

1) Racism

In the nineteen fifties, Britain was a nation in need of men. A decade after the second world war, it was a country with lots of children, but not enough men to work in the mines, the factories and the public services.

Hundreds of thousands of young men had been killed during the war; who could take their place? There was an easy answer; men from the colonies! Britain was still the capital of an Empire that stretched to the four corners of the earth. In the developing countries of the Commonwealth, there were millions of young men, just looking for work. When the British authorities offered them the chance to come to Britain and work, thousands wanted to come.

. While a few came from Africa, the largest contingent of Black immigrants came from Jamaica and the other islands that make up the West Indies.

By 1960, "Afro-Caribbeans" and their families had settled in large numbers in several of Britain's cities — usually in the poorest and most unattractive parts. At the time however, the conditions they lived in in Britain were not too bad, and often better than those they had enjoyed in the West Indies. There were jobs, so there was money; there were schools for the children. . In many cases, black workers took the jobs that white workers did not want — bus conductors , railway porters, and other jobs that were not too well paid.

The Afro-Caribbean community lived quietly beside the White community in cities like London and Wolverhampton, and there was no tension, because generally speaking there were enough jobs for everyone

Around the year 1967, things began to change. Inspired by the Civil Rights movement in America, Britain's Blacks began to look for a new identity and a better status for their community. But at the same time, right-wing nationalist movements were starting to develop in some sectors of white society. Racial tension began to grow in some working class districts of London and other cities. Once there had been jobs for all, but now a new problem was appearing: unemployment . More and more people, both Blacks and Whites, began finding themselves in competition for a falling number of jobs. Profiting from people's misfortune, new racist political parties came into existence. The National Front and the British National Party began recruiting young people, and encouraging racism. Here and there, gangs of skinheads began to write racist graffiti in public places; there were occasional incidents between black youths and skin-heads, but generally speaking, the overt racism of the National Front did not appeal to people in Britain. In most parts of Britain, that is still true today. Generally speaking, Britain is a very tolerant society; but even in a very tolerant society, there are a few misguided individuals and groups who continue to judge people by the colour of their skin

3) Digital life

Today's grandparents are joining their grandchildren on social media, but the different generations' online habits couldn't be more different. The over-55s are joining Facebook in increasing numbers, meaning that they will soon be the site's second biggest user group, with 3.5 million users aged 55–64 and 2.9 million over-65s.

Sheila, aged 59, says, 'I joined to see what my grandchildren are doing, as my daughter posts videos and photos of them. It's a much better way to see what they're doing than waiting for letters and photos in the post. That's how we did it when I was a child, but I think I'm lucky I get to see so much more of their lives than my grandparents did.'

Ironically, Sheila's grandchildren are less likely to use Facebook themselves. Children under 17 are leaving the site – only 2.2 million users are under 17 – but they're not going far from their smartphones. Chloe, aged 15, even sleeps with her phone. 'It's my alarm clock so I have to,' she says. 'I look at it before I go to sleep and as soon as I wake up.'

Unlike her grandmother's generation, Chloe's age group is spending so much time on their phones at home that they are missing out on spending time with their friends in real life. Sheila, on the other hand, has made contact with old friends from school she hasn't heard from in forty years. 'We use Facebook to arrange to meet all over the country,' she says. 'It's changed my social life completely.'

Teenagers might have their parents to thank for their smartphone and social media addiction as their parents were the early adopters of the smartphone. Peter, 38 and father of two teenagers, reports that he used to be on his phone or laptop constantly. 'I was always connected and I felt like I was always working,' he says. 'How could I tell my kids to get off their phones if I was always in front of a screen myself?' So, in the evenings and at weekends, he takes his SIM card out of his smartphone and puts it into an old-style mobile phone that can only make calls and send text messages. 'I'm not completely cut off from the world in case of emergencies, but the important thing is I'm setting a better example to my kids and spending more quality time with them.'

Is it only a matter of time until the generation above and below Peter catches up with the new trend for a less digital life?

