

The Human Face of Poverty: Exploring Causes and Solutions

Lesson 6: Immigration

Standards Addressed by Lesson: **HISTORY** Standard 3.1 Students know how various societies were affected by contacts and exchanges among diverse peoples. **GEOGRAPHY** Standard 4.1 Students know the characteristics, location, distribution, and migration of human populations. Standard 5.3 Students know the changes that occur in the meaning, use, location, distribution, and importance of resources.

Objectives of Lesson: To allow students to consider the origins of residents of the U.S., both past and present; to examine how immigration policy has shaped and continues to shape the experiences of people coming to the U.S.; and raise awareness of the connections between immigration and economics and politics.

Instructional Strategies: Reading, active video watching, group discussion

Vocabulary: Immigration, migration, xenophobia

Suggested Resources to Obtain:

- *Bridge: Building a Race and Immigration Dialogue in the Global Economy* (National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights – NNIRR, 2004)
- *Uprooted: Refugees of the Global Economy* (NNIRR video, 2004)
- “The New Americans”, PBS website at www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans

Suggested Time: 60-70 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Map of the world and small post-it notes
- *Uprooted: Refugees of the Global Economy* (video) and VCR
- Laptop computer, computer compatible projector and screen for immigration timeline slide show
- Easel, paper, markers, tape, pens, small post-its (if exercise on page 209 of *Bridge* is included)
- Handouts of “U.S. Immigration History: a handout”, pages 62-65, *Bridge*
- Copies of the Myths & Realities Immigration Quiz for students and the teacher

Attachments:

- A. Root Causes of Immigration outline
- B. Myths & Realities Immigration Quiz
- C. Answer Key to Immigration Quiz

Lesson Outline

Activities

Activity 1:

Immigration Timeline

- Allow 20 minutes.
- Show the Immigration Timeline slideshow and ask students to take turns reading each description. (NOTE: Scan or copy 25-30 representative images from pages 75-111 of *Bridge* to make a slideshow or pictorial that can be shown to the students.)
- Suggest that students note historical events that may have affected members in their family.
- Wrap-up by asking students to consider the following questions. Full discussion optional.
 1. What groups have immigrated here throughout history?
 2. How have immigrant laws prevented certain groups of people from coming to the U.S.?
 3. Who did these laws exclude and include?
 4. Who influenced these laws and why?

Activity 2:

Myths & Realities Immigration Quiz

- Allow 15-20 minutes.
- Distribute quizzes allowing 5-7 minutes for completion. Tell students not to labor over their responses but to select the one that makes the most sense and quickly move on to the next question.
- Ask for oral responses to correct the quiz. Make this process as an interactive as possible, constantly encouraging discussion of the responses.
- Wrap-up by leading students in a discussion of:
 1. What was the most surprising fact that they learned?
 2. Why so little of this information is known by a wide audience?
 3. How the type of information presented in this quiz could be presented so that people would be more knowledgeable?

Activity 3:

Uprooted: Refugees of the Global Economy

- Allow 20 minutes.
- View “Introduction” and “Marisel” sections of the video (first two sections, 11 minutes), *Uprooted: Refugees of the Global Economy*, with the students.
- Educator should quickly explain the key points from “Jessy y Jaime’s” and “Luckner’s” stories.
- After viewing the video, discuss the following questions with the students:
 1. Why did the characters decide to move from their homes to the U.S.?
 2. Why did they feel “forced” to migrate? What government policies affected their decision? What corporate policies prompted them to relocate? (Refer to Root Causes of Immigration outline.)

3. What immigration policies shaped their experience in the U.S.? Must corporations comply with similar constrictions?
4. Why did the individuals in the film become activists? What do they hope to accomplish? If you were going to advise them, what would you suggest they do to achieve their goals?
 - Encourage any students who feel comfortable doing so to share their or their families' immigration stories. Try to inject as much diversity as possible into this discussion in order to see similarities of experience that have occurred historically.
 - Note to educator: You may want to review the following in *Bridge* for this discussion: p. 134, "Introduction to Race, Migration, and Multiple Oppressions"; p. 238, "Changing Demographics of Race and Migration"; and p. 252, chart on "Where Have Immigrants Come From."

CONCLUSION

Focus students' attention on the lesson objectives:

- consider the origins of residents of the U.S., both past and present;
- examine how immigration policy has shaped and continues to shape the experiences of people coming to the U.S.; and
- raise awareness of the connections between immigration and economics and politics.

Ask students to illustrate each objective with a point made during the class.

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Attachment A: Root Causes of Immigration Outline

I. Economic (consider at both “global” and “personal” levels)

A. “Supply/push”

1. Lack of jobs and/or underemployment
2. Poor wages
3. Substandard working conditions
4. Substandard living conditions
5. Increasing gap between rich and poor
6. Reliance/dependency on U.S. economy
7. Remittances – provide limited economic growth for long-term sustainability
8. Maquiladoras – “employment opportunity” that perpetuates poor wages and conditions
9. Lack of confidence in political and corporate leaders
10. “Brain drain”

B. “Demand/pull”

1. Seasonal/agricultural work
2. Availability of low wage jobs not being filled by U.S. citizens
3. Recruitment by employers (formal and informal means)
5. Conceptions of U.S. as “land of opportunity”

II. Familial

A. Family disunification (when some family members migrate)

1. Shift in “head of household” responsibilities

B. Family reunification (when remaining family members follow)

III. Political

A. Imbalanced trading positions vis-à-vis U.S., IMF, WB, WTO, etc. leading to privatization, lack of workers’ rights, environmental rights, reductions in social programs (health, education, etc.)

