



IMMIGRATION
SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT
REFLECTION BOOKLET

NAME _____

CLASS _____

TEACHER _____

SCHOOL _____

1400 to 1799	The First Wave: British Settlements and African Slaves
15 th century	Europeans began exploring and conquering North and South America.
1600s	The British formed colonies along the Atlantic coast and proceeded to expand westward.
1607	The colonists began importing African slaves. The practice continued for 200 years. By the American Civil War in the 1860s, there were 4 million African slaves.
1789	George Washington is elected first President
1790	The U.S. Congress passes the Naturalization Act of 1790 which established citizenship for free white persons of good moral character.
1790	The U.S. population is 3.9 million including 2.5 million from the British Isles, 757,000 African slaves, 270,000 from Germany and 100,000 from the Netherlands
1790 to 1880	The Second Wave of Immigrants: Ireland and Germany
1845 – 1851	About 2.3 million Irish immigrate to the U.S. to escape the Potato Famine in Ireland. About 2.3 million German and other Northern Europeans also came at this time.
1848	80,000 Mexicans became U.S. citizens when the U.S. seized Mexican land as a result of the Mexican American War
1850s	Anti Catholic and anti immigrant sentiment grows spurred on by the Know Nothing movement.
1861 to 1866	The U.S. Civil War, the North wins, Emancipation Proclamation freed all slaves
1868	The construction of the Transcontinental and other railroads brought approximately 12,000 Chinese laborers to the U.S.
1868	Citizenship was granted to all persons born on U.S. soil. This included 4 million former African slaves.
1880 to 1924	The Third Wave of Immigrants: Southern and Eastern Europe
1880 to 1920	24 million immigrants including large numbers of Italians and Eastern European Jews entered the United States to escape poverty and religious persecution.
1882	The Chinese Exclusion Act prohibited immigration of Chinese workers. It is the first federal law restricting a specific ethnic group.
1890	The U.S. Exclusion Act – (expanded the Chinese Exclusion Act) to include the ban of “undesirables” (for example homosexuals and Pacific Islanders) from entering the U.S.
1924	The Immigration Act of 1924 sharply restricted immigration and virtually eliminated immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe; immigration quotas favor Northern and Western Europeans
1929	The U.S. Stock Market crashed and The Great Depression with massive unemployment begins. During the depression 500,000 Mexicans are deported
1942	After the United States declared war on Japan, Japanese Americans were moved to internment camps
1948	Displaced Persons Act – Approximately 2 million persons were displaced by Nazi persecution, during WWII. This act allowed 100s of thousands of refugees from Austria, Italy, and Germany into the U.S. to become permanent U.S. residents.
1965 to today	The Fourth Wave of Immigrants – Latin America and Asia
1965	The Immigration Act of 1965 eliminated the quota system and changed immigration policy to prioritize <u>work skills</u> and <u>family reunification</u> . The priority of family unification led to significant increases in immigration from Latin America and Asia, substantially increasing the diversity of the U. S. population.
1986	The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) provided amnesty to approximately 3 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S.; most were from Mexico
1965 to 2015	Immigration between 1965 and 2015 increased the nation’s foreign born population from 9.6 million to 45 million.
	Since 1965, 51 percent of immigrants to the U. S. have come from Latin America, 25 percent from Asia and 8 percent from Africa and the Middle East.

Lesson I

History of Immigration to the U. S. and My Family's Experience

(Pages 2 to 6)

1. My Family's Immigration Story (If possible talk to your parents and older relatives to gather information to answer these questions, a - f.)

a. Who were the first members of your family to come to the U. S.?

b. When did they arrive in the United States?

c. From where did they come?

d. What were their main reasons for coming to the U. S.?

e. How have they experienced their time in the United States? What are some of the things that have gone well? What have been some of the difficulties/challenges?

f. How does your family fit into the history of immigration to the U. S.?

2. Irish Immigrants

Please read the following excerpts about Irish immigration to the U. S. and answer the questions (pages 5 and 6) that follow the excerpt.

Irish Immigrants in the United States, by Kevin Kenny, Professor of History, Boston College (IIP Digital/U. S. Department of State)

“Irish immigrants had a rough start in the United States, stuck in urban poverty and taunted by their neighbors. They and their descendants overcame the obstacles and prevailed.

In the century after 1820, 5 million Irish immigrants came to the United States. Their presence provoked a strong reaction among certain native-born Americans, known as nativists, who denounced the Irish for their social behavior, their impact on the economy, and their Catholic religion. Nonetheless, by the early 20th century, the Irish had successfully assimilated.

