



**HUDDLED
MASS
OR
SECOND
CLASS?**

CHALLENGING ANTI-IMMIGRANT BIAS IN THE U.S.

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“What is it Like to be an Outsider?”: Building Empathy for the Experiences of Immigrants

ABOUT THIS LESSON

Time

2 – 3 hours or 3 class periods + time for research

Grade Level

Grades 3 – 5

Strategies and Skills

brainstorming, connecting past to present, cooperative group work, critical thinking, forming opinions, historical understanding, large and small group discussion, reading skills, research skills, social action, using the Internet, writing skills

Key Words and Phrases

bias, Cambodia, “chink,” descendent, discrimination, Ellis Island, empathy, famine, “gook,” immigrant, immigration, Native American, outsider, prejudice, refugee, stereotype

RATIONALE

This lesson helps students to build empathy and understanding for the experiences of immigrants in the U.S. Through stories, reflective writing and research on the influence that immigrants have had on U.S. culture, students heighten their awareness about the negative effects of anti-immigrant bias and the integral role that immigrants have always played in U.S. life.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will increase empathy for immigrants and others who are treated as “outsiders” in their community
- Students will learn about the history of immigration to the U.S.
- Students will explore the negative impact of anti-immigrant stereotypes and bias
- Students will research the contributions of immigrants to the U.S.

LESSON PREPARATION

Handouts/Supporting Documents:

- *You Have to Live in Somebody Else’s Country to Understand* (one per student or one large copy to post)
- *Native Americans* (one per small group)
- *A Nation of Immigrants* (one per small group)
- *One Nation, Many Languages* (one per small group)
- *Gifts from Many Lands* (one per small group)
- *Contributions of Native Americans and Immigrants* (one per small group)

Other Materials: chart paper, markers, world map, small Post-it® pad or pushpins

Advance Preparation:

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.
- (OPTIONAL) Instead of photocopying, chart the poem, *You Have to Live in Somebody Else’s Country to Understand*
- Gather a copy of the Spanish and English versions of *Who Belongs Here?/Quien Es de Aqui?* by Margy Burns Knight

PROCEDURES

Part I: Building Empathy for “Outsiders” (45 – 60 minutes + time to write story/poem)

1. Prior to the lesson, gather a copy of both the Spanish and English versions of the following book:

Who Belongs Here?/Quien Es de Aqui? by Margy Burns Knight
Tilbury House Publishers, 2003, 30 pages, grades 2 – 5

Summary: Nary, a young boy fleeing war-torn Cambodia for the safety of the U.S., is viewed by some of his new classmates as a “chink” who should go back where he belongs. But what if everyone whose family came from another place was forced to return to his or her homeland? Who would be left? This story teaches compassion for recent immigrants while sharing the history of immigration in the U.S. and some of the important contributions made by past immigrants.

2. Tell students that you are going to read a story aloud, and that for homework you would like them to write a summary of the story in their own words and a letter to the main character, Nary, describing how they felt as they heard about Nary’s experiences. Begin reading *Quien Es de Aqui?* (the Spanish version only) aloud to the class. Read several pages and pause to ask students if they have any questions about the story so far and if they feel prepared to complete the homework assignment.

NOTE: Read just enough to make students feel a little uncomfortable; the goal is for students to experience what it might feel like to be a newcomer to a country where they don’t understand the language. If *Quien Es de Aqui?* is not available or if many of your students speak Spanish, this exercise can be done with any book written in a language that is unfamiliar to the majority of your students.

3. Presumably many students will express frustration at having to listen and respond to a book that they can’t understand. After students have had a chance to voice their apprehensions, tell them that they don’t actually have to complete the assignment and discuss some of the following questions:
 - How did it feel to sit through a story that you could not understand?
 - What was your reaction when you thought you’d be expected to complete an assignment that you are not capable of doing?
 - What group of people experience situations and feelings like this every day? (*If students do not use the term immigrants, introduce and define it.*)
 - How do you think it would feel to move to a place where you do not understand the language or the customs?
 - Have you ever observed immigrants being teased or treated differently because of where they come from? Describe what you have observed.

4. Tell students that you'd like to read a poem together written by a ninth grade student, an immigrant from Cambodia who expresses what it feels like to be an outsider. Post or distribute copies of the poem, *You Have to Live in Somebody Else's Country to Understand* by Noy Chou. Ask for volunteers to read each stanza aloud. Discuss the following questions:
 - What is it like for Chou to be an outsider from another country, and to look and sound different from the other kids in her new school?
 - What groups or individuals have you noticed are treated like outsiders in our community? How does it affect a person when they are made to feel like an outsider?
 - How do Chou's new classmates in the U.S. react to her differences? How do they treat her?
 - Is it fair for Chou's teachers and peers to expect her to keep up with everyone else? What do they think about Chou when she can't keep up?
 - Why do you think that some of Chou's classmates bother or make fun of her when she hasn't done anything to them? Why do some people choose to hurt rather than help immigrants like Chou?
 - Have you learned anything from this poem that will cause you to behave differently in the future?
 - What can we all do to make immigrants like Chou feel welcome and supported in our school or community?

NOTE: The Cambodian name is spoken and written in the order of last name then first name, so Noy Chou should be referred to as Chou when discussing the poem with students.

5. Tell students that we have all had the experience of feeling like an outsider—or as Chou says, “an opposite” or “a loser”—for one reason or another. Ask students to reflect on a time when they have felt this way, and to write a short story or a poem describing the experience and their feelings. Have students title their poems/stories, “You have to _____ to Understand” (e.g., “You Have to be Adopted to Understand” or “You Have to Have a Disability to Understand”).
6. When students have completed their writing, ask for several volunteers to share their pieces with the class. Conclude by reinforcing the importance of demonstrating empathy for others and making “outsiders” feel like “insiders” through kindness and friendship.

OPTIONAL: If there is not sufficient time in class for this writing task, assign it for homework and do just the sharing/processing part in class.

7. For homework, ask students to find out whether or not their family is originally from the United States and, if not, approximately when they arrived in the U.S. and from what part(s) of the world. For the purposes of this assignment, ask students to trace their family's history back as many generations as possible.

Part II: Exploring Who “Belongs” in the U.S. (30 – 40 minutes)

8. Read aloud the English version of *Who Belongs Here?* by Margy Burns Knight and discuss the following questions:
 - Why did Nary and his family leave Cambodia and immigrate to the U.S.?
 - Nary’s grandmother once told him that the U.S. would be “better than heaven.” Did this turn out to be true for Nary? Explain your answer.
 - Why did some of Nary’s classmates call him names and tell him to “get back on the boat and go home where you belong”? Why do they believe that Nary does not belong in the U.S.?
 - How did Nary and his teacher help the other students to better understand Nary’s experiences and feelings?
 - In what ways did Nary’s story help you to better understand the experiences of immigrants that you know?
9. Post a copy of a world map. Tell student that the book they just read asks the question, “Who belongs here?” Ask, “what if everyone whose family came from another place was forced to return to his or her homeland? Who would be left?” Remind students that for homework you asked them to find out where in the world their families originally came from, if not the U.S. Invite students up to the world map to indicate where their families lived before coming to the U.S. using a small sheet of Post-it® paper or a push pin.

NOTE: Students should indicate the place(s) that represent the earliest ancestors about whom they are aware. Encourage students who do not know precise locations to approximate. For example, African-American students who do not know exactly which country their forebears came from can select any spot on the continent of Africa; a Jewish student who only knows that his/her relatives lived somewhere in Eastern Europe before the war can select any spot in that region.

10. Ask students to stand if they did not come up to the world map, that is if their family has always lived in the U.S. (Presumably few if any students will stand.) Ask students if all those families who come from someplace else “don’t belong” in the U.S. Ask why some people say that immigrants—like Nary in the story—don’t belong here and should go back where they come from.
11. Emphasize that while every country has to set limits on the number of immigrants who can arrive at any given time, it is never true to say that any particular group—such as Cambodians or Mexicans—don’t belong. Ask students if they know what it is called when someone holds a belief about a whole group of people that assumes that everyone in the group is the same (e.g., Mexicans are criminals so they should not be allowed in the U.S. or Haitians are lazy so we don’t want them in this country).
12. If students do not identify the term *stereotype*, introduce and define it (a belief about a whole group of people that does not allow for each person’s individual differences). Ask students why it is important to avoid stereotypes about immigrants and all groups of people (e.g., they

are untrue, hurt people's feelings, limit opportunities, lead to prejudice and discrimination, etc.).

