



LESSON 1

Who Are Immigrants?

*The United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem...
Here is not merely a nation but a teeming nation of nations.*

~ Walt Whitman, Preface to Leaves of Grass (1855)

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Goals

- » Define key immigration terms.
- » Identify how migration and immigration have contributed to the United States and to students' own lives.

Objectives

- » Students will understand key immigration vocabulary.
- » Students will be able to give examples of immigrants past and present and understand how they have contributed to our country.
- » Students will explore the migration history of their own families or someone they choose.

Essential Questions

- » Who are migrants and immigrants?
- » How have immigrants impacted my life, my family history, and the country in general?

Key Skill

- » Conducting an interview (Activities 2 & 3).

Materials

- Handout 1: Famous Immigrants to the United States*
- Handout 2: Creating a Mock Interview*
- Handout 3: Gathering a Migration History*
- Paper, tape, sticky notes
- Map, push pins, string (optional)

Time Frame

3-4 class periods

Vocabulary

-  emigrant
-  emigration
-  forced migration
-  immigrant
-  immigration
-  migrate
-  migrant
-  migration

Talking Migration

Procedure:

1. Prepare. Write each of the following questions about migration (without the answers) on a separate sheet of paper and hang them around the room.

- **When do you think that humans first began to migrate?**

Although this is still debated among historians and archeologists, humans are thought to have first migrated from Africa between 60,000-80,000 years ago.¹ From the earliest times, migration has been part of the human experience.

- **Do you think that a greater percentage of the world's population is migrating today than in previous periods? Why or why not?**

The total number of immigrants worldwide has been increasing steadily in the last 50 years, but because total population has also increased, the percentage of the world's population that is immigrating has remained relatively constant, at around 2.5%.²

- **List three reasons why people migrate. Do you think that the reasons for migration have changed over the years?**


Many of the reasons that people migrate are the same today as they have been for centuries: a desire to be with family members; a search for food, shelter, and economic opportunity; or a need to escape war or political repression. Migration can also be involuntary, when one group uses violence to displace another.


- **If you were going to move to another country, what are some issues you would need to consider?**

Answers will vary, but might include: learning a new language or culture; obtaining a visa; leaving behind family and friends; finding employment, schools, and/or housing; transporting pets; adapting to different climates/weather; paying for and arranging the move; finding transportation in a new country; leaving personal possessions behind; or accessing services.

2. Define. Ask students what they think the term “migration” means. Write their answers on the board. Next, ask them to define “immigration.” What is the difference between migration and immigration? Provide the following definitions:

 Migration: *people moving from one place to another*

 Emigration: *people moving out of a country*

 Immigration: *people moving into a new country*

Explain to students that *migration* is a fundamental human experience that has been going on for thousands of years. *Immigration*, in contrast, is a more recent phenomenon, resulting from the development of national borders that led to the regulation and control of migration. While every person in the United States has some family history of migration, everyone does not have a similar experience with immigration. Students will now get a chance to think more deeply about migration, and how both migration and immigration have shaped the United States and the people who live here.

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1 Guy Gugliotta, “The Great Human Migration: Why humans left their African homeland 80,000 years ago to colonize the world,” *Smithsonian Magazine* (July 2008), <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/human-migration.html>.

2 Çağlar Özden, Christopher Parsons, Maurice Schiff, and Terrie Walmsley, “Where on Earth is Everybody? The Evolution of Global Bilateral Migration 1960–2000,” World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 5709 (June 2011), http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2011/06/28/000158349_20110628100223/Rendered/PDF/WP5709.pdf, 4.

Talking Migration

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Teacher Tip

Introducing this topic by talking about “migration” (as opposed to “immigration”) allows teachers to be inclusive of all students. This includes Native Americans whose ancestors have a history of migration, both voluntary and forced, within the United States, as well as African Americans who suffered forced migration during the slave trade. Be aware of the diversity of American migration histories when discussing the topic.

3. Visit. Divide the class into small groups of two or three students and give each group a small stack of sticky notes. Have each small group go around, read each question, and then discuss possible answers with their small group. Ask students to write their best answer on their sticky notes and put them under the question.

4. Discuss. After the small groups have visited all the questions, bring them back together as a large group and discuss their answers to the questions. Students can volunteer their answers or the teacher can choose to read some of the sticky notes under each question. Once students have discussed their answers to a question, provide the sample answers above and compare them to the students’ answers.