All legal immigrants who subscribe to the U.S. Constitution are entitled to become U.S. citizens, and white immigrants have encountered relatively few obstacles in their attempt to do so. Despite nativist hostility, the Irish never encountered racism comparable to that inflicted on African Americans and Asians, who were excluded from citizenship or restricted from entering the United States. Turning their Catholic identity to their advantage and pursuing political opportunities unavailable in Ireland, the Irish moved steadily upward in American society.

The Irish made up almost half of all immigrants in the United States in the 1840s and one-third in the 1850s. These figures are remarkable given that Ireland is no larger than the state of Maine and its population never exceeded 8.5 million. Between 1846 and 1855, due to repeated massive failures of the potato crop, the Irish population declined by one-third. More than 1 million people died of starvation and famine-related diseases and another 1.5 million fled to the United States...”

Early Struggles

“The Irish immigrants of the famine era were the most disadvantaged the United States had ever seen. Some of the poorest lived in the Five Points district of lower Manhattan in New York City, which the English novelist Charles Dickens describes as “reeking everywhere with dirt and filth,” with ‘lanes and alleys, paved with mud knee deep.” This neighborhood, Dickens wrote, was filled with “hideous tenements which take their name from robbery and murder, all that is loathsome, drooping, and decayed is here...”

“The Irish immigrants were mostly unskilled, worked for low wages, and were often used as substitute labor to break strikes. Native-born workers worried that their own wages would decline as a result and that gains made by organized labor would be undercut. Many Americans

also feared that the Irish would never advance socially but would instead become the first permanent working class in the United States, threatening the central principle of 19th century American life; upward social and mobility through hard work..."

"Nativists launched a sustained attack on Irish immigrants because of their Catholicism..."

Anti-Catholicism remained part of American culture until 1960, when John F. Kennedy was elected to the presidency... Kennedy, who was acutely conscious of his Irish heritage, finally laid to rest America's long anti-Catholic tradition. "I am not the Catholic candidate for President," he declared during the campaign. "I am the Democratic Party's candidate for President, who happens also to be a Catholic. I do not speak for my church on public matters – and the church does not speak for me."

Irish immigrants became good Americans without sacrificing their religious and cultural heritage. They demonstrated that assimilation is not a one-way process in which immigrants must conform to a dominant Anglo-Protestant culture while forsaking their own traditions. Immigrants always change the United States as much as the United States changes them..."

"Today the Irish are one of the most prosperous ethnic groups in the United States, significantly exceeding national averages on education levels, occupational status, income, and home ownership. In line with their steady upward social mobility during the 20th century, the American Irish moved out of the tight-knot urban communities of the Northeast and Midwest to settle in suburbs, towns, and cities across the United States. They also married increasingly outside their ethnic groups, first with other Catholics and then with Americans generally."

Reflection Questions

1. What kinds of conditions in Ireland were the Irish escaping? What conditions did they find in the United States?

2. How did the Irish stand up for themselves and overcome challenges in America?

3. What does the author mean when he writes that immigrants always change the United States as the United States changes them?

4. How is the experience of the Irish similar and how is it different from the experience of immigrants you know?

LESSON II

The Historic Debate about the Value of Immigration

(Pages 7 – 10)

The period of European immigration between the nation's beginning and 1924 was characterized by ongoing debate over the value of immigration. While the flow of immigrants and the path to citizenship for these immigrants persisted, opposition to immigration was significant. In 1924 anti-immigrant sentiment prevailed with legislation that severely limited the number of immigrants to the U. S. and virtually stopped immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe. Immigration quotas of the 1924 law favored immigration of Northern Europeans. (See Time Line, page 2)

Class assignment: Consider the following pro and anti-immigrant sentiments and discuss in small groups. Refer to the Reflection Questions on page 8.

Anti-Immigration:

- The Know Nothing Movement was represented by an American political party that operated nationally in the mid-1850s. The movement promised to “purify” American politics by limiting or ending the influence of Irish Catholics. (When asked who was

responsible for the many acts of violence against the immigrants, they claimed they “knew nothing about it,” hence their name.) Know Nothings sought to curb immigration and naturalization of Catholic immigrants.

- The 1924 immigration restriction was supported by a popular book by anthropologist Madison Grant entitled The Passing of the Great Race which argued that both the physical and mental characteristics of Eastern European immigrants were below the standards (inferior) of the dominant Protestant stock.
- Donald Trump: “When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And I assume some are good people.”

Favoring Immigration:

- George Washington, “Address to Irish Immigrants”, December 1783:
“The bosom of America is open to receive not only the opulent and respectable stranger, but the oppressed and persecuted of all nations and religions; whom we shall welcome to a participation of all our rights and privileges.”
- Abraham Lincoln’s opposition to the Know Nothings who attacked Irish Catholics and opposed their immigration to the U. S. from a letter to Lincoln’s friend Joshua Speed in the 1850s.
“I am not a Know-Nothing—that is certain. How could I be? How can anyone who abhors the oppression of negroes, be in favor of degrading classes of white people?”
- From the poem by Emma Lazarus engraved on the Statue of Liberty:
“Give me your Tired, your Poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless tempest tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door.”

