
4. Refer to [Source 1.4 \(page 5\)](#). What is happening in this cartoon? What comment is this cartoon making about the dictation test? What do the facial expressions of the characters reveal?

ACTIVITY 2 – CREATE YOUR OWN DICTATION TEST

Imagine you are an Australian Government official in charge of writing the passages for the dictation test. Remember, your goal is to keep out ‘undesirable migrants’. Create a fifty word passage that you think would be difficult for potential migrants to complete. Write it below.

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ACTIVITY 1 – DICTATION TEST

1. Were you able to pass the test after only hearing the passage read once?

Student answers will vary but in all likelihood they will not pass.

2. What did you find difficult about this test?

Students may talk about the difficulty of keeping up as the text is read out.

They may also discuss the difficulty of the words used as well as trying to get all punctuation correct.

3. Imagine you are a migrant whose first language is not English. What chance would you have of passing this test? Do you think this is fair? Explain why/why not.

Students will probably come to the conclusion that people who are forced to write the test in a language they don't know will not pass. They should also come to the conclusion that this isn't fair as it is excluding people based on a trivial test which can be given in a language that isn't even used in Australia.

4. Refer to [Source 1.4 \(page 5\)](#). What is happening in this cartoon? What comment is this cartoon making about the dictation test? What do the facial expressions of the characters reveal?

This cartoon shows a number of people sitting down and attempting the dictation test. There is an Immigration Officer at the front of the room reading the passage that the migrants must write out. The passage is made up of very difficult words to spell. This cartoon is implying that the dictation test is basically impossible to pass. The facial expressions of the characters show that they are confused and struggling with the test.

ACTIVITY 2 – CREATE YOUR OWN DICTATION TEST

Student responses will vary.