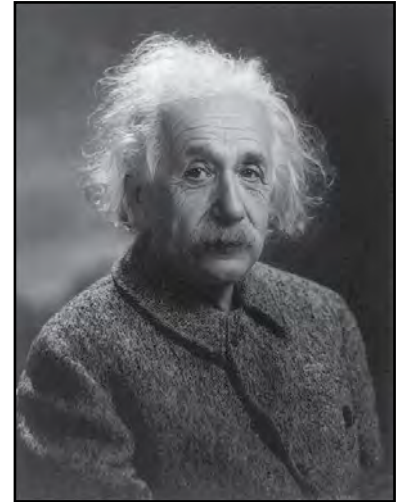
Famous U.S. Immigrants

Procedure:

1. Choose a famous immigrant. Divide students into groups of two or three. Explain that they will be researching the life of a famous immigrant and then presenting it to the class in the form of a mock interview. Give each student a copy of *Handout 1: Famous Immigrants to the United States* and ask the groups to choose a person from the list or select another famous immigrant to research.

2. Research and write. Have students research and write a 5-10 minute mock interview with the famous immigrant they have chosen, using *Handout 2: Creating a Mock Interview* as a guide. The students should work with their small groups to write the questions and answers. Encourage them to cover the following topics:

- The famous person's immigration story: where she or he came from, when she or he arrived in the United States, and why she or he came.
- The famous immigrant's experiences, positive or negative, in the United States.
- The famous immigrant's major accomplishments, or why she or he is famous.



3. Conduct mock interviews. Have an interview day in class. Students should come with an object, drawing, or piece of clothing that represents the famous immigrant they have studied. Pair students with someone who was not in their original small group. Each student will take turns role-playing the famous immigrant they researched while the other acts as the interviewer.

The first "famous immigrant" should give the interviewer *Handout 2* filled in with the questions that their small group generated, and then try to answer the questions in character. After the interview is over, have the students switch roles and interview the second "famous immigrant."

4. Discuss. As a class, discuss what students learned from talking to these "famous immigrants." Try to address the following questions:

Questions for Discussion

- ? Were there factors in common that led these immigrants to want to come to the United States? What were they?
- ? Did any of the immigrants have similar experiences after arriving in the United States?
- ? What are some ways that the United States as a whole has benefited from these famous immigrants' achievements? How have students benefited from them?

Migration Histories

Procedure:

1. Research a migration story. Tell students that migration is not only a part of U.S. history, but is also part of the family histories of many people. For this activity, students will research and report on the family migration history of a relative or other person of their choice. Students should interview their chosen person about either their own migration experience or about one of their ancestors that migrated to or within the United States. In some cases, the person will have migrated to the United States from another country, either by choice or because they were forced to come (as in the slave trade). A Native American may be part of a tribe with a history of migration (voluntary or forced) within the Americas.

Teacher Tip

Some students may not be able or willing to explore their own families' migration history due to adoption, trauma, or lack of knowledge, so it is important to offer them the alternative of interviewing a family friend, neighbor, or other adult of their choice. Teachers may want to recruit an adult or two at the school who can serve as interview subjects for students who have trouble finding someone to interview.

2. Tell a migration story. Help the students understand what kind of information they will be gathering by offering a brief overview of your own family's migration history or the migration history of someone you know well, answering as many of the same questions as the students will be asking as possible.

3. Write a report. Ask students to write a report on the family migration history of their relative or other chosen person. Give them *Handout 3: Gathering a Migration History* to help them conduct their interviews. The reports should include at least one page with photographs, maps, hand-drawn images, or other artistic representations of the student's chosen migration story that will be displayed around the room. Students should ask their interviewee the following questions and include the answers in their reports:

- What was the name of your ancestor who migrated to or within the United States?
- How many generations ago did your ancestor migrate? What year did he or she arrive?
- What country or region did your ancestor migrate from? Where did he or she migrate to in the United States?
- Why did your ancestor leave his or her home and migrate to or within the United States?
- What language(s) did your ancestor speak when he or she migrated? What language(s) does your family speak at home most often today?
- Do you feel you have any cultural, linguistic, or other connections with the region where your ancestor migrated from?

4. Display. Once students have completed their reports, hang the artistic representations of their migration stories around the classroom. Two good ways to display them are piecing together a "patchwork quilt" or sticking pins in a world map with string connecting the art to each migrant's place of origin.

FAMOUS IMMIGRANTS TO THE UNITED STATES

Students: Select one of the following immigrants to be the subject of your mock interview.

