

Immigration and Immigrant Rights Service Learning Lessons

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LESSON ONE

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

(5 minutes)

Suggestion to Teacher: Today we are beginning a set of lessons on the issue of immigration and immigrant rights. Students may receive 15 hours of service-learning credit for:

1. Being in all classes where the issue of immigration and immigrant rights are discussed. (3 hours)
2. Completing and turning in the reflection booklet (2 hours), and,
3. School and community based work supporting immigrant rights (10 hours)

(15 minutes)

Teacher continues:

The United States is a nation of immigrants—with significant exceptions:

- African-Americans were brought as slaves
- Native-Americans were already here
- Mexicans in the Southwest became citizens in 1848, when, following the Mexican-American War, the land they lived on was annexed by the U. S.

The majority of Americans today are descendants of European immigrants who came to the U. S. between the nation's founding about 1790 and 1924. They came for economic opportunity and to leave behind harsh circumstances including religious discrimination and political persecution in Europe.

Ask students to look at the Timeline on Page 2 of their reflection booklet on the history of immigration to the U. S. Ask students:

1. What stands out from the Timeline?
2. What were the periods of greatest European immigration to the U. S.? (Prompt students to look at the 1840s and 1850s when significant numbers of Irish and Germans came to the U.S. and the "great wave" of immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe between 1880 and 1920—this wave of immigrants included large numbers of Italians and Jews)

Teacher says: European immigrants who came to the U. S. between the nation's founding and 1924 often faced discrimination and difficult economic circumstances in the U. S. but in time the economic and social circumstances for most greatly improved. All became U. S. citizens.

(10 minutes)

Ask students to take out reflection booklets and respond to question 1 (Pages 3 and 4) asking students to provide information on their own family's immigration history:

- a. Who were the first members of your family to come to the U. S.?
- b. When did they arrive in the U. S.?
- 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.?

(10 minutes)

Students share what they have written in their reflection booklets.

Homework: Students are to read the description of the experience of Irish Immigrants in the reflection booklet (Page 4) and answer the questions on the Irish immigrant experience. Students will indicate how the experience of the Irish was similar to and how it was different from the experience of immigrants they know.

<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/publication/2008/03/20080307131416ebyessedo0.6800043.html#axzz4Kp54j8mT>

LESSON TWO

The Historic Debate about the Value of Immigration

(5 minutes)

Teacher says: We are continuing our unit on immigration and immigrant rights. Today we will consider the historic and ongoing debate about the value of immigration. We will also look at restrictions to immigration in 1924 and to changes in immigration policy in 1965 that resulted in a far more diverse U. S. population.

(35 minutes)

Teacher says: The period of European immigration between the nation's beginning around 1790 and 1924 was characterized by ongoing debate over the value of immigration. While the flow of European 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.

In small groups of 4 ask students to consider the following pro and anti-immigrant sentiments in their reflection booklets (Pages 7 and 8) and evaluate the statements answering questions a-d in their reflection booklets. Each group should choose a reporter to report back to the class. Encourage class discussion.

Anti-immigration:

- The Know-Nothing movement was 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. 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 titled the Passing of the Great Race and arguing that both the physical and mental characteristics of eastern European immigrants were below the standards 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?”
- Edna St. Vincent Millay’s words 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."

LESSON III

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

(20 minutes)

Increased Diversity with the Immigration Act of 1965

Suggested introduction: In 1965 when civil rights were a priority, legislation was passed that dramatically changed immigration policy. The Immigration Act of 1965 discontinued immigration policy based explicitly on race or ethnicity. Quotas favoring Northern European immigration ended.

The Immigration Act of 1965 favored immigration for two groups who could come from any country:

- Skilled workers who could contribute to the U. S. economy
- Family unification giving preference to foreigners who were seeking to join their families in the United States

Advocates of the family unification provision 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.

Select students to read to the class the excerpts below from the Atlantic Article, Politics and Policy Roundtable, October 2, 2015, Tom Gjelten. The excerpts are in the students' reflection booklets (Page 9).

"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.”

Ask students what they think of the diversity of the U. S. population.

Homework: Students answer the following two questions on page 10 of their reflection booklet.

- 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) Ask students in small groups to read the list of misconceptions of immigrants that many Americans have. (These misperceptions are listed in the students' handbooks on Page 11). Ask students to discuss how these misperceptions may encourage anti-immigrant sentiment and voting. How can these misperceptions be countered/overcome? A reporter from each group should summarize the small group's findings. Encourage class discussion.

