

Lesson 4

READ THIS STORY #1, Advanced

Immigration

The underwater tunnel used by trains traveling between France and England has proven to be irresistibly attractive to desperate immigrants.

Despite incredible obstacles, they manage to enter England from countries where they have lost all hope for a better life. Some are seeking asylum in Britain, while others just yearn to find acceptance and a job.

Neither barbed wire, electric fencing, floodlights nor vicious dogs have prevented immigrants from trying to smuggle their way through the tunnel. Signs in four languages warn of the hazards. The prospect of being crushed by speeding trains or electrocuted by high voltage wires does not deter them.

About 200 people attempt the crossing every night. Some leap from bridges onto the tops of moving trains. Others lurk near gas stations hoping to hide in vehicles heading for the tunnel. Although it is extremely dangerous, some even jump in front of freight trains to slow them down so that others, hidden in the bushes, can climb aboard.

It is estimated that thousands of people have successfully sneaked through the tunnel. Since Britain does not demand that her citizens carry identification papers at all times, these immigrants hope that their illegal entry will escape detection by the authorities, and that they will not be deported.