Reflection Questions

- a. How do the anti-immigrant speakers view many of the immigrants to the U. S.?

- b. How do the anti immigrant speakers see the role of the United States government in relation to immigrants?

c. How do the pro-immigration speakers view immigrants coming to the U.S.

d. How do they see the role of the United States government in relation to immigrants?

Lesson III

Increased Diversity in the U. S. and Misperceptions About Immigrants

Increased Diversity with the Immigration Act of 1965 (20 minutes)

In 1965 when the struggle for civil rights was a priority legislation was passed that dramatically changed immigration policy. Quotas favoring Northern European immigration ended. The Immigration Act of 1965 discontinued immigration policy based explicitly on race or ethnicity and favored immigration for two groups who could come from any country.

- Skilled workers who could contribute to the U. S. economy
- Foreigners who were seeking to join their families in the United States via the policy of family unification

Advocates of the family unification program in the 1965 law thought it would favor continued immigration from Northern and Western European countries that then dominated the U. S. population. As excerpts from the article cited below indicate, they were wrong about who would now come to the United States.

From the *Atlantic*, Politics and Policy Roundtable, October 21, 2015, Tom Gjelten

"The heightened emphasis on family unification, rather than replicating the existing ethnic structure of the American population, led to the phenomenon of chain migration. The naturalization of a single immigrant from an Asian or African or Hispanic background opened the door to his or her brothers and sisters. Within a few decades, family unification had become the driving force in U. S. immigration and it favored

exactly those nationalities the critics of the 1965 Act had hoped to keep out, because they were the people most determined to move.”

“In the subsequent half century (after passage of the 1965 Immigration Act), the pattern of U. S. immigration changed dramatically. The share of the U. S. population born outside the country tripled and became more diverse. Seven out of every eight immigrants in 1960 were from Europe; by 2010 nine out of ten were coming from other parts of the world.”

Growth of the Hispanic Population in the U. S.

In 2020 the Hispanic population in the U. S. was 62.1 million, seven times the 1970 Latino population in the country. The significant increase in the Latino population was due to the 1965 immigration law and furthered by amnesties for undocumented immigrants in 1986 (Ronald Reagan was President) and the 1990's. In 2018 there were approximately 37 million people of Mexican descent, 5.8 million of Puerto Rican descent and more than two million of Cuban descent in the U. S.

Foreign Born in the U. S.

In 2019 approximately 44.9 million people, 13.7 percent of the U. S. population were foreign born. The largest foreign born populations in the country were from Mexico (11.2 million), China (2.9 million), India (2.6 million) and the Phillipines (2 million).

Growth of the Minority Population in the U. S.

Non-Hispanic whites will be less than half the U. S. population by 2055¹.

Reflection Questions/homework

a. How did the Immigration Act of 1965 alter the make-up/diversity of the United States?

b. Do you think current anti-immigration sentiment in the U. S. is a response to the increasing diversity of the country?

Misperceptions many Americans have of Immigrants

(20 minutes) Discuss the following misperceptions and facts related to immigrants. How can these misperceptions be countered/overcome? Refer to Questions 1 and 2 below the table. A reporter from each group should summarize the small group's findings.

MISPERCEPTIONS	FACTS
Immigrants are responsible for crime and terrorism.	FACTS: Since 9/11 almost all terrorist acts have been committed by individuals who were born here, not by immigrants. Immigrants have <u>lower</u> crime rates than individuals born in the U. S.*
Immigrants are a “drain” on the economy.	FACTS: Immigrants, including the unauthorized, contribute substantially to the U. S. economy, creating jobs through their purchasing power and entrepreneurship. The 27.3 million foreign born workers in the U. S. in 2020 comprised 17 percent of the work force but were 21.7 percent of business owners in the U. S. and owned a high percentage of small neighborhood businesses (e.g. grocery stores, restaurants and clothing stores).
Immigrants are a “drain” on the economy.	FACT: Undocumented immigrants support critical areas of the economy; they are a majority of the workforce in agriculture. If they were not present there would be food shortages and costs of agricultural products would soar.
More is spent on services for immigrants than paid in taxes by them.	FACT: The Congressional Budget office (2007) has reported that immigrants pay more in tax revenues of all types than the cost of services they use.
Immigrants remain “separate” from American culture.	FACT: Immigrants today are integrating into the society, advancing in income, buying power and acquisition of English at the same rate as previous generations of immigrants.