Part III: Researching the Influence of Immigrants on U.S. Culture (time will vary)

13. Emphasize that immigrants have always been and still are a central and important part of U.S. life, and that they have shaped the way we live in many ways. Tell students that they will conduct some brief research to further explore the ways in which Native and immigrant groups have influenced U.S. life and culture.

14. Divide the class into five groups and assign each group one of the following topics:

- Native Americans
- A Nation of Immigrants
- One Nation, Many Languages
- Gifts from Many Lands
- Contributions of Native Americans and Immigrants

Have each group select a recorder and a reporter. Provide each group with a copy of the appropriate handout and review the directions with them. Allow groups time to research their topics using the classroom/school library and the Internet.

15. When groups have completed their research, reconvene the class and ask the group reporters to share highlights from their group's findings. Conclude by underscoring that the U.S. is a "nation of immigrants," that this is an important part of our history and that prejudice and discrimination against immigrant groups is unacceptable.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. In *Who Belongs Here?* the author writes: *Every year millions of people from all over the world try to come to the U.S. Not all of them are allowed to live here. Since the mid-1800s the government has made laws to keep certain people out of this country. Many people choose to come illegally...Who should be allowed to come to the U.S.? Should anyone be made to leave? If there aren't enough jobs, homes, and food for everyone, how do we decide who gets to live here?* Have students research some of the past and current U.S. laws regulating immigration. Discuss with students the question of how the government decides who gets to live in the U.S. Have students write their own immigration law that addresses this question and incorporates their ideas about the fairest way to regulate immigration.
2. Assign students to conduct research on activists who have worked to safeguard the rights of immigrants and migrant workers, such as Dolores Huerta and César Chávez. Have students write brief biographies and create dioramas depicting scenes that represent key episodes in the struggle for rights.

YOU HAVE TO LIVE IN SOMEBODY ELSE'S COUNTRY TO UNDERSTAND

By Noy Chou



What is it like to be an outsider?

What is it like to sit in the class where everyone has blond hair and you have black hair?

What is it like when the teacher says, "Whoever wasn't born here raise your hand."

And you are the only one.

Then, when you raise your hand, everybody looks at you and makes fun of you.

You have to live in somebody else's country to understand.

What is it like when the teacher treats you like you've been here all your life?

What is it like when the teacher speaks too fast and you are the only one who can't understand what he or she is saying, and you try to tell him or her to slow down.

Then when you do, everybody says, "If you don't understand, go to a lower class or get lost."

You have to live in somebody else's country to understand.

What is it like when you are an opposite?

When you wear the clothes of your country and they think you are crazy to wear these clothes and you think they are pretty.

You have to live in somebody else's country to understand.

What is it like when you are always a loser?

What is it like when somebody bothers you when you do nothing to them?

You tell them to stop but they tell you that they didn't do anything to you.

Then, when they keep doing it until you can't stand it any longer, you go up to the teacher and tell him or her to tell them to stop bothering you.

They say that they didn't do anything to bother you.

Then the teacher asks the person sitting next to you.

He says, "Yes, she didn't do anything to her" and you have no witness to turn to.

So the teacher thinks you are a liar.

You have to live in somebody else's country to understand.

What is it like when you try to talk and you don't pronounce the words right?

They don't understand you.

They laugh at you but you don't know that they are laughing at you, and you start to laugh with them.

They say, "Are you crazy, laughing at yourself? Go get lost, girl."

You have to live in somebody else's country without a language to understand.



What is it like when you walk in the street and everybody turns around to look at you and you don't know that they are looking at you?

Then, when you find out, you want to hide your face but you don't know where to hide because they are everywhere.

You have to live in somebody else's country to feel it.

NATIVE AMERICANS

In *Who Belongs Here?* by Margy Burns Knight, the author writes: For at least 10,000 years before [immigrants made the U.S. their home], the U.S. was inhabited by thousands of tribes of native people. Descendents of these tribes live in the U.S. today.

What Native American Nations still exist in the U.S. today? Where do they live? What can you learn about their culture?

Name of Nation	Location	Cultural Facts
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS

In *Who Belongs Here?* by Margy Burns Knight, the author writes: In the last five hundred years millions of people have made the U.S. their home. Some came by choice, while others were forced from their homelands by war, slavery, or famine...From 1892 to 1954 more than 12 million immigrants from at least 50 countries arrived on boats at Ellis Island, an immigration station in New York City.

What are some of the immigrant groups that make up our nation today? How many people from each of these countries live in the U.S.? Why did they leave their homelands?

Immigrant Group/Country	Number of People in U.S.	Reasons for Immigrating
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

ONE NATION, MANY LANGUAGES

In *Who Belongs Here?* by Margy Burns Knight, the author writes: At least 350 languages are spoken in the U.S. today, and many English-language words come from other languages. Kindergarten is a German word that means children's garden, and Mississippi is a Chippewa word for large river. Jeans became the English word for Gênes, which is the French spelling of Genoa, a city in Italy. The original material for jeans was imported from Genoa.

What are the main languages spoken in the U.S. today in addition to English? How many people in the U.S. speak those languages? What are some words or expressions from each language that have become a part of our everyday speech?

Language	Number of Speakers in U.S.	Common Words/Phrases
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

GIFTS FROM MANY LANDS

In *Who Belongs Here?* by Margy Burns Knight, the author writes: Peanuts, peppers, corn, squash, and avocados are among America's native foods. Bagels, tortillas, olive oil, curry, potatoes, pretzels, and rice are some of the many foods brought to the U.S. from other countries.

What other foods or products originate from foreign countries? When and how did they arrive in the U.S.? How are they prepared or used?

Products from Other Places	When/How They Arrived	How They are Used
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

CONTRIBUTIONS OF NATIVE AMERICANS AND IMMIGRANTS

In *Who Belongs Here?* by Margy Burns Knight, the author writes: Parts of the U.S. Constitution were modeled after the Great Law of Peace, a political system that six nations of Iroquois people developed in the 1500s and used for several hundred years. Representatives of each nation spent long hours talking about ways to build peace and cooperation among their people.

What are some other contributions from Native Americans or immigrant groups? What person or nation is responsible for the contribution? How has each contribution helped to shape the way we live in the U.S.?

Contribution	Who Introduced It?	How It Affects Our Lives
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

“They Don’t Know Me”: Exposing the Myths and Establishing the Facts about Immigration

ABOUT THIS LESSON

Time

2 hours or 3 class periods

Grade Level

Grades 6 – 9

Strategies and Skills

analyzing political cartoons, brainstorming, case study, cooperative group work, critical thinking, forming opinions, large and small group discussion, media literacy, reading skills, social action, substantiating factual information, writing skills

Key Words and Phrases

9-11, ally, barrier, bias, border, day laborer, discrimination, immigrant, immigration, Muslim, myth, native, prejudice, refugee, scapegoat, Sikh, stereotype, terrorism, undocumented, unemployment, wages

RATIONALE

This lesson helps students to differentiate the myths from the facts about immigrants and immigration. Students participate in a quiz and analyze a political cartoon in order to better understand how stereotypes and scapegoating are used to marginalize immigrants. They then hear immigrant testimonials, view a video clip and investigate scenarios in order to increase their empathy and develop their skills as allies to targeted individuals and communities.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will distinguish myths from facts regarding immigrants and immigration
- Students will learn how stereotyping and scapegoating marginalizes groups
- Students will increase their understanding of the impact of anti-immigrant bias
- Students will identify and practice strategies for being an ally to targeted individuals and groups

LESSON PREPARATION

Handouts/Supporting Documents:

- *Immigration Quiz* (one per student)
- *Bloody Glow-Worms...* (one to project or one per student)
- *Myths and Facts about Immigrants and Immigration* (one per student)
- *Quiz Answer Key and Myths and Facts Sources* (one copy)
- *Voices of Immigrants* (one copy or one per student)
- *Standing Up to Anti-Immigrant Bias* (one copy)
- *Being an Ally* (one per small group)

Other Materials: chart paper, markers, scissors, *What Would You Do?* video clip, computer, LCD projector, Internet connection

Advance Preparation:

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.
- Set up computer/projector/screen (see steps #2 and #8).
- Decide which *Voices of Immigrants* option to use and prepare as indicated (see step #6).
- Cut apart *Standing Up to Anti-Immigrant Bias* scenarios (see step #11).

