

ProfilSup

**LIRE
ET COMPRENDRE
LA PRESSE
ANGLO-SAXONNE**

*Tous les outils pour réussir
avec méthode les épreuves écrites
et orales des concours*

Andrew Milne



1. ‘Absolute carnage’: EU hauliers reject UK jobs over Brexit rules

The Guardian, by Lisa O’Carroll, 20th January 2021

A British freight company director with more than over 20 years’ experience has told how EU hauliers and transport companies are turning their backs on UK business because they are being asked to provide tens of thousands of pounds in guarantees to cover VAT or potential tariffs on arrival in Britain.

The financial guarantee requirement did not exist before Brexit and EU transport companies who previously provided a shipping service for small and medium-sized firms have decided they do not want the extra financial burden, according to Colin Jeffries, who runs Key Cargo International in Manchester.

“We’ve got people that are trying to bring textiles in from Italy but we are being told there is no haulage availability on that. Nobody’s willing to touch anything because of these guarantees. In Poland, we’re trying to get masks in for PPE in the workplace and we can’t get anyone to bring them over.”

Jeffries, who has been in the freight forwarding business for 24 years, said his business nearly came to a standstill last week because of the sudden trade barriers erected on 1 January.

He said it was “absolute carnage out there” trying to get EU hauliers to come to Britain, because they underestimated the gravity of the financial guarantees, known as T1s, that now apply to goods being exported to the UK.

A truck with a £200,000 cargo would need cash or a T1 financial guarantee document for £40,000 in VAT alone, he said, a significant burden for transport companies with multiple trucks going to the UK.

“Many agents who are completing T1s have run out of guarantee funds, which they need to have in place,” he added.

He spoke as data showed that an increasing number of freight groups rejected contracts to move goods from France to Britain in the second week of January.

Transporeon, a German software company that works with 100,000 logistics service providers, said freight forwarders had rejected jobs to move goods from Germany, Italy and Poland into Britain.

In the second week of January the rejection rate for transport to the UK was up 168% on the third quarter of 2020 and had doubled in the first calendar week of the year.

Jeffries said one of the problems was how complicated exporting to the UK had become.

Text adapted and shortened.

Vocabulary

Here is the essential vocabulary to understand the document above. The words are in the order that they are to be found in the text.

Freight	Cargaison
Freight company	Compagnie de fret
Over 20 years	Plus de 20 ans
Transport company	Compagnie de transport
To turn their backs on	Tourner le dos à
Business	Entreprise/affaires
To provide	Fournir
Tens of thousands	Des dizaines de milliers
To cover	Couvrir
VAT	TVA
On arrival	À l'arrivée
Shipping service	Service de livraison
Small and medium sized firms	Petites et moyennes entreprises
Burden	Fardeau
To run	Gérer
Haulage	Transport
Availability	Disponibilité
Nobody	Personne
To be willing	Être prêt
To touch	Toucher
PPE (Personal Protection Equipment)	Equipment de protection individuelle (EPI)
Workplace	Lieu de travail
To bring over	Amener/Apporter/Faire venir
Standstill	Arrêt
Sudden	Soudain
Trade barriers	Barrières douanières
Carnage	Carnage
To underestimate	Sous-estimer
Gravity	Gravité
To be known as	Être connu comme
To apply to	S'appliquer à
Goods	Marchandises/Biens

To export	Exporter
Truck	Camion
Cash	Espèces/Liquide
Alone	Seul
Funds	Fonds
To have in place	Mettre en place
Increasing	En augmentation
To reject	Rejeter
Software company	Entreprise de logiciels
Service provider	Fournisseur de services
Rate	Taux
Quarter	Trimestre
To double	Doubler
Panoply	Panoplie
Paperwork	Formalités/Paperasse
Customs	Douanes
To certify	Certifier
Treatment	Traitement
To hit out at	Critiquer
Refrain	Refrain (répétition sans cesse)
To issue	Émettre
Inside knowledge	Connaissance intime (Interne/d’initié)
Insight	Perspicacité
To gain access	Accéder à
To go live	Déployer/Mettre en ligne

Keys to understanding the Text

- Read through the text and note down the main ideas, as well as any divisions or sections that you can see in the article.
- Pick out the key information and note down the names of the main protagonists as well as any figures that may be mentioned.
- Think of a line of attack that could be used to deal with the article and be prepared to formulate it into a question, so that this is what you will be dealing with.
- Structure is the most important thing in any presentation.
- What is the basic plan that you will use?
- For any of the commentaries that you may have to do in official oral examinations the following should be done to start off:
 - Have a catchy opening that does not begin with ‘This article is about...’. You should use something that shows how unique you are and helps you stand out from the other candidates. That could be a historical reference or a quote or something that is related to the document, but it should not come from the article directly.

