

1. What do you learn about the narrator: occupation, country of origin and sex?
Complete the chart and put a question mark (?) if the information isn't given. Justify with a quotation.

Occupation	Country of origin	Sex
(l.)	(l.)	(l.)

2. In what country does the scene take place? Justify with a quotation.

3. (lines 1-2) *'I understand this is the place at which I should present myself for a position in that particular profession.'*

- a. In the passage "*the place*" is not described in details. What could it refer to?

- b. Explain what the narrator has come there for.

4. (line 7) *'I handed her the two letters of recommendation ...'*

Who does the underlined pronoun refer to? What is her job in your opinion?

5. Between lines 7 and 17, find one synonym for each of the following words. Indicate the line:

a. Look[ing] (l.3) _____(l.)

b. Smil[ing] (l.13) _____(l.)

c. Position (l.1) _____(l.)

6. What does the narrator expect the other character to do with the letters?

7. What does the narrator feel these letters prove?

8. Show that the interview does not happen as the narrator expected.

9. Does the narrator get what she wants? Why?

Name: Form:

1. What do you learn about the narrator : occupation, country of origin and sex. Complete the chart and put a question mark (?) if the information isn't given. Justify with a quotation.

5

Occupation	Country of origin	Sex
Teacher 0,5	Jamaica 0,5	? 0,5
(l. 1) "I am a teacher" 0,5	(l. 14) "I am from Jamaica" 0,5	(l.) ?

2. In what country does the scene take place ? Justify with a quotation.

The scene takes place in England: "here in England" (l. 29) 0,5

3. (lines 1-2) 'I understand this is the place at which I should present myself for a position in that particular profession.'

- d. In the passage 'the place' is not described in details. What could it refer to ?

It could refer to a job center (the service where unemployed go to look for a job), or to the admissions office of a municipality / region. 2

- c. Explain what the narrator has come there for.

She has come to apply for a position as a teacher. 2

4. (line 7) ' I handed her the two letters of recommendation ...'

Who does the underlined pronoun refer to? What is her job in your opinion?

It refers to the other character in the passage, a woman who works at the job center.

Maybe she is in charge of selecting teachers, or maybe she is only a clerk. 2

5. Between lines 7 and 17, find one synonym for each of the following words. Indicate the line:

a. Look[ing] (l.3) glancing (l. 10) 1

b. Smil[ing] (l.13) grinning (l. 15) 1

c. Position (l.1) post (l. 17) 1

25

6. What does the narrator expect the other character to do with the letters?

She expects her to read them. 1

7. What does the narrator feel these letters prove ?

She feels they prove that she has enough experience / is qualified to teach. 1

30

8. Show that the interview does not happen as the narrator expected.

The narrator sees confusion in the woman (l. 3). She does not believe the narrator really is a teacher (l. 5-6). She does not read the letters (l. 9). She laughs at the letters (l. 11). 3

9. Does the narrator get what she wants? Why?

No, she does not get what she wants, a teacher's job (l. 24 "you can't teach here"). She is turned down because she is from Jamaica (l. 14). Maybe the woman thinks Jamaican schools have low standards / a low level, or maybe the narrator is black and this is the reason why she is refused. In any case, she is a victim of discrimination. 3

35

Name:
Form:

‘I am a teacher and I understand this is the place at which I should present myself for a position in that particular profession.’ Through the woman's smile I detected a little confusion. Too well bred to say ‘What?’ she looked a quizzical eye on me, which shouted the word just as audibly. I repeated myself clearly but before I had completed the statement the woman asked of me sweetly, ‘Did you say you are a teacher?’

‘I am,’ I said. I handed her the two letters of recommendation which I had taken from my bag in anticipation. She politely held out her slim hand, took them, then indicated for me to sit. However, instead of studying the letters she merely held them in her hand without even glancing at their contents.

‘What are these?’ she asked with a little laugh ruffling up the words.

‘These are my letters of recommendation. One you will see is from the headmaster at –’

Interrupting me, her lips relaxed for just a moment before taking up a smile once more, ‘Where are you from?’ she asked.

‘I am from Jamaica,’ I told her.

She was silent, we both grinning on each other in a genteel way. I thought to bring her attention back to the letters. ‘One of the letters I have given you is from my last post. Written by the headmaster himself. You will see that–’

But once more she interrupted me: ‘Where?’

I wondered if it would be impolite to tell this beguiling woman to read the letter in her hand so all her questions might be answered. I concluded it would. ‘At Half Way Tree Parish School,’ I told her.

‘Where’s that?’

‘In Kingston, Jamaica.’

‘Well , I’m afraid you can’t teach here,’ and passed the unopened letters back to me.

‘If you would read the letters,’ I said, ‘one will tell you about the three years of training as a teacher I received in Jamaica while the other letter is concerned with the position I held as a teacher at–’

She did not let me finish. ‘The letters don’t matter,’ she told me. ‘You can’t teach in this country. You’re not qualified to teach here in England.’

Small Island, Andrea Levy, 2004
(abridged and adapted)