PROCEDURES

Part I: Myths and Facts about Immigrants and Immigration (45 minutes)

1. Tell students that they will be exploring the topic of immigration and that, as an introduction to the topic, you'd like them to take a brief true/false quiz. Explain that the purpose is to find out what the class as a whole believes rather than what each individual knows, so they will not need to write their names on the quiz. Distribute a copy of *Immigration Quiz* to each student and allow 5 – 10 minutes for students to work silently. When students are finished, collect the quizzes.

OPTIONAL: Conduct the quiz by asking students to stand along an imaginary continuum for each question. Designate one side of the room as “definitely true,” the other as “definitely false” and the space between as “unsure” but leaning in one direction or another. Read each statement aloud and ask students to stand in the place that reflects their belief. If time allows, ask for volunteers to share why they believe each statement is true or false.

2. Project or distribute copies of *Bloody Glow-Worms*. Have a volunteer read the caption aloud and clarify any vocabulary with which students are unfamiliar. Engage students in a discussion using some of the following questions:
 - How do the insects at the front table feel about the glow-worms? Why do they feel this way?
 - What accusations do they make of the glow-worms? Do you think these claims are true?
 - How does this cartoon relate to immigration?
 - What problems do immigrants sometimes get blamed for in our society? What myths or stereotypes are sometimes spread about this population? (OPTIONAL: List the myths that students come up with on a sheet of chart paper.)
 - What do you think the artist is trying to say through this cartoon?
3. Tell students that the quiz they took earlier contains some myths about immigrants—ideas that many people in society believe are true, but that are actually flawed or just plain wrong. Tell students that they will revisit the quiz to set apart the myths from the facts about immigrants and immigration.
4. Divide the class into small groups of 3 – 4 students and distribute the *Myths and Facts about Immigrants and Immigration* handout to each student. Randomly divide the quizzes completed earlier among each group. Instruct groups to collaboratively mark the quizzes by reading through the *Myths and Facts* handout and searching for the correct answers. Allow about 20 minutes for groups to work.

OPTIONAL: If time is limited or the reading is challenging for students, cut the *Myths and Facts* handout into sections and assign each group to read just one or two of the myths.

NOTE: Refer to the *Quiz Answer Key and Myths and Facts Sources* as needed.

5. Reconvene the class and discuss some of the following questions:

- What surprised you about what you learned from the handout?
- How did students do overall on the quizzes you marked? Did you find that most students were aware of the facts or did they believe some myths? Which myths in particular?
- What is a stereotype (*an oversimplified idea about an entire group of people without regard for individual differences*)? How do you think myths or stereotypes about immigrants take hold in our society? Why do people buy into them?
- What is a scapegoat (*an innocent person or group that is blamed for the general problems of society*)? How and why are immigrants scapegoated in our society?

Part II: Exploring the Impact of Anti-Immigrant Stereotypes (45 minutes)

6. Tell students that you would like them to think about how the myths and stereotypes they just read about can develop into negative behavior, and how this behavior might affect immigrants and all people. Proceed with one of the following options:

- Divide the class into small groups of 3 – 5 students. Cut apart the handout, *Voices of Immigrants*, and give each group several quotes to examine. Instruct groups to discuss how each quote made them feel, and to write down examples of myths, stereotypes and/or scapegoating that are reflected in the immigrants' experiences.
- Cut apart the handout, *Voices of Immigrants*, so that there is one quote on each strip. Ask for volunteers to read aloud each quote one at a time, pausing in between for students to reflect on what they have heard.
- Provide each student with a copy of *Voices of Immigrants* and have them read all of the quotes. Instruct students to select one quote that they are particularly drawn to and to do some free writing in response to the quote. Have a few volunteers read their reflections aloud to the class.

7. After exploring the *Voices of Immigrants* quotes, discuss some of the following questions:

- How do myths and stereotypes shape the way that people treat immigrants?
- How does this behavior affect immigrants? How does it affect you?
- Do the experiences described in the quotes reflect what you see and hear in our school or neighborhood? If so, describe what you have noticed.
- Why do you think certain groups are singled out for negative treatment in our society?
- What would you do if you heard or observed anti-immigrant remarks or behavior?

8. Tell students that you'd like them to watch a video that follows on the last question—"What would you do?" Explain that in this clip, hidden cameras capture how ordinary people react to prejudice and discrimination against immigrants. Make sure students understand that the immigrants in the video and those who treat them badly are all actors. Tell students that, as they watch, you'd like them to think about what they would do if a similar situation occurred in their school or community. Play *What Would You Do?* and discuss some of the following questions after students have viewed the video.

- Describe the different forms of bias you observed (e.g., demanding that the day laborers speak English; demanding that they leave/take their business elsewhere; ignoring them or acting indifferently; laughing along with the mean comments; making threatening remarks; etc.).
- What are some of the stereotypes and prejudices that motivated the biased behavior (e.g., immigrants won't learn English; they're invading/overflowing our country; they're different from Americans; they don't fit into American culture/society; etc.)?
- How did Mario, the actual day laborer, react to what he observed and how did this make you feel?
- How did some customers take a stand against the bias (e.g., they challenged biased assumptions; demanded polite behavior; asserted values such as respect for others; showed kindness to the immigrants by ordering/paying for them; threatened to leave/not give future business to the deli; shared their personal background/experiences to lend support; etc.)?
- What would you do if you observed your peers behaving in a similarly prejudiced or mean way to immigrants in our school or community?
- What can you do to make sure you never stereotype or scapegoat immigrants or any group of people?

Part III: Being an Ally to Targeted Communities (30 minutes)

9. Write the word, ALLY, on the board or a sheet of chart paper and ask students what it means. Record their responses and make sure that the following basic definition is conveyed:

An ally is someone who speaks out on behalf of someone else or takes actions that are supportive of someone else.

Comment to students that it can sometimes be scary to stand up for others. Ask them what some of the challenges are of being an ally (e.g., peer pressure, fear of being targeted, not wanting to be the only one, not knowing what to say, etc.) List their responses under the definition of ally.

10. Suggest that it takes reflection and practice to be an ally; that we need to think about and even rehearse the words we might use in a difficult situation so that we feel prepared in the moment. Tell students that they will be identifying and practicing strategies for being an ally in response to some made-up scenarios in which immigrants are treated with disrespect.
11. Divide the class into small groups of 3 – 4 students and have each group select a recorder and a reporter. Provide each group with one scenario from *Standing Up to Anti-Immigrant Bias* and the *Being an Ally* worksheet. Instruct groups to read and discuss their scenario, and to fill in the worksheet with their thoughts and ideas. Allow about 15 minutes for groups to work.
12. Reconvene the class and have the reporters share highlights from their small group discussions as time allows. Engage the class in a conversation using some of the following questions:

- What strategies for being an ally did you discuss or hear that never occurred to you before?
- What strategies did you discuss or hear that you can actually imagine yourself using?
- Were there strategies that seemed unsafe or uncomfortable to you? Explain.
- Have you acted as an ally to someone in the past? What happened and how did it feel to stand up against bias or cruelty?
- What can you do to prepare yourself to act as an ally in the future?

NOTE: Make sure to acknowledge that there are situations in which it may not be safe to stand up to others. Point out that confronting people is only one way to be an ally, and that it is equally helpful to show support in other ways, such as getting assistance from adults, not laughing at biased jokes and showing friendship to the targets of bias and bullying.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Show students political cartoons that depict anti-immigrant sentiment throughout U.S. history. Discuss how such prejudice has been aimed at many immigrant groups who were newcomers to the U.S. Compare historical examples of prejudice to some of the anti-immigrant attitudes that exist today, and discuss strategies for responding to and reducing such bias.
2. Have students collect newspaper and Internet articles that reflect current attitudes about immigrants and immigration reform. Discuss the articles in class and help students to identify changes they would like to see in this country regarding the treatment of immigrants. Work with students to identify strategies for achieving these changes (e.g., letter writing, participating in marches/protests, etc.) and help them to follow through on one or more of these change strategies.

IMMIGRATION QUIZ

Read the following statements and indicate whether you think each is true or false by placing a T for true or an F for false on the line before each statement.