- Make sure that you provide quick and short details related to the origin of the document and the type of newspaper that it is (political stance and whether or not the article is informative, descriptive, accusatory, or defensive...).
- Make a short summary of the article detailing the main points and citing certain figures, statistics, numbers, and people directly from the text (provide paragraph or line numbers to back up your statements).
- Do not *overly* quote from the article.
- Make sure that you understand that a commentary is literally a comment on certain things, with words being defined and extensive details being provided related to the subject matter. For example, here for this article, you will need to provide background information as to what Brexit is and when it took place. Showing precision is important.
- You should also go into detail as to what has happened since the article was published to show that you are up to date with recent developments and that there is an interest in current affairs and the news generally speaking.
- Make sure that there is a conclusion that is announced, and that key vocabulary (linking words and phrases) are used to create some sense of structure in what is being said.
- Keep an eye on the time that you need to speak for and that you do not go very much under this or indeed over it.
- Do not attempt to write out entirely what is going to be said since the preparation time will go very quickly, and it is a waste. Nobody would be able to write enough for the full length of the oral and candidates that do this, quickly run out of things to say.
- It is not only about language but about civilisation knowledge also. Candidates should aim to be good at both, rather than concentrating just on one.

Background

It would be essential in any understanding of this document to know when and how Brexit took place in the UK. It would also be of the utmost importance to note details of how referendums might occur and have historically occurred in the UK.

Since 31st January 2020, Brexit has come into effect and is now part of law in the British Parliament. However, it was not until 1st January 2021 that it was finalised. Brexit is a *portmanteau* word stemming from ‘British’ and ‘Exit’ and is the word applied to the British withdrawal from the European Union.

Britain joined the European Economic Community (EEC), otherwise called the Common Market at that time by the British, on 1st January 1973. However, it took a number of years for this to become possible, beginning talks in 1961.

The official attempts to join and Britain's applications in 1963 and 1967, however, were vetoed by Charles de Gaulle, President of France. Britain was suffering from the economic consequences of World War II and was regularly referred to during the 1960s and 1970s as 'the sick man of Europe'. This was because the Wilson government (1974-1976) and the Callaghan government (1976-1979) were plagued with industrial action and poor economic performance at this time. The culmination of this was in the period 1978-1979, just prior to the election of Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister of the UK (1979), when the *Winter of Discontent* occurred. Inflation was rampant and certain sectors were asking for pay rises with two figure percentages that had never been seen to try to keep in line with that inflation. It was called the *Winter of Discontent* because it was also the coldest winter for decades, meaning that people had even more difficulty in such economic hardship to get along and make ends meet. President De Gaulle was reluctant to allow such an economically poor country to enter the EEC. But it was not the only reason. He also believed that Britain would be a 'Trojan Horse' and allow the USA to enter the EEC and take control of it, since Britain would always side with its Atlantic cousins. It was also the fact that Britain still had close ties through the Commonwealth with the countries of its former Empire. Finally, the idea that De Gaulle had was that the EEC would be mainly governed by both France and German and the UK would be too much of a rival perhaps at some later stage. There were also tensions over the differing farming methods of both France and the UK. France had and still has (for the moment) small, somewhat unprofitable farms, but a huge number of rural people that were dependant on them. This is currently changing, and we can see a growing number of super-farms of a huge size. Britain had invested heavily in farming after World War II, and had, as a result, a cheap food policy that was effective and efficient. It would compete rather too much with France on this matter. But when De Gaulle resigned in 1969 as President, the way was left clear for Britain to apply again and this time it was accepted, enabling membership of the EEC in 1973.

It is surprising perhaps that the UK has only had historically 3 national referendums in the country. Two of those have been related to the European membership of the EEC and later the EU. The first time a national referendum was held in the UK was just 2 years after the country had joined the EEC. In 1975 it was the European Communities membership referendum that was held, and the result was an overriding 'Yes' vote to remain part of the EEC (67.23% for and 32.77% against). The second referendum to be held was to ask the British people if they wished to change the First-Past-the-Post voting system that they have (2011). They voted not to change it, meaning that there is still only one round in every election, rather than two, as in France, for

example. It was rejected by 67.9% of the voters, although only 42% of those eligible to vote actually did at the time.

The third referendum that took place, and the last one, was in 2016. It too concerned the membership of the European Union, although the wording of the question was technically somewhat different. The question in 2016 concerned either Leaving or Remaining in the EU. The Leavers won by 51.89% of the vote and the Remainers were defeated (48.11%). All other referendums that have taken place in the UK have only been regional ones, and not national.

Labour Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Clement Attlee stated with regard to referendums in 1945: *“I could not consent to the introduction into our national life of a device so alien to all our traditions as the referendum which has only too often been the instrument of Nazism and fascism”*. Later Margaret Thatcher, Conservative Prime minister, noted that they were, in her opinion: *“splendid weapon for demagogues and dictators”*. This is perhaps because referendums ask a single question, with a binary, ‘yes’ and ‘no’ answer and nothing can be reduced to such a simple formula. The question also, depending on how it is worded, may also have an influence on the outcome. Hitler used referendums regularly from 1933 (in which Germans voted to leave the League of Nations) onwards to provide legitimacy from the people in his actions. In 1936, for example, Germans were asked if they approved of the occupation of the Rhineland. The vote was rigged with a 99% voter turnout and 98.8% in favour of that occupation. It is not surprising, therefore, in the aftermath of World War II, British politicians were reluctant to resort to the use of referendums, despite the belief that they might be also democratic methods of empowerment.

Referendums in the UK are, however, not legally binding in Parliament. There exists no such official legislation governing referendums, therefore. But it is rather Parliament that retains sovereignty and that decides. Parliament had already decided that the same question could not be asked twice since it would invalidate any previous formulation of that question if it were to use the same words. It is also not a legal requirement for the government in power, as a consequence, to accept the decision of the referendum vote outcome and implement any legislation as a result. However, there is a moral requirement, perhaps, that Parliament should apply what the people have voted for. However, in the future, there is no government that can forbid any government later at some stage from revoking that law passed as a result of a referendum. Any future parliament remains sovereign and can decide what it wishes to do.

Further Ideas

Recent events that have taken place are also to be taken into consideration.

- Brexit and Covid-19 have both had an effect on the British economy. Many people working in certain sectors such as butchers and also lorry drivers, to name but two examples were mostly foreign workers, since those jobs were hard and were badly paid, on the whole. When Brexit came into effect, those people left the United Kingdom since it became difficult on an administrative level to get the necessary papers sorted out to stay in the United Kingdom.
- This was also heightened by difficulties experienced due to Covid-19 and restrictions on travel.
- Since 2020 the United Kingdom has suffered from a lack of lorry drivers (100,000 vacancies for jobs were available in 2021). This could be said of most countries in the world, since lorry drivers have left their professions due to Covid-19. France has a need of some 50,000 lorry drivers, for example at the present time. Brexit heightened that problem and has exacerbated it.
- The British government made 300 short-term visas available to deliver petrol in the United Kingdom. Only 127 applications were made for those jobs. The government had originally announced that they would allow 5,000 immediate short-term visas. 200 army personnel members were brought in to drive the tankers and deliver petrol.
- By the start of October 2021, there was a cap on how much petrol could be bought by an individual: £30 maximum.
- There are 8,000 filling stations in the United Kingdom. 20% of the petrol stations in London, for example were completely out of petrol.
- Therefore, there are difficulties that exist with deliveries in the United Kingdom of basic necessities (food, for example, and also petrol, notably).
- 80% of butchers came from other countries outside of the United Kingdom, for example. At the present time, this means that even if the UK does have enough farm animals to provide the British with food, they do not have the necessary skilled people to deal with them at abattoirs. Farmers are currently culling animals that would have been destined for the sale of meat and burying them because they cannot deal with them. A backlog is growing. The same can be said of eggs that are used to produce chickens rather than being eaten directly. There are not enough people to deal with the chickens and so the eggs are being destroyed.
- Pigs and Poultry are the worst hit sectors since they grow much more quickly than other sectors of meat production (such as lamb and beef, for example). However, other meat sectors are also worried that if the situation is not solved, they too will have the same problem and the animals will be culled.

- The British government has provided the possibility of temporarily employing those migrants that work in those sectors so that the British may be provided with meat products, but also that the animals are not simple culled.
- Temporary visas are not a long-term solution since it takes time to train butchers, and this will not be done before the temporary visas (until Christmas 2021) run out.
- The reason why those migrant workers left is a culmination of Covid-19 and Brexit, but also other issues that date from 2012 with the Hostile Environment Policy implemented systemically by the then-Home Secretary, Theresa May, who was later to become Prime Minister (2016-2019).
 - The Hostile Environment Policy was to make it very difficult for non-authorised migrants to be in the country. All institutions, banks, schools, administrative services, landlords or employers had the obligation to ensure that people had the right to be in the country by showing a visa, for example. If they were not able to, then they were to be deported. This inevitably led to problems in a country in which there are absolutely no identity papers. It became difficult for even British people to prove that they were indeed British or had the right to be in the country. Fines were given to employers who gave jobs to people without the necessary paperwork, and this contributed to a climate of fear in the country. The Windrush Scandal was the disastrous consequence of some Caribbean settlers in the UK being told to leave the country when, in fact, they had arrived in 1948 on board the Windrush Ship. The government had destroyed the papers proving that they had the right to be in the country. The decision to destroy those documents was decided upon by the Labour government in 2009, but the Conservative-Lib Dem coalition government destroyed them in 2010. With no registry slips available; hundreds of people that were in fact British were deported from the United Kingdom. Only a meagre £360,000 had been paid out in compensation between 2018 and 2020 to nearly 700 people. That figure has now risen under public pressure on the British government to £36 million. But figures of estimated compensation stand at £200 million to £500 million, at least. People lost their jobs, housing, health access and were deported from a country that they came to live in from sometimes their infancy, only ever having been brought up in the UK.
- The British government refuses to recognise that the consequences are exacerbated by Brexit and only refers to Covid-19 as the cause.
- In an opinion poll from mid-October 2021 and run by the *Daily Mail* newspaper, which contributed extensively to the heightening of the question of sovereignty, anti-immigration tabloid headlines, and the