4) The sharing economy

If we look around us at the things we have purchased at some point in our lives, we would no doubt notice that not everything we own is being put to good use: the thick woollen coat which we thought looked trendy despite the fact that we live in a tropical country, the smartphone that got put away when we bought ourselves the newest model, the car that only gets used at the weekends, or even the guest room in our house that somehow got turned into a storeroom.

Those underutilised items may seem useless to some, but could be an asset to others. With the advent of the internet, online communities have figured out a way to generate profit from the sharing of those underused assets. Using websites and social media groups that facilitate the buying and selling of second-hand goods, it is now easier than ever for peer-to-peer sharing activities to take place. And this is known as the sharing economy.

These democratised online platforms are providing a chance for people to make a quick buck or two. To give an example, busy parents previously might not have bothered with setting up a stall at the local market or car boot sale to sell their children's old equipment, but with online marketplaces, parents are now able to sell on those hardly worn baby clothes that their children have outgrown and the expensive pushchairs and baby equipment they have invested in, so as to put some cash back into their pockets.

Businesses have also caught on to the profitability of the sharing economy and are seeking to gain from making use of those underutilised resources. A business model that has rapidly risen in popularity sees companies providing an online platform that puts customers in contact with those who can provide a particular product or service. Companies like Airbnb act as a middleman for people to cash in on their unused rooms and houses and let them out as lucrative accommodation. Another example is Uber, which encourages people to use their own personal cars as taxis to make some extra cash in their free time.

This move towards a sharing economy is not without criticisms. Unlike businesses, unregulated individuals do not have to follow certain regulations and this can lead to poorer and inconsistent quality of goods and services and a higher risk of fraud. Nevertheless, in the consumerist society we live in today, the increased opportunities to sell on our unwanted and underused goods can lead to a lesser impact on our environment.

5) The hardest language

People often ask which is the most difficult language to learn, and it is not easy to answer because there are many factors to take into consideration. Firstly, in a first language the differences are unimportant as people learn their mother tongue naturally, so the question of how hard a language is to learn is only relevant when learning a second language.

A native speaker of Spanish, for example, will find Portuguese much easier to learn than a native speaker of Chinese, for example, because Portuguese is very similar to Spanish, while Chinese is very different, so first language can affect learning a second language. The greater the differences between the second language and our first, the harder it will be for most people to learn. Many people answer that Chinese is the hardest language to learn, possibly influenced by the thought of learning the Chinese writing system, and the pronunciation of Chinese does appear to be very difficult for many foreign learners. However, for Japanese speakers, who already use Chinese characters in their own language, learning writing will be less difficult than for speakers of languages using the Roman alphabet.

Some people seem to learn languages readily, while others find it very difficult. Teachers and the circumstances in which the language is learned also play an important role, as well as each learner's motivation for learning. If people learn a language because they need to use it professionally, they often learn it faster than people studying a language that has no direct use in their day to day life.

Apparently, British diplomats and other embassy staff have found that the second hardest language is Japanese, which will probably come as no surprise to many, but the language that they have found to be the most problematic is Hungarian, which has 35 cases (forms of a nouns according to whether it is subject, object, genitive, etc). This does not mean that Hungarian is the hardest language to learn for everyone, but it causes British diplomatic personnel, who are generally used to learning languages, the most difficulty. However, Tabassaran, a Caucasian language has 48 cases, so it might cause more difficulty if British diplomats had to learn it.

Different cultures and individuals from those cultures will find different languages more difficult. In the case of Hungarian for British learners, it is not a question of the writing system, which uses a similar alphabet, but the grammatical complexity, though native speakers of related languages may find it easier, while struggling with languages that the British find relatively easy.

No language is easy to learn well, though languages which are related to our first language are easier. Learning a completely different writing system is a huge challenge, but that does not necessarily make a language more difficult than another. In the end, it is impossible to say that there is one language that is the most difficult language in the world.