- _____ 1. There are more immigrants living in the U.S. today than ever before.
- _____ 2. The majority of immigrants in the U.S. have entered the country illegally.
- _____ 3. Most immigrants in the U.S. try to learn English.
- _____ 4. Crime rates have gone up recently in cities with large immigrant populations, like New York and Miami.
- _____ 5. Immigrant teens are less likely than U.S.-born teens to be involved in violence and drug use.
- _____ 6. Immigrants help to create new jobs and to lower unemployment rates in the states where they live.
- _____ 7. Immigrants don't pay taxes.
- _____ 8. Tougher immigration laws have led to more arrests of terrorists in the U.S.
- _____ 9. In 2006 the U.S. began building a 700-mile fence on the U.S.-Mexico border.
- _____ 10. Border walls have been proven to greatly reduce illegal immigration.



BLOODY GLOW-WORMS...



“Bloody glow-worms... Coming over here... Hanging out in our dingy bars... Wantonly luminescing... Enticing our youth... Attracting our women... Eating them all...”




MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT IMMIGRANTS AND IMMIGRATION

 **Myth #1: Immigrants are overrunning our country, and most are here illegally.**

The Facts: It is true that there are more immigrants living in the U.S. than ever before. However, the *percentage* of immigrants in the overall population is not much different than during other large waves. Today immigrants make up about 12% of the total U.S. population. From 1900 to 1930, immigrants made up between 12% and 15% of the population, and similar spikes occurred in the 1850s and 1880s. The U.S. successfully absorbed immigrants during those periods, and there is no reason to believe that we are being “overrun” today.

Of the 36 million immigrants in the U.S. today, two thirds (24 million) are here legally, and half of those with legal status (12 million) are U.S. citizens. There are an estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. Half (6 million) of these people entered the country legally as tourists, students or temporary workers and became “undocumented” when their papers expired and they didn’t leave the country. Undocumented immigrants make up about 4% of the overall U.S. population, and only 2% have crossed the border outside of legal channels.

 **Myth #2: Most immigrants aren’t interested in fitting into our society. They don’t want to learn English or become Americans.**

The Facts: Most immigrants, if given the opportunity, work hard to adapt to their new countries. More than 80% of immigrants say they have tried to learn English. After 15 years in the U.S., for example, 75% of Spanish-speaking immigrants speak English regularly; and 91% of their children and 97% of their grandchildren can speak English well. For many immigrants, however, there are barriers to learning a new language. Many work two or three jobs and don’t have enough time, money or child care to allow for classes. English language programs in the U.S. are often underfunded and hard to get into. It is estimated that more than 90,000 immigrants across the nation are on waiting lists to learn English.

Similarly, many immigrants seek citizenship despite difficult requirements and long delays—applications for citizenship sometimes take years to process. In 2007 the Department of Homeland Security received 1.4 million citizenship applications, and in recent years the number of new citizens has risen to the highest level in 25 years.

In addition, one out of every three immigrants marries outside of their national or ethnic group, and half of their children intermarry. Today’s immigrants are adjusting and blending into U.S. society at the same rate as past generations of immigrants.



Myth #3: Immigrants bring crime and violence to our cities and towns.

The Facts: Study after study shows that immigrants are less likely than native-born citizens to commit crimes, even though immigrants are more likely to live in poverty and have less than a high school education. About five times as many U.S.-born men as immigrants between the ages of 18 and 39 spend time in prison. One study found that almost 10% of U.S.-born versus just over 1% of immigrant male high school dropouts was in jail in 2000. Newly arrived immigrants are especially unlikely to be involved in crime, and teenage immigrants are less likely than native-born teens to be involved in delinquent behavior, such as violence and drug use.

Even as the U.S. experiences one of the largest spikes in immigration in many decades, crime rates across the country continue to go down. This is true even in cities with large immigrant populations, such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Miami, and border cities like San Diego and El Paso. Those who try to blame immigrants for a supposed rise in crime are twisting the facts to stir up stereotypes and bias against immigrants.



Myth #4: Immigrants hurt our country financially by taking jobs and services without paying taxes.

The Facts: Though many people fear that immigrants are taking job opportunities away from natives, immigrants actually help to create new jobs. States with large numbers of immigrants report lower unemployment for everyone. Immigrants are more likely to be self-employed and start new businesses. 18% of small businesses, which provide up to 80% of the new jobs in the U.S. each year, are started by immigrants. Though an increase in immigrant workers sometimes drives down wages for working class people, immigrants help to lift wages for workers as a whole in the U.S.

Immigrants pay between \$90 and \$140 billion each year in taxes. More than half of all undocumented immigrants are believed to be working “on the books,” which means that they pay taxes on their salaries; and all people contribute by paying sales taxes on goods that they buy and property taxes on the homes they rent.

Studies show that immigrants pay \$20 to \$30 billion more in taxes each year than the amount of government services they use. While the cost of educating the children of immigrants may be high, many immigrants do not benefit from other support that citizens receive, such as food stamps and social security payments. In addition, immigrants are less likely to use services that may be open to them, such as health care. Overall, immigrants contribute more to the U.S. economy than they take.



Myth #5: Open borders and too many illegal immigrants make it more likely that the U.S. will suffer a terrorist attack.

The Facts: Since September 11th, some people have tried to link the “War on Terror” to the recent wave of immigration. The U.S. government passed laws after 9-11 treating immigrants—especially Muslim and Arab people—in hostile ways. For example, a “Special Registration” program was set up that required immigrant boys and men from certain countries to be fingerprinted, photographed and interviewed by immigration officers. In 2002, 400 immigrants who voluntarily showed up for registration in Los Angeles were held, not because they were violent criminals, but because their paper work was outdated. Some were placed in handcuffs and leg shackles, hosed down with cold water and forced to sleep standing up in overcrowded cells. Since 9-11, thousands of immigrants have been held without any proof that they were involved in terrorist activities. Many have been put on trial in secret courts without being allowed to talk to a lawyer or their family members.

These harsh actions against some immigrant groups have led to the capture of almost no terrorists, and are unlikely to have made our country any more secure. Terrorist attacks are committed by people of all backgrounds, including U.S.-born citizens as well as people from other parts of the world. One study of almost 400 terrorists showed that only 6% entered their host country illegally. Many experts believe that unfairly targeting immigrants actually causes us to be less safe by making immigrants afraid to contact the police with information about crimes. The truth is that the vast majority of immigrants are not criminals or terrorists. Most are law-abiding people who come here to work hard and make a better life for their families.



Myth #6: We can solve the problem of illegal immigration by building walls and increasing security.

The Facts: In 2006 Congress passed the Secure Fence Act, which provided \$3 billion for 700 miles of fencing stretching from California to Texas, designed to prevent illegal immigration from Mexico. The government also doubled the number of border patrol agents between 1995 and 2006, and increased the border security budget by over ten times during that period. Even with all of the new walls and policing, though, the number of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. increased from about 8 million in 2000 to 12 million in 2009.

Rather than stopping immigration, the extra security has pushed it to more dangerous and out-of-the-way places, leading to fewer arrests and triple the number of deaths at the border. These risky conditions also lead many immigrants—who might normally work in the U.S. only for a short time—to stay longer and bring their families with them.

As long as there is poverty and suffering in other parts of the world, people will continue to come to the U.S. to seek a better life, no matter how big a wall we build. While no country can take in unlimited numbers of immigrants, wealthy nations have a responsibility to help those who are less fortunate. This is especially true when their policies add to hardships elsewhere, such as U.S. trade laws that drive Mexican farmers out of business or the war in Iraq, which has created millions of refugees. The U.S. prides itself on being a “nation of immigrants,” and on the values of fairness and equality. It is possible to create a process for managing immigration that treats immigrants with dignity instead of as criminals.

See the handout, Quiz Answer Key and Myths and Facts Sources, for a list of the source material used to create this fact sheet.

QUIZ ANSWER KEY AND MYTHS AND FACTS SOURCES

ANSWER KEY

1. There are more immigrants living in the U.S. today than ever before.
True and False; see Myth #1
2. The majority of immigrants in the U.S. have entered the country illegally.
False; see Myth #1
3. Most immigrants in the U.S. try to learn English.
True; see Myth #2
4. Crime rates have gone up recently in cities with large immigrant populations, like New York and Miami.
False; see Myth #3
5. Immigrant teens are less likely than U.S.-born teens to be involved in violence and drug use.
True; see Myth #3
6. Immigrants help to create new jobs and to lower unemployment rates in the states where they live.
True; see Myth #4
7. Immigrants don't pay taxes.
False; see Myth #4
8. Tougher immigration laws have led to more arrests of terrorists in the U.S.
False; see Myth #5
9. In 2006 the U.S. began building a 700-mile fence on the U.S.-Mexico border.
True; see Myth #6
10. Border walls have been proven to greatly reduce illegal immigration.
False; see Myth #6

SOURCES

- American Civil Liberties Union. Immigration Myths and Facts, <http://www.aclu.org/immigrants/34870pub20080411.html>.
- Day Labor Research Institute. Top 10 Immigration Myths and Facts, <http://daylaborinfo.org/Documents/MythsandFacts.pdf>.
- Immigrants' List. The Immigration Debate: Myths vs. Facts, http://www.immigrantslist.org/pages/myths_vs_facts.
- McDaniel, Paul. How to Understand Ten Immigration Myths and Facts, http://www.ehow.com/how_4398118_understand-ten-immigration-myths-facts.html.
- Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund. Myths about Immigrants, <http://www.truthinimmigration.org/Myths.aspx>
- OneAmerica, With Justice for All. Myths and Facts on Immigration, <http://www.hatefreezone.org/article.php?id=203>.
- PBS In the Mix. Teen Immigrants: Five American Stories, http://www.pbs.org/inthemix/shows/show_teen_immigrants3.html.

