

Brain drain



Speaking

Discuss these questions.

- Do many people from Spain go abroad to find work?
- Do you know anybody who works abroad? If so, why did they go abroad to work?
- Do many people emigrate to Spain to find work? If so, where do they come from? What kind of work do they usually do?

Reading

- 1 Read the entry in an online encyclopedia. Choose the best ending, 1, 2 or 3, to complete the summary.
The Brain drain is ...
- 1 a historical phenomenon.
 - 2 affects a lot of countries.
 - 3 a European problem.

Brain drain

- A** Hundreds of thousands of highly qualified professionals leave their home countries every year in search of work. The countries that educated them cannot offer them the job opportunities they want so the young brains of the country leave to build their futures abroad. This phenomenon is called the “Brain Drain”. The term was first used to talk about British scientists who emigrated to the US in the 1960s. Many of these scientists found highly-paid jobs in prestigious universities and the UK lost many talented young scientists.
- B** The phenomenon is still common today. Young graduates leave their homes in Africa, South East Asia or Latin America and travel North. Most of them go to the UK, the US and the richer countries of Northern Europe. But the movement is not only from the South to the North. Because of high youth unemployment in many European countries young people are leaving the EU and moving South. Young graduates from Greece are leaving for Australia, many young professionals from Portugal are looking for job opportunities in Brazil.
- C** Of course, many immigrants, highly qualified or not, send part of their salaries to their families and in this way invest in the economy of their home country. In some cases the Brain Drain is reversed and can even have a positive effect. Some of these immigrants will return home once they feel more financially secure. They will use their experience and expertise to develop services and industries in their home countries.

- 2 Read the entry again and match the topics 1–6 to the paragraph A, B or C where they appear.
- 1 A definition of ‘brain drain’.
 - 2 The positive aspects of the brain drain.
 - 3 An explanation of its history.
 - 4 Information about where they come from.
 - 5 The negative aspects of the brain drain.
 - 6 Information about where people move to.
- 3 Give your personal opinion and the opinion given in the entry. Is the brain drain phenomenon a) mainly positive? b) mainly negative? c) both positive and negative in equal parts?
- 4 Match the words from the entry in the box to the definitions 1–6.

emigrate - immigrant - investment - training - expertise – salaries

- 1 a person who comes to live in a country from another country
 - 2 to leave your country to live in another country
 - 3 special skill or knowledge that you get from experience, training or study
 - 4 the process of teaching or learning a particular job or activity
 - 5 the money you spend to improve something
 - 6 money you get for doing your job
- 5 Discuss the question below.
Use the words in exercise 4 in your answer.
- Does the brain drain affect Spain? If yes, in what way?

KEY

2

1 A 2 C 3 A 4 B 5 C 6 B

3

opinion given in text: c

4

emigrate2 immigrant1 investment5 training4 expertise3 salaries6