Misperceptions:

- In the current political atmosphere immigrants have been associated with terrorism and crime. **In fact**, since 9/11 almost all terrorist acts have been committed by individuals who were born here, not by immigrants. Immigrants have lower crime rates than individuals born in the U. S.*
- Their opponents characterize immigrants as a “drain” on the economy. **In fact**, immigrants, including the unauthorized, contribute substantially to the U. S. economy, creating jobs through their purchasing power and entrepreneurship. The 26.3 million foreign born workers in the U. S. in 2014 comprised 16.5 percent of the work force, but were 18 percent of business owners in the U. S. and owned 28 percent of small neighborhood businesses (e.g. grocery stores, restaurants and clothing stores). 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.
- Opponents of immigration say more is spent on services for immigrants than paid in taxes by them. The Congressional Budget office (2007) has reported that

in fact immigrants pay more in tax revenues of all types than the cost of services they use.

- Their opponents say immigrants remain “separate” from American culture. **In 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.

LESSON IV

The Dilemma of the Undocumented

(5 minutes) Begin by review of homework on the 1965 Immigration Law from the Reflection Booklet.

Questions for students include:

- How did the 1965 law alter the make up/diversity of the United States?
- Do you think current anti-integration sentiment in the U. S. is a response to the increasing diversity of the country?

(10 minutes)

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

Have a different student read each of the following statements below to the class. The statements are in the students’ reflection booklets. (Page 12)

Undocumented Immigrants:

- live in the “shadows” fearful of deportation
- over the past 10 years 3.65 million undocumented individuals, averaging 365,000 per year, have been deported

- children of the undocumented who are born in the U. S. are citizens; 4.5 million 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

(10 minutes)

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

(15 minutes)

Students discuss the video; teacher asks:

a) Whose story affected them most?

b) What are the students own experiences and observations in relation to the video?

LESSON V THE CURRENT IMMIGRATION CRISIS

(20 minutes)

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

- **substantially increased deportations of the undocumented**
- **terminated DACA which protected from deportation 800,000 young immigrants brought 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 reunify 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 persecution/serious threats in their home countries).**
- **promoted building a multi-billion dollar wall along the Mexican border to keep out undocumented immigrants**

President Biden overturned Trump's policies toward unauthorized immigrants living in the U. S. Biden:

- **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 maintained Trump policies keeping new unauthorized immigrants from entering the country.

(15 minutes)

Teacher says: In groups of 4 consider the effect of differing Presidential policies (Trump compared to Biden) on:

- immigrant communities
- the undocumented

(5 minutes)

Teacher announces: In after-school sessions (identify time and place) you will have the opportunity to earn service-learning hours by work related to immigrant rights. Service learning Projects will be of two types (see reflection booklet):

- **school based projects that promote immigrant rights (e.g. posters, assemblies, student council and school-based position papers, preparation and delivery of talks on immigrant rights that may be presented to school clubs or in classes)**
- **community based projects (e.g. working with ICIRR, the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, including work on projects to strengthen support for immigrants and to increase the power of immigrant communities by registering voters.)**

Note to Teachers on Service Learning and Student Reflection

To high school teachers: Please work with your school's Service Learning Coach to make sure that your students receive their correct service learning credits. This curriculum is designed for 15 service learning credit hours but that can vary depending on what you do. The CPS website provides guidance on the components of a service learning project:

<http://www.cps.edu/ServiceLearning/Pages/Guidelines/ aspx>.

Optimally the service learning experience reinforces and complements the content of the class curriculum and helps students understand the value of their potential role in supporting their school community or the community where they live. The

final service-learning projects can be of two types: a school-based project or a community-based project.

School Based Projects

The following are some ideas for school-based projects that could be developed by you and your students.

--Creating and distributing posters that raise awareness and understanding about Chicago as a Sanctuary City or your school as one that supports undocumented students.

--Speaking events and round tables where students speak about and discuss issues pertaining to immigrant communities and the undocumented

--Researching the special needs of immigrants and creating and distributing a list of resources for immigrant students and their families

Community Based Projects

Community based projects provide the opportunity for students to learn from and model the pro-social attributes and activities of members of their community. Groups can vary widely from a local community group that teaches civics or citizenship classes to a larger statewide or national organization such as one of those listed below. Community based groups may schedule youth centered activities or campaigns.

Selected Immigrant Rights Organizations

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR)—www.icirr.org

Organized Communities Against Deportations (OCAD)
<https://www.facebook.com/OCADIL/>

Arab American Action Network (AAAN) <http://www.aaan.org/>

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>