VOICES OF IMMIGRANTS

“I remember going to school in the U.S. at six or seven – I would cry every day when I first came and always wanted to go back home. I had none of my friends here, and I didn’t understand the language. People also treated me differently because I dressed and acted different and I didn’t speak English.” —*Romina, Uzbekistan*

“Elementary and middle school were very rough years. I didn’t understand English well. Kids would mess with me. Punch me. They’d tell me to curse at teachers, and I would do it without understanding. Then the school would call my dad, so I’d be punished at school and at home. I got suspended a lot during those years because students would trick me into getting in trouble, and I didn’t know how to defend myself in English.” —*Inayet, Afghanistan*

“High school was an extremely difficult stage for all of us [brothers]. I remember how hard it was to eat alone in the cafeteria full of your peers. I pretended to read books as I ate, pretended to be okay, and I was horrible at pretending. Each one of my brothers has a story but we rarely told our parents how hard it was for us. We knew our parents did not have it easy either.”
—*Jeff, Philippines*

“This is a great country, don’t get me wrong. But when I started school, I was received with such negativity. I had people walk up to me and say things like, ‘You dumba** of an African, why don’t you go back to where you came from?’ I was shocked, but I was thinking, they don’t know anything about me.” —*Neema, Kenya*

“One time I was playing in the park, playing basketball by myself, the kids they used to throw stones at me. Brothers, they wouldn’t let me play in the park. And they used to curse at me and tell me, ‘Go back to your country.’ I think what made those people treat me the way they treated me was because they don’t know me, they don’t know anything about my culture.”
—*Mohammed, Guinea, West Africa*

“It was a very slow and awkward process of being ‘Americanized.’ After the first year I became fluent in English, gained the ability to hide most of my accent, shed the FOB [fresh off the boat] look, and eventually became less of a target for scrutiny. My appearance was one of my biggest paranoias. I received a major beating the first week of school by two boys in Metallica t-shirts. They did not like ‘Kmart-wearing Asians.’ To this day I refuse to shop there for clothes.”
—*Jeff, Philippines*

“Terms like discrimination, prejudice, stereotype, I never heard those terms in my country. I learned them here. I remember someone saying that Dominicans in Washington Heights, they are all drug addicts.” —*Luincys, Dominican Republic*

“If a Muslim is a terrorist, it doesn’t mean that we all are terrorists. That’s totally wrong. That is not – you don’t know me. You don’t know me. If you want, if you want to know me, you got to come up to me and ask me.” —*Fatima, Tanzania*

“I remember in elementary school, this girl that I met said, ‘Go back where you came from.’ People don’t understand that you would have to go back to a war zone or a refugee camp. Those comments are emotionally painful. I was young and didn’t know how to explain that my country was full of bombing and murders, and occupation by the Soviets. We were the lucky ones to come to the U.S., and we expected Americans to know why we came, but they didn’t know.” —*Inayet, Afghanistan*

“I have been rejected for different reasons, the worst one being from ignorance about who I am by teachers and classmates. Once I was brave enough to complain to the head of my school. One of my teachers was spreading stereotypes about Moslems and how they shouldn’t come to the U.S. because they cause trouble and don’t fit in. The principal seemed surprised and said he’d talk with the teacher. I felt good being able to speak up for myself.” —*Roya, Iran*

“I remember when my mother used to tell me, ‘In the U.S. you can find a job on every corner. It’s the only place where everybody is equal; it’s the promised land, *mijito*.’ Mom, I love you, but that was the biggest lie anybody ever told me. I have been here four years, and I still don’t see the promised land...Nobody tells you about the hard work of an immigrant, and people making fun of your English. You can never get respect if you come from another country. For a person who has graduated from university, it’s hard to think you will be working at a restaurant in New York City.” —*Waiter, Columbia*

“It’s not easy to talk to the customers. I feel sad when they have a bad attitude talking to me. I am like a slave in their eyes; they think my job is for low level and poor people...I’m here illegally, so there is little chance for me to travel back and see my parents. Now is the time for me to save money and work hard. I feel sorry that I came here to struggle. I don’t know what I will do next.” —*Manicurist, China*

Quotes from Romina, Inayet, Jeff and Roya are from: Blohm, Judith M. and Lapinsky, Terri. *Kids Like Me: Voices of the Immigrant Experience*. Boston: Intercultural Press, 2006.

Quotes from the Columbian waiter and Chinese manicurist are from: Students of Three New York International High Schools. *Forty-Cent Tip: Stories of New York Immigrant Workers*. New York: Next Generation Press, 2006.

Quotes from Neema, Mohammed, Luincys and Fatima are from: *Teen Immigrants: Five American Stories*, PBS In the Mix at http://www.pbs.org/inthemix/shows/show_teen_immigrants3.html.

STANDING UP TO ANTI-IMMIGRANT BIAS

1. Jaspreet enrolled at your school after his family moved to the U.S. from India earlier this year. Though Jaspreet's family is Sikh, he is often mistaken for Muslim because he is from South Asia and wears a turban. On the way home from school one day, you observe a group of kids from school throw sticks at him and shout remarks like, "Why did you blow up the Twin Towers?" and "Go back to Iraq."
2. Different groups at your school claim certain spots during lunch. For example, the Latina/o students hang out at the picnic tables, the white students by the basketball court and the African American students on the grass. One day a student from El Salvador sits with an African American friend on the grass. Several other students demand that she leave the grassy area, telling her to "Go back to Mexico" and that she's not welcome in this country.
3. Ivo is a Bosnian immigrant who recently moved to the U.S. and knows only a few words of English. You notice that every day at lunch some of the kids in your class invent ways to get Ivo in trouble, and then laugh when he is unable to defend himself. You watch one day as one of your classmates sneaks a cell phone from a girl's bag and plants it in Ivo's backpack. When the girl starts searching for her phone, the other kids point at Ivo and tell the teacher on him. Ivo stares helplessly at the teacher and the other kids shout things like, "Cat got your tongue?" and "We speak English in this country."
4. When the biology teacher tells the class to find a lab partner, the kids quickly pair up and Chun Hei is left sitting alone. When the teacher asks for a volunteer to work with Chun Hei, no one offers. The teacher finally assigns Michele to work with Chun Hei. Michele reluctantly walks over to Chun Hei's station and sits as far away from her as possible. You hear Michele whisper to some neighboring students that Koreans eat dog and it smells like Chun Hei has a dead one in her lunchbag.
5. Jose is one of several students who have been selected as finalists in an essay contest at your school. The winner will receive \$1,000 toward his or her college fund. A couple of classmates tell you that they don't think Jose should be allowed to win, and ask you to go with them to complain to the principal. They tell you that Jose and his family are "illegals" and shouldn't be entitled to scholarship money from a public school. "They'll probably be sent back to their country at some point," says one, "and then *they'll* have our money instead of a real American."
6. A large number of Liberian refugees have settled in your community over the past few years as the result of a long civil war in that country. Some of the families in your school have complained that the Liberian students are wild, that they steal and are interfering with the education of American students. After several fights break out between Liberian and U.S.-born students, a petition circulates demanding that the school stop taking in Liberian refugees. Some classmates approach you and ask you to sign the petition.



BEING AN ALLY

After reading your scenario, discuss the questions below with your group members and record the group's thoughts and ideas.

Describe the problem behavior(s).	
What stereotypes, prejudices or other beliefs motivated the problem behavior(s)?	
What actions could you take in the moment to be an ally?	
What specific words could you use in the moment to be an ally?	
What actions could you take following the incident to be an ally?	

