

Racism and homophobia

Racism has existed throughout human history. It may be defined as the hatred of one person by another -- or the belief that another person is less than human -- because of skin colour, language, customs, place of birth or any factor that supposedly reveals the basic nature of that person. It has influenced wars, slavery, the formation of nations, and legal codes.

The most notorious example of racism by the West has been slavery. Jews are usually seen by anti-Semites as subhuman but also superhuman: cunning, skilled, and powerful. Blacks and others are seen by racists as merely subhuman, more like beasts than men. If the focus of anti-Semitism is evil, the focus of racism is inferiority.

In some ways, homophobia could be treated as another kind of racism. Homophobia is the hatred of homosexuals sometimes leading to acts of violence and expressions of hostility. Homophobia is not confined to any one segment of society, and can be found in people from all walks of life. Prejudiced views directed at homosexuals often stem from the perception that homosexual activity is immoral. Homophobia makes some people think that they are superior to homosexuals.

Internet is widely used to spread racist ideas. The advancement of digital communication technologies has, however, added a new dimension to this problem by providing individuals and organisations with modern and powerful means to propagate racism and xenophobia. As the Internet ignores territories and has no boundaries, states cannot control it effectively by unilateral national regulation: so what is needed is increased international co-operation.

Also, societies can take steps to avoid racism. Although it is comforting that trade unions have accepted the existence of racism, it is time for trade unions and universities to undertake impact assessments on their respective policies and procedures. It is only through critical self-reflection and a commitment from both university leadership and trade unions to work together that we can have changes that will enable us to develop equal treatment for staff and students.

1. Comprehension exercises (2 points)

1.a. Racism (0.5 points)

- a. means having different skin colours.
- b. implies considering somebody as an inferior individual.**
- c. is believed to have influenced languages and customs in the West.

1.b. According to the text (0.5 points)

- a. Internet works as a vehicle spreading racists theories.**
- b. National regulations can control racism successfully with their legal rules.
- c. Trade unions must work together with students to change racism in our universities.

1.c. Homophobia grows in specific groups of people.

(Answer 'True' or 'False' AND write the sentence supporting this idea) (0.5 points)

- FALSE - Homophobia is not confined to any one segment of society, and can be found in people from all walks of life.

1.d. Anti-Semitism and racism share the same central point.

(Answer 'True' or 'False' AND write the sentence supporting this idea) (0.5 points)

- FALSE - If the focus of anti-Semitism is evil, the focus of racism is inferiority.

2. Do the following grammar exercises according to the instructions given (2 points)

2.a. Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first one. (0.5 points)

- You should invite us and you shouldn't invite them.

- You had **better invite us than them**.

2.b. Turn the two sentences into a clause containing 'providing'. (0.5 points)

- I don't mind lending you my book but give it back to me before Monday.

- **I don't mind lending you my book providing you give it back to me before Monday.**

2.c. Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first one (0.5 points)

- Paul didn't let me go with them.

- Paul told **me not to go with them**.

2.d. Write the appropriate verb form of the verb in brackets (0.5 points)

- After a long time she gave up **smoking**.

3. Identify ONLY FOUR words from their definitions (1 point)

- the amount, value, quality or importance of something, or the judgment or decision that is made. (**assessment**)

- real or imagined lines that mark the edge or limit of something. (**boundaries**)

- to do or begin to do something, especially something that will take a long time or be difficult. (**to undertake**)

- go out of, have roots in, originate in. (**stem**)

- describes people who are clever at planning something so that they get what they want. (**cunning**)

- an extremely strong feeling of dislike. (**hatred**)

4. Write a summary of the text of about 30 – 45 words using your own words (2 points)

5. Write a composition of about 100 – 150 words on ONLY ONE of the following topics (3 points)

5.a. What's your opinion about racism?

5.b. Things you would do if you were rich.