*According to data cited by the American Immigration Council from the 2010 American Community Survey 1.6 percent of immigrant males age 18-39 were incarcerated compared to 3.3 percent of the native born.

1. How can these misperceptions be countered? Why don't facts and statistics solve the problem faced by undocumented and foreign-born people in the U.S. today?

2. Do you think these misperceptions discourage immigrants from participating in the political process in the U.S? Please explain your thinking.

Lesson IV

The Dilemma of the Undocumented

The 11 million undocumented people in the U. S. are not covered by the 1965 Immigration Act because they do not have the required job skills or family members in the U. S. who would allow them to enter the country legally. Current immigration policy does not provide a route to citizenship to immigrants seeking economic opportunity and fleeing hardship.

Undocumented immigrants:

- live in the “shadows” fearful of deportation
- In the 10 years between 2010 and 2019 3.65 million undocumented individuals, averaging 365,000 per year, were deported
- children of undocumented individuals who are born in the U. S. are citizens; 4.5 millionⁱⁱⁱ children who are citizens are living with a parent who can be deported.
- an American Psychological Association Report cites difficulties of children of parents who may be deported including anxiety, fear, depression, anger, isolation and lack of a sense of belonging^{iv}

Watch American Psychological Association video on experiences of children of the undocumented. Google: "American Psychological Association Undocumented Americans"

Reflection / Class Discussion

1. Whose story affected you most? Why?
2. What are your own experiences and observations in relation to the video?

Lesson V

The Current Immigration Crisis and Service Learning

As President Donald Trump enacted anti-immigrant policies. Trump:

- Substantially increased deportations of the undocumented
- Terminated DACA which protected from deportation 800,000 young immigrants who came to the U. S. as children (the termination of DACA was overturned by a federal court)
- Separated children from their parents at the border without any plan to reunite families
- Significantly cut legal immigration to the U. S.
- Associated Muslims with terrorism and curtailed immigration from 6 predominantly Muslim countries
- Sharply limited the number of refugees who can settle in the U. S. (Refugees enter the U. S. because they face prosecution/serious threat in their home countries)
- Promoted building a multi-billion dollar wall along the border with the U. S. to keep undocumented immigrants out of the country

The Biden Presidency has overturned Trump's policies towards undocumented immigrants living in the U. S. Biden has:

- Significantly reduced deportations of the undocumented living in the U. S.
- Restored legal immigration to the U. S. to pre-Trump levels
- Restored DACA
- Supported legislation that would provide a path to citizenship for the great majority of undocumented immigrants in the country
- Substantially increased the number of refugees who can enter the country
- Stopped building of the wall between the U. S. and Mexico

However, Biden has largely maintained Trump's policies preventing new immigrants from entering the country illegally.

*Dreamers are undocumented youth who came to the U.S. before their sixteenth birthday and before June 2007. They were covered by an executive order of former President Obama (DACA—Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) which enabled them to receive a renewable two-year work permit and deportation exemption.

Class Discussion

1. In your small groups please consider the differing effects of President Trump and President Biden on:
 - Immigrant families and communities,
 - The undocumented, and
 - Your own feelings and understanding of American immigration policies

2. What do you think can be done to support those who are most vulnerable to deportation?

Service-Learning and Reflections

Considering the issues you discussed above, how can you best serve your school and

community through either a school-based or community-based service learning project?

The following are just some ideas for school-based projects that you can develop:

- Creating and distributing a poster that raises consciousness about dilemmas the undocumented face
- Looking at the intersectionality of immigrant rights with other struggles for social justice and speaking/reporting your findings to the school community
- A round table event where students discuss various issues pertaining to immigration and problems of the undocumented
- Research and reporting to the school community on U.S. immigration policy and how it has shaped our world.
- Researching the special needs of immigrants and creating a list of resources for students and families

Community-based Projects

- A community based project gives you the opportunity to learn from people in your city who are working for social justice and who are providing services to your community. Some immigrant rights organizations that you can research and/or contact have youth centered activities or campaigns you may participate in.
- Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) - www.icirr.com
- Arab American Action Network (AAAN) <http://www.aaan.org>
- Organized Communities Against Deportations (OCAD) <http://www.facebook.com/OCADIL>

Other helpful websites:

- American Civil Liberties Union - aclu.com
- Informed Immigrant Campaign - <https://www.informedimmigrant.com>
<http://immigration.lawyers.com/general-immigration/legal-rights-of-illegal-immigrants.html>

Footnotes

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- ⁱ www.pewhispanic.org/2015/0928modern-immigration-wave
 - ⁱⁱ statisticbrain.com/number-of-u-s-deportations
 - ⁱⁱⁱ www.apa.org/topics/immigration/undocumented-video.aspx
 - ^{iv} www.apa.org/topics/immigration/undocumented-video.aspx