Walling Out the Unwanted: Understanding the Barriers that Perpetuate Anti-Immigrant Bias

ABOUT THIS LESSON

Time

- Part I: 60 – 90 minutes
- Part II: 60 – 90 minutes
- Part III: 30 – 45 minutes + time for action projects

Grade Level

Grades 10 – 12

Strategies and Skills

analyzing poetry, brainstorming, case study, cooperative group work, critical thinking, debate, forming opinions, large and small group discussion, media literacy, reading skills, research skills, social action, substantiating factual information, using the Internet, writing skills

Key Words and Phrases

alien, amnesty, assimilate, barrier, bias, border, commentary, comprehensive, demographic, demonize, deportation, enforcement First World, immigrant, immigration, immigration reform, legislation, mainstream media, melting pot, minority, nativist, pundit, scapegoat, stereotype, Third World, undocumented, wedge issue, xenophobia

RATIONALE

This lesson increases student awareness about the physical and symbolic barriers that create divides between immigrants and native born residents of the U.S., and engages students in an exploration of the ways in which mainstream discourse on immigration can perpetuate bias and bigotry. Students analyze poetry, blog posts, readings and media clips in order to deepen their understanding of the negative consequences of anti-immigrant language. Students also learn about current legislation related to immigration and ways to take action against anti-immigrant prejudice and discrimination.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will analyze poetry in order to better understand immigration issues.
- Students will learn about the U.S. – Mexico border fence and debate the notion of walls as a strategy for limiting illegal immigration.
- Students will explore the language used to discuss immigration in the mainstream media, and increase their media literacy skills.
- Students will increase their awareness about the repercussions of anti-immigrant discourse and bias.
- Students will learn about current legislation related to immigration.
- Students will develop skills to take action against anti-immigrant bias.

LESSON PREPARATION

Handouts/Supporting Documents:

- *Mending Wall* (one per student)
- *A Voice from the Border* (one per student)
- *700-Mile Border Fence Between the United States and Mexico* (one per student)
- *Walls or Barriers?* (one per student)
- *You've Been Framed!* (one per student)
- *Media Analysis: The Framing of Immigration* (one per small group)

- *Immigration in the Media: Sample Commentary* (one copy)
- *Immigration in the Media: Book Excerpts and Article* (one per small group)
- *Excerpt from “Who is to Blame for Marcelo Lucero’s Murder?”* (one per student)
- *Taking Action on Immigration Issues* (one copy)

Other Materials: chart paper, markers; the following additional materials are optional: computer, LCD projector, Internet connection, *Mending Wall* audio version, *International Border Fence* video, *Codewords of Hate* video

Advance Preparation:

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.
- Assign *Mending Wall* for homework (see step #1).
- Prepare computer, projector and screen (optional).
- Label a sheet of chart paper, *700-Mile Border Fence Between the United States and Mexico*.
- Cut sheets of chart paper into strips, about 4 – 6 inches tall, enough for each student to have one strip.

PROCEDURES

Part I: “Something there is that doesn’t love a wall” (60 – 90 minutes)

1. Prior to the lesson, have students read *Mending Wall* by Robert Frost for homework. Assign students to think about or respond in writing to one or more of the questions or topics for further study that follow the poem.
2. Begin the lesson by having volunteers read *Mending Wall* aloud or by playing the audio version of Robert Frost reading his poem. Discuss some of the questions that you assigned students to think or write about for homework.
3. Divide the class into small groups of 3 – 4 students and provide each student with a copy of *A Voice from the Border* by Jorge Nunez. Direct groups to read the poem and discuss some of the questions that follow it. Allow about 10 minutes for discussion.
4. Reconvene the class and discuss some of the following questions:
 - How would you compare *Mending Wall* and *Voice from the Border*? What themes do both poems have in common?
 - A physical wall is the focal point of both poems. What literal or figurative walls might these be symbols for?
 - What does each poem say about the nature of walls?
 - *Mending Wall* was written in 1914 and some have interpreted the poem as a comment on the growing tendency of the U.S. to isolate itself from the rest of the world at the beginning of World War I. What contemporary issue might Nunez be exploring through his poem? What message do you think he is trying to communicate about this issue?

5. Play the video of the *International Border Fence*. Ask students if they know what wall is depicted in the footage. If students do not know, tell them that it is a section of the border fence that separates the U.S. and Mexico. Point out that this is most likely the “huge wall” that Nunez writes about in his poem. Ask students what they know about the wall. Share some of the following facts with them:
- In 2006 Congress passed the Secure Fence Act, which authorized nearly \$3 billion for 670 miles of fencing stretching from California to Texas, as well as lights, sensors and cameras.
 - The fence is actually several separation barriers designed to prevent illegal movement across the U.S.—Mexico border.
 - The barrier is located on both uninhabited and urban (e.g., San Diego, El Paso) sections of the border.
 - As of January 2009, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security had built 580 miles of fence in New Mexico, Arizona, California and Texas.
 - According to the Congressional Research Service, the cost of building and maintaining the border fence could be as much as \$49 billion over the expected 25-year life span of the fence.

NOTE: If it is not possible to play the video in class, display or pass around a still photo of the U.S. – Mexico Border Fence; photos are readily available on the Internet.

6. Ask students to reflect on the discussion they had earlier about the two poems and the nature of walls, and to consider whether or not they think the border fence is an effective response to the issue of illegal immigration.
7. Post the chart entitled *700-Mile Border Fence Between the United States and Mexico*. Distribute a copy of the handout with the same title and a blank strip of chart paper to each student. Explain that the handout is a blog post taken from the Web site, <http://www.activoteamerica.com>. Direct students to read the blog and then to add their own “Reader Comment” by writing their opinion on the blank strip of paper. Allow about 10 minutes for students to respond and invite them to tape their strips to the master chart as they finish writing.

OPTION: If the technology is accessible, have students complete this exercise online either in class or for homework. Have students visit the blog site, read the existing posts and add their comments. Print the class posts and distribute to students to read and discuss.

8. When all of the comments have been posted, ask for several volunteers to read their opinions aloud and lead a class discussion about their responses.
9. For homework, assign students to write a brief essay in response to the quote on the handout, *Walls or Barriers?* Have students read aloud their essays in class as time allows, and discuss the ways in which the U.S. – Mexico border fence creates not just a physical barrier, but also relational barriers between Mexican and U.S. citizens, immigrants and native born residents of the U.S. and other groups of people.

Part II: Analyzing Media for Anti-Immigrant Language and Themes (60 – 90 minutes)

10. Remind students of the earlier discussion about the ways in which the border fence creates a divide between immigrants and native born residents of the U.S. Ask students for examples of other, non-physical, barriers that may deepen this divide (e.g., laws, policies, prejudices, segregation in housing and schools, language differences, etc.).
11. If students don't bring it up, ask them how the language we use to discuss immigration and immigrants can create a barrier—or an invisible wall—that promotes distrust of and even prejudice against immigrants.
12. As an example, read the passage below aloud. Tell students that it is from a book by Pat Buchanan, a conservative politician and columnist, who has run for president, written bestselling books and appears regularly on mainstream news programs. Ask students to think about how Buchanan's language may deepen the divide discussed above.

Unlike the Ellis Island generations, all of whom came from Europe, those pouring in today come from countries, continents, and cultures whose peoples have never before been assimilated by a First World nation. And they are coming in far greater numbers than any nation has ever absorbed. History has never seen an invasion like this. For there are more illegal aliens in the United States today than all the Irish, Jews, and English who ever came, and the total number of immigrants here now almost equals the total number who came in the 350 years from the birth of Jamestown to the inauguration of JFK.¹

13. Ask students to share their reactions to the quote and chart their responses. You may want to highlight one or more of the following ideas:
 - The quote makes a distinction between immigrants from Europe and those from non-“First World nations,” and suggests that the latter may not be able to fit in here.
 - The quote describes immigration as an “invasion” and implies that the U.S. is under attack.
 - The quote characterizes some immigrants as “illegal”—and thereby illegitimate—rather than people in search of a better life.
 - The quote conveys panic about the number of immigrants in the U.S. and insinuates that this swelling population will bring ruin to the U.S.
14. Point out to students that the debate over immigration in the U.S. has created ways of talking about and framing the issue that often dehumanize the people whose lives and fates we are debating; and that this language sometimes promotes stereotypes and prejudices against immigrants and those perceived to be “foreign.” Add that no matter what our beliefs are about specific policy issues, it is never acceptable to talk about human beings in stereotypical or demeaning ways.

¹ Buchanan, Patrick J. 2007. *Day of Reckoning: How Hubris, Ideology, and Greed are Tearing America Apart*. New York: St. Martin's Press, page 9.

NOTE: The handout, *Myths and Facts about Immigrants and Immigration*, can be used as a reference during this part of the lesson to help students distinguish legitimate information from stereotypes and hyperbole.

15. Tell students that they are going to spend some time analyzing articles, book excerpts, ads and other mainstream examples of commentary on the issue of immigration. Explain that the task will be for students to identify the types of language used to frame the issue, and to think about how it may promote stereotypes, bias and unnecessary fear. Use one or both of the following options to set the stage for students:
- Show *Codewords of Hate*: This 7-minute video, produced by the National Council of La Raza, features an ADL Government and National Affairs representative discussing how some commentators fuel the scapegoating and demonizing of immigrants as part of the national debate over immigration reform. It offers four broad themes, and clips from a variety of news programs that demonstrate these themes.
 - Read *You've Been Framed!*: Individually or together as a class, read this adaptation of an article by two University of California, Berkeley linguistics professors that looks at the problematic ways in which the immigration debate has been framed by politicians and the media. It discusses five frames that contribute to anti-immigrant bias.

16. After providing the background above, divide the class into small groups of 3 – 5 students and have each group select a recorder and a reporter. Provide each group with one copy of *Media Analysis: The Framing of Immigration* and content from *Immigration in the Media: Sample Commentary*. (If possible, provide each group with one commentary from each of the three categories—Articles/Book Excerpts, Print Ads and Public Service Announcements; if this is too much for your students to manage, limit analysis to just one or two pieces of content.)

OPTIONAL: Distribute a copy of *You've Been Framed!* to each group to use as a reference.

17. Tell groups to read/view/listen to and discuss the sample commentaries together, using the questions on the *Media Analysis* handout as a guide. Instruct the recorders to take notes on the handout, and tell the reporters to be prepared to share back a few main points to the whole class. Allow about 20 minutes for groups to complete this task.
18. Reconvene the class and have each group's reporter briefly share two or three key findings from their investigation. After all groups have shared, lead a class discussion using some of the following questions:
- What themes or patterns did you notice across these commentaries?
 - When did it seem as though reasonable criticisms crossed the line to become unfair or extreme?
 - In what ways is language used in the media to create a barrier or divide among different groups of people?
 - How does this language lead to stereotypes and prejudice? What are other consequences of this type of language?

- How can you protect yourself from the influences of extreme language, and how should you respond when you hear it?

Part III: Understanding the Repercussions of Anti-Immigrant Bias and Taking Action Against It (30 – 45 minutes + time for action projects)

19. Ask students why they should be concerned about anti-immigrant language and bias in the media. Ask what the consequences are of this type of discourse, and how it relates to them and to their communities.
20. Distribute copies of *Excerpt from “Who is to Blame for Marcelo Lucero’s Murder?”* to each student or project the article onto a large screen. Ask for volunteers to read each paragraph aloud or have students read the article silently to themselves. Discuss some of the following questions:
 - What feelings or reactions came up for you as you listened to/read this article?
 - What do you think motivated the teenage boys to “find a Mexican” to beat up?
 - What is a scapegoat? Do you think Marcelo Lucero was a scapegoat? If so, what factors do you think triggered the teens to target him?
 - What is xenophobia? How does it relate to what happened to Marcelo, and to the issue of immigration in general?
 - What is the connection between this hate crime and the way immigration is talked about by politicians and in the media?
 - What is the connection between this hate crime and recent laws that criminalize immigration and immigrants?
21. Comment that incidents like the murder of Marcelo Lucero can leave us feeling angry and helpless. Repeat the following line from the article:

We must all own our part in this crime ... We can legislate and educate the hate away.

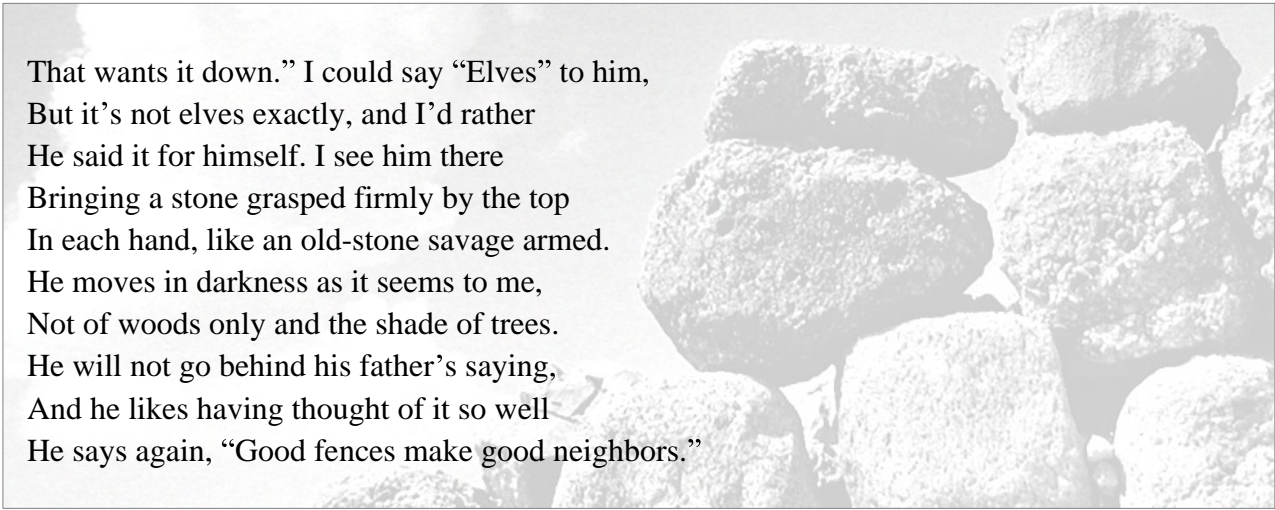
Ask students what ordinary community members can do if they feel outraged about anti-immigrant prejudice and discrimination. Chart their ideas (e.g., get informed/educated about the issues, don’t laugh at anti-immigrant jokes, join groups that promote acceptance of others, befriend/support immigrants who are new to the community, challenge unjust laws, etc.).
22. Suggest that one way to get involved is to challenge unfair laws and support good ones. Point out that the author of the article discusses whether “elected officials, through legislation and rhetoric, have created a xenophobic climate that breeds hate crimes.” Ask students if they are aware of any laws related to immigration, and what community members can do to challenge or support a law. Add their ideas to the chart.
23. Review some of the information from *Taking Action on Immigration Issues* with students, and ask them to focus on one law that they want to learn more about and take action for or against. Either in class or for homework, have students do some research on the law and identify ways to take action (e.g., writing letters to local representatives, circulating petitions,

organizing a rally or informational event, writing an editorial, fundraising, etc.) Work with students to implement one or more of their ideas.

NOTE: Consult the Web sites listed on the *Taking Action on Immigration Issues* handout to ensure that the information on the handout pertaining to immigration laws and policies is current, and to receive additional information that is pertinent to this activity.

MENDING WALL by Robert Frost

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun,
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
"Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows?
But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,



That wants it down.” I could say “Elves” to him,
But it’s not elves exactly, and I’d rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father’s saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, “Good fences make good neighbors.”

Questions for Discussion/Writing

1. What does the narrator mean by, “Something there is that doesn’t love a wall”? How does the meaning of this phrase change when it is repeated during the last part of the poem?
2. Why is there a wall separating the neighbors’ properties? Why do they repair it each spring?
3. What does the narrator mean when he says, “Oh just another kind of out-door game”? Does he think the wall is necessary? What does his neighbor think?
4. The narrator says, “Before I built a wall I’d ask to know / What I was walling in or walling out, / And to whom I was like to give offence.” Do you think the builders of the wall thought about these questions? Why or why not?
5. What does the narrator mean when he describes his neighbor as “an old-stone savage armed,” who “moves in darkness” and “will not go behind his father’s saying”?
6. The neighbor in the poem asserts that “Good fences make good neighbors.” What do you think makes a better neighbor, good boundaries or good communication? Why?
7. The wall in the poem is a stone fence between two pieces of property. What other kinds of walls, literal and metaphorical, might this wall be a symbol for?
8. What does the poem suggest about the nature of walls?
9. When have you felt “walled in” or “walled out” in your own life? What caused you to feel this way?