Government

Madeleine Albright, former U.S. Secretary of State (Czechoslovakia; modern-day Czech Republic)
 Zbigniew Brzezinski, former U.S. National Security Advisor (Poland)
 Felix Frankfurter, Supreme Court Justice (Austria)
 Henry Kissinger, former U.S. Secretary of State (Germany)
 Hyman G. Rickover, U.S. Navy admiral (Russia; modern-day Poland)

Business and Technology

Sergey Brin, co-founder of Google (Russia)
 Andrew Carnegie, industrialist (Scotland)
 Dov Charney, founder of American Apparel (Canada)
 Steve Chen, co-founder of YouTube (Taiwan)
 Oscar de la Renta, fashion designer (Dominican Republic)
 Max Factor, founder of Max Factor cosmetics (Russia; modern-day Poland)
 Domingo Ghirardelli, founder of Ghirardelli Chocolate Company (Italy)
 Vinod Khosla, co-founder of Sun Microsystems (India)
 Pierre Omidyar, founder of eBay (France)
 Wolfgang Puck, chef/restaurant owner (Austria)
 Igor Sikorsky, founder of Sikorsky helicopters (Russia; modern-day Ukraine)
 Levi Strauss, founder of Levi Strauss & Co (Germany)
 Jerry Yang, co-founder of Yahoo (Taiwan)

Sports

Mario Andretti, race car driver (Italy; modern-day Croatia)
 Charles Atlas, bodybuilder (Italy)
 José Canseco, baseball player (Cuba)
 Patrick Ewing, basketball player (Jamaica)
 Pau Gasol, basketball player (Spain)
 Sebastian Janikowski, football player (Poland)
 Martina Navratilova, tennis player (Czechoslovakia; modern-day Czech Republic)
 Hakeem Olajuwon, basketball player (Nigeria)
 Chan Ho Park, baseball player (South Korea)
 Knute Rockne, football coach (Norway)
 Sammy Sosa, baseball player (Dominican Republic)

Science and Academia

Hannah Arendt, philosopher (Germany)
 Albert Einstein, theoretical physicist (Germany)
 Enrico Fermi, nuclear physicist (Italy)
 David Ho, AIDS researcher (Taiwan)
 Simon Kuznets, economist (Russia; modern-day Belarus)
 John Muir, naturalist/writer (Scotland)
 Nikola Tesla, developer of AC power (Austria-Hungary; modern-day Croatia)

Arts and Entertainment

Isabel Allende, author (Chile)

Isaac Asimov, author (Russia)
 Mikhail Baryshnikov, dancer/choreographer (Russia; modern-day Latvia)
 Irving Berlin, composer/lyricist (Russia)
 David Byrne, musician (Scotland)
 Frank Capra, director (Italy)
 Charlie Chaplin, actor (England)
 Christo, artist (Bulgaria)
 Edwidge Danticat, author (Haiti)
 Willem de Kooning, artist (The Netherlands)
 Marcel Duchamp, artist (France)
 Gloria Estefan, musician (Cuba)
 Michael J. Fox, actor (Canada)
 Greta Garbo, actress (Sweden)
 Khalil Gibran, poet (Lebanon)
 Samuel Goldwyn, movie producer (Russia; modern-day Poland)
 Salma Hayek, actress (Mexico)
 Bob Hope, actor/comedian (England)
 Anthony Hopkins, actor (Wales)
 Khaled Hosseini, author (Afghanistan)
 Harry Houdini, magician (Hungary)
 Wyclef Jean, musician (Haiti)
 Elia Kazan, director (Turkey)
 DJ Kool Herc, musician/inventor of hip-hop (Jamaica)
 Mila Kunis, actress (USSR; modern day Ukraine)
 Ang Lee, director (Taiwan)
 Béla Lugosi, actor (Austria-Hungary; modern day Romania)
 Yo-Yo Ma, classical cellist (France)
 Claes Oldenburg, artist (Sweden)
 I.M. Pei, architect (China)
 Ayn Rand, author (Russia)
 Rihanna, musician (Barbados)
 Arnold Schwarzenegger, actor/politician (Austria)
 William Shatner, actor (Canada)
 M. Night Shyamalan, director (India)
 Gene Simmons, musician (Israel)
 Charlize Theron, actress (South Africa)
 Alex Trebek, game show host (Canada)
 Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, architect (Germany)
 Eddie van Halen, musician (The Netherlands)
 Elie Wiesel, Noble Prize winner/author (Romania)

News Media




Christiane Amanpour, reporter (Iran)
 Peter Jennings, news anchor (Canada)
 Joseph Pulitzer, newspaper magnate (Hungary)

Other

Saint Frances X Cabrini, first American Catholic Saint (Italy)
 Emma Goldman, anarchist (Russia, modern day Lithuania)

CREATING A MOCK INTERVIEW

Students: With your small group, write a script for an interview with the famous immigrant you've chosen to research. The mock interview should be 5-10 minutes long and should cover the following topics:

-  The person's immigration story: where she or he came from, when she or he arrived in the United States, and why she or he came.
-  The immigrant's experiences, positive or negative, in the United States.
-  The immigrant's major accomplishments or why she or he is famous.

Try to come up with five interview questions. Every group member should write them down on their own handout to give them to their interviewer. The interviewer will ask these questions and write down the responses in the boxes.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