B. Political corruption (systemic)

C. Lack of political will to improve conditions and shrink gaps between rich and poor

D. Concentration of power in government and business elites

- E. Some number of politicians, bankers, business leaders trained in the U.S.—their classmates are in U.S. government, WB, etc.

IV. Social/cultural/religious

- A. Family reunification – those still in country of origin want to move to U.S. to rejoin breadwinners
- B. Increase in gangs – prompts some families to want to leave home countries to escape influence and environment of gangs (double edged sword: many gangs have ties to gangs in U.S.)

V. Militarization

- A. Imposition of “military mentality” on societies—holdover especially in countries that experienced internal wars
- B. U.S. military training at SOA/WHINSEC
- C. “Project New Horizon” – collaboration with U.S. military for “humanitarian” assistance
- D. War against Drugs
- E. War against Terror—Latin America is next area of priority for Bush administration
 - 1. Venezuela – “socialist-militarist” government “depriving” middle and upper classes of their rights
- F. Cause of family divisiveness

Attachment B: Myths & Realities Immigration Quiz

- 1) How many immigrants are there in the world?
 - a. 9 million
 - b. 50 million
 - c. 175 million
 - d. 1 billion
- 2) What percent of the U.S. population was born in another country?
 - a. 5%
 - b. 11.5%
 - c. 27.3%
 - d. 50%
- 3) What percent of all immigrants coming to the U.S. are women?
 - a. 75%
 - b. 55%
 - c. 30%
 - d. 10%
- 4) Most immigrants come to the United States from where?
 - a. The Middle East
 - b. Africa
 - c. Asia
 - d. Latin America
 - e. The Middle East and Africa
 - f. Asia and Latin America
 - g. All of the Above
- 5) What percentage of the world's immigrants come to the United States?
 - a. More than 35%
 - b. 27%
 - c. 15%
 - d. Less than 1%
- 6) What is the most common reason people from other countries come to the U.S. to live?
 - a. To join a close family member
 - b. For employment
 - c. To escape prosecution
 - d. All of the above
- 7) Most immigrants come to the United States illegally.
 - a. True
 - b. False

- 8) Immigrants made up what percentage of the total U.S. population in 2000?
- 6%
 - 11%
 - 15%
 - 28%
- 9) Undocumented immigrant workers take jobs away from native workers
- True
 - False
- 10) In 2000, nearly three quarters of all immigrants settled in how many states?
- 2
 - 6
 - 10
 - 15

Sources:

- *Bridge: Building a Race and Immigration Dialogue in the Global Economy*, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR)
- “The New Americans”, PBS website at www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans

Attachment C: Answer Key to Immigration Quiz

- 1) **c.** The United Nations estimated in 2002 that there were over 175 million people in migration in the world, more than 2/3 of the total population of the United States to provide perspective. The number of migrants in the world has more than doubled since 1970, with the majority of migrants living in developed countries. Source: United Nations, International Migration Report, 2002.
- 2) **b.** 11.5% of the U.S. population was born outside the United States. Today's proportion of foreign-born residents to U.S.-born residents is less than at the turn of the century, when foreign-born immigrants comprised 15% of the population. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, The Foreign Born Population in the United States, March 2002, issued 2003.
- 3) **b.** Over one half of all immigrants to the U.S. are women, which is a new trend in migration to the U.S., reflecting global trends of the growing number of female migrants. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, The Foreign Born Population in the United States, March 2002, issued 2003.
- 4) **f.** Asia and Latin America. Most immigrants come to the United States from Asia and Latin America. From 1900 to 2000, the proportion of immigrants from Asia and Latin America increased from less than 1.5 percent to 26 percent and 52 percent, respectively.
- 5) **d.** Less than 1 percent. Of the 175 million migrants in the world, the U.S. admitted 1,063,732 documented immigrants in 2002. Undocumented immigration adds approximately 350,000 people per year by INS estimates.
- 6) **a.** To join a close family member. Most legal immigrants (about 75 percent) come to the U.S. to join close family members, although employment and escaping persecution are two of the other main reasons people come to the U.S.
- 7) **False.** Of the approximately 1.4 million immigrants who entered the U.S. in 2002, only about 25 percent came illegally. Although these figures do not account for some homeless immigrants and undocumented migrant workers who return to their native countries when their seasonal work is over, the proportion of illegal immigrants to legal immigrants is still quite small.
- 8) **b.** In 1910, immigrants made up nearly 15 percent of the U.S. population but in 2000, immigrants made up a little more than 11 percent of the population. Immigration was at its peak during the late 19th and early 20th centuries when Europeans arrived to work in the factories of the industrializing cities and the Western territories. Census Bureau statistics for 2000 report that out of approximately 281.4 million people living in the U.S., 31.1 million were born outside the country U.S. So far, no single decade has topped 1901-1910 for immigration admissions.
- 9) **False.** Studies show that undocumented immigration either has no effect on native workers or actually increases their labor market opportunities by boosting the industries that create

new jobs. Immigrants create more jobs than they themselves fill. They do so directly by starting new businesses and indirectly through their expenditures on U.S. goods and services. Undocumented immigrants often take jobs that others in the community refuse to perform. For example, the railroads across the West were largely built by Chinese immigrants, and large-scale agricultural production still relies on Mexican workers, many of whom are migrants, not immigrants.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary definitions:

Migrant: a person who moves regularly in order to find work especially in harvesting crops

Immigrant: a person who comes to a country to take up permanent residency

- 10) **b.** Perhaps a common misperception that there is a high volume of immigrants entering the U.S. today rests in the fact that nearly three-quarters (68 percent) of all immigrants settle in just six states: California, New York, Texas, Florida, New Jersey and Illinois.

Sources:

- *Bridge: Building a Race and Immigration Dialogue in the Global Economy*, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR)
- “The New Americans”, PBS website at www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans