

Colonialism and migration

Possible answers and solutions

1. Summarise the passage. (*Comprehension*)

- Chanu and his wife Nazneen are sitting in the Azads' living room with the doctor and his wife.
- Chanu seems to enjoy being with the doctor, whereas Nazneen seems to feel uneasy and wants to leave.
- The doctor's daughter comes into the room and asks her parents for money to go to the pub.
- Dr Azad seems to be unwilling to give her money, so his wife does, and the girl leaves.
- An argument develops between Chanu, who considers the immigrant's life a tragic one, and Mrs Azad, who thinks integration is necessary.

2. "This is the tragedy of our lives. To be an immigrant is to live out a tragedy" (II.11–12). Analyse Chanu's view of the immigrant's life. (*Analysis*)

- Chanu makes his remark after the daughter has left the room to go to the pub; he has probably noticed the girl's appearance and Dr Azad's bad feelings about her ways.
- To him the girl becomes an example of the loss of one's cultural and religious origins; she is one of the children "who don't know what their identity is" (I.37).
- To Chanu the tragedy of the immigrant's life is "the struggle to assimilate and the need to preserve one's identity and heritage" (I.36); these two aspects conflict and cannot be resolved. This determines the whole life of the immigrant.
- Even financial and material success, such as Dr Azad enjoys, cannot make up for the tragedy, the loss of one's cultural roots.
- Even after being contradicted by Mrs Azad, Chanu seems to insist on his view: This tragedy is something highly individual; even if not every immigrant is aware of it all the time and to the same extent, it is there as a determining factor of his or her existence.

3. Explain Mrs Azad's refusal to accept Chanu's view. (*Analysis*)

- Mrs Azad is still very conscious of her cultural roots in Bangladesh, but she thinks that assimilation into the Western society in which one lives is an absolute necessity.
- She sees her own and her husband's progress from poverty to relative wealth as a success story.
- Her viewpoint is very pragmatic; she clearly appreciates the freedom Western society offers her as a woman: "But here I go out to work. I work with white girls and I'm just one of them" (II.52-53).
- She sees no perspective in keeping the women away from social life and from learning English (here she may be thinking of Nazneen).
- In her opinion, people like Chanu cannot only be blamed for self-pity but also stand in the way of successful integration; they are responsible for their own alienation (growing sense of feeling separated from society) and the racism which they have to face in society.

Task 1 asks you to write a summary and therefore clearly aims at the contents of the text (*Anforderungsbereich 1*).

Keeping your summary short and focusing on the main points is important, but it can be tricky: You might have to guess some of the information you need in a fictional text. However, leave out your own opinion and interpretation. You will be asked to do this later on.

Analyse means you are to describe and explain in detail. So **task 2** clearly aims at *Anforderungsbereich 2*.

What causes Chanu to make this remark in the first place? Also, at the end he still uses the word "tragedy". Why?

With **task 3** you are still in *Anforderungsbereich 2*.

Explain means to describe and define the causes.

4. America is often described as a 'melting pot'. Discuss the issues of racism and integration of Muslim immigrants into American society today.

(Evaluation: comment)

Your answer may take different forms, depending on what you want to focus on and what conclusion you want to draw. Here are some ideas:

On the one hand:

- The United States is a nation of immigrants, a melting pot; therefore Americans have many different ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds. This makes it easier for immigrants to integrate.
- The notion of the American dream, which means that even poor people can make it to the top in the USA, gives hope to new immigrants, who often come to the United States for economic reasons.

On the other hand:

- Because of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, American assistance to Israel, etc. there is a lot of political tension between the USA and Arabian Muslims.
- After 9/11 many Americans are afraid of Muslim terrorists; fear can lead to discrimination or racism.
- Integration in the USA means acceptance of the democratic principles and rights that are the foundation of the United States – some Muslim communities deny their own members such rights (e.g. discrimination against women).
- People within one ethnic group in the USA often stick together or form a separate community.

Task 4 aims at *Anforderungsbereich 3*.

Discuss means you have to give reasons for and against, in this case, the issues of racism and integration of Muslim immigrants into the American society. The text offers you two contradictory views in the examples of Chanu and Mrs Azad. If you think about them, you will find that neither of them is completely right or wrong.

It is a good idea to first collect aspects concerning racism, its causes and effects, and integration. What was said about the integration of Muslims in the USA in your class, especially after 9/11? A structure working along the lines of "on the one hand/on the other hand" may be helpful. Then try to support your view with evidence and arguments in such a way that you can make your point most effectively. Do not forget to write a proper conclusion.