

Being black in the UK

by Bakita Kasadha



Being Black in the UK?

It's having more than one place to call home
where are you really from, though

Not having to remember elders' names
They're all aunties and uncles anyway

My barnet is no political statement
Even if it's rare, you still can't touch my hair

More role models on screens than ever before
embraced when we're winning

My identity is a source of pride
We find belonging in each other
our spice, styles and moves shape the culture

Commented [1]: Meaning: Black people have many cultural reference. Whether through mixed heritage, being children of migrants of migrants ourselves. We have claim to a rich culture and often call more than one place home.

However, our skin can make us stand out. So when we say we're from in the UK, we may often be asked to share our family heritage in a way that strips us from belonging to the UK.

Commented [2]: Meaning: in various African cultures it's common to call older people uncle/auntie as a sign of respect. Across Black communities more broadly it is very rare to call someone from an older generation by their first name. If we are not saying 'uncle' or 'auntie', then we may refer to them as Mrs/Mr or even mum or dad as a sign of respect.

Commented [3]: Meaning: Historically, afro hair has been politicised and stigmatised (e.g. in the workplace and at schools). Since the 'natural hair movement', increasing number of Black women are wearing their hair naturally. This is often seen as a statement in a way that is not true for any other ethnic group. It's just the way our hair grows from our heads!

Sometimes, there is also a fascination with Black people's hair which can result in our physical space and boundaries not being respected.

Commented [4]: Meaning: a nod to more Black people being on TV and that we're seen in a wider range of fictional roles.

However, there is still a tension between being rejected when we lose and but being embraced when we win (e.g. Euro final reaction to missed penalties, but it also links to day-to-day events in the workplace)

Commented [BK5]: Meaning: There is a strong sense of community across and within different Black communities.

Commented [BK6]: Meaning: Celebrating and acknowledging the contribution of Black culture(s) to British culture.

These contributions are historical and ongoing, making the UK what it is today (e.g., from Caribbean nurses working in the NHS; African and Caribbean fighters in the world wars; Black researches; Jamaican cultural influences on language and food, Black British sports people etc.)

It also has double meaning:

- 'spice' refers to food as well as essence and personality
- moves refers to movement as well as 'making move' and progress (may only be picked up by Black Brits)