Topics for Further Study/Writing

1. Research a well-known wall in history (e.g., Berlin Wall, Israel/Palestine Security Barrier, Great Wall of China, Hadrian’s Wall, Maginot Line, U.S. – Mexico Border Fence). Write a brief essay answering the following questions: Did this wall make for “good neighbors”? What did the wall accomplish? What problems did it create?
2. Write a poem about a barrier that separates one human being from another.
3. Write a dialogue between two people on different sides of the U.S. – Mexico Border Fence that addresses the themes in *Mending Wall* and that explores the tensions that exist around immigration in our society.

A VOICE FROM THE BORDER by Jorge Nunez



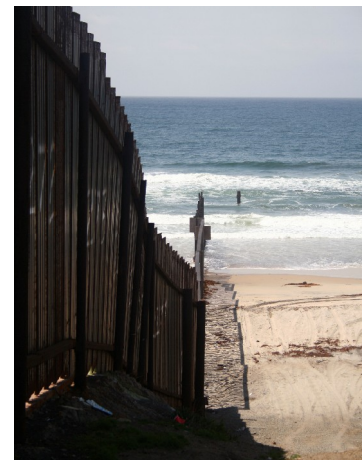
I stand on an unknown shore,
It seems as I wash upon it.
My mind is blurred, I really don't recall what happened.
Maybe a shipwreck, where I might have fell overboard,
I stand here on this strange shore.
It seems out of this world that a huge wall would be
Running as far as my eyes could see onto the land
And straight into the ocean water.
It's a strange place, and for a second I think I'm no
longer on earth.
A woman's voice tells me your family your kids

And your mother
Can come up to this wall to see you,
But you can't cross over.
My thoughts are confused,
My heart is pounding, I suggest to this woman
I just want to step on this side for a second.
She tells me I can't
They'll call you an alien.
It feels like I'm dreaming,
I sit on the sand, my head hanging I look up and stare into the sunset
And try to remember how I got on this side of the wall
On to this strange soil.

© Jorge Nunez/Youth Radio

Questions for Discussion/Writing

1. Where do you think the "strange shore" that the narrator washed up onto might be located? How do you think he got there?
2. What do you think the huge wall is that stretches before the narrator?
3. What feeling does the scene evoke? Why do you think the narrator feels that he is "no longer on earth"?
4. Why do you think the narrator is forbidden to cross over the wall, even though his family is on the other side?
5. What explanation does the woman give for this prohibition? Who or what do you think the woman represents?
6. What do you think the wall symbolizes, both literally and figuratively?



700-MILE BORDER FENCE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO¹



In an effort to stem the tide of illegal immigration coming up from Mexico, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives passed the “Secure Fence Act of 2006,” which was signed by President Bush. The bill calls for the construction of about 700 miles of fencing along the Mexico-U.S. border. There are already several walls or fences between the two countries, most notably in highly populated areas. However, opponents argue the proposed wall would harm environmentally sensitive areas, hurt the economies of border towns, and is not worth the cost.

READER COMMENTS:

Build it and they will NOT come.

I agree that we need controls. I don't think the fence will completely stop the problem but it will slow it down and allow the border patrol agents some relief. The bill has passed, the money allocated, why hasn't it been implemented?

Hey America, let's start curing the PROBLEMS that lie behind the issues, instead of just trying to cure the symptoms. Fences, no matter how big or large won't stop it, bodies of water won't stop it, guns won't even stop it. So WHY is that? Hmm...

It's kind of a form of flattery. If I was right next to the Land of Opportunity, I'd want in too. If these immigrants can become law-abiding, tax-paying citizens, then why not? Or if you don't go for that, let's pressure Cuba and Mexico to create more jobs and demand better living conditions in both countries and bring the land of opportunity to them.

Go hang out at The Athens Regional emergency room for a few hours any day of the week and ask yourself, “how long can we absorb illegal immigrants before our infrastructure collapses?”

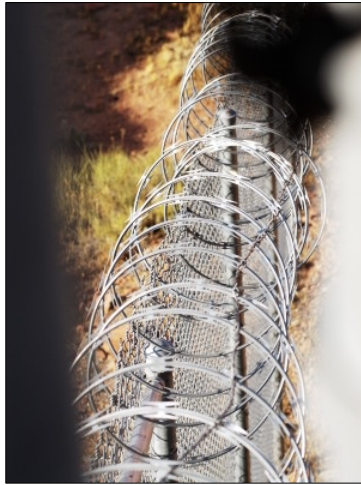
America was not founded on the principle of “let's give everyone opportunity, then when someone actually succeeds immediately take everything they have earned and give it to illegals and lazy people.” Funny, I don't remember that part in Social Studies.

In South Texas during the last 6 weeks they have picked up 18 Africans (from Ethiopia and Eritrea) and 26 Chinese illegal immigrants. They are not just coming from Mexico and Central America. At one time I was not in favor of the wall since it would cut through the campus of the University of Texas at Brownsville, TX. It will also cut the Sabal Palms Wildlife Sanctuary and many homes will be behind the wall. I am concerned about the locked gates and access for emergency vehicles will be limited, but the number of immigrants coming is ridiculous. They have caught over 47,000 since October 2007 and I would remind you that this number was given by the Border Patrol for the lower Rio Grande Valley. This includes only Cameron, Hidalgo, and Starr Counties. Enough is enough.

¹ This blog appears on ActiVote at <http://savannah.activote.com/issues/border-fence-between-united-states-and-mexico>.

WALLS OR BARRIERS?

Write a brief essay in response to the quote below, in which a Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor of linguistics comments on the U.S. – Mexico Border Fence. Your essay should address some of the questions that follow the quote.



...Too often what nations build are not walls but barriers. They keep out the unwanted. They keep in the unwilling. In his poem, Robert Frost sees the wall as a barrier that keeps him and his neighbor strangers. Frost's neighbor, the farmer, sees it as useful, an amenity between them invoking distance and ensuring civility, or at least lack of the complications that attend human interaction. I suppose it really comes down to this: Do we build barriers or do we build walls? Do we keep our neighbors at arm's length or do we keep the door open for a visit? In other words, it's either the farmer's view—"Good fences make good neighbors"—or it's the poet's—"Something there is that doesn't love a wall." ¹

- How does Frost's poem relate to the debate over the U.S. – Mexico Border Fence?
- Who are the "unwanted" and the "unwilling" that Keyser describes?
- Do you subscribe to the "farmer's view" or the "poet's view"?
- Do you see the fence as a way to achieve, or a barrier to, safety and security?
- What other types of barriers—besides the physical one—does the border fence create?

¹ Keyser, Jay. 2006. The Xenophobic School: Misreading Poetry. *All Things Considered* (May 23, 2006). [You can listen to this interview at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5426125>.]

YOU'VE BEEN FRAMED!

Imagine you are looking out of your bedroom window at the house across the street. Through a narrow gap in the curtains, you see a masked figure pointing a gun. Alarmed, you reach for the phone and dial 911. At that moment, someone in the house pulls back the curtains completely and you see a room full of people in colorful outfits, enjoying themselves at what you now recognize to be a costume party.

The way in which the curtains framed the scene above shaped the way in which you perceived it. Similarly, the ways in which language is used to frame issues in our society influence how we understand those matters and what we believe are the best ways to address them.

The immigration debate in our society has been framed, or defined, in specific ways by politicians, journalists, activists, pundits and the media at large. The particular language and frames they use affect our attitudes and beliefs about immigration and immigrants, whether or not we are aware of their impact.

“Immigration reform,” for example, is a widely used term that is the very basis of discussion about immigration in the U.S. It is a term that is taken for granted, yet limits the conversation about immigration from the start. It suggests there is a pressing problem that needs to be fixed, and that the problem lies with immigrants themselves or with the agencies that oversee immigration law. There are many different frames that could be used to define the issue, but most are not a regular part of mainstream discussion. For example:



Source: <http://indymedia.us/en/2006/04/15506.shtml>

- The “foreign policy reform” or “globalization” frame, which would suggest that the ways in which the U.S. interacts with other countries contribute to world poverty and mass immigration;
- The “humanitarian crisis” or “economic refugee” frame, which would focus efforts on helping people who have fled poverty and terrible living conditions elsewhere rather than trying to keep them out;
- The “civil rights” frame, which would focus attention on the denial of basic protections and services to millions of people who work and pay taxes here; and
- The “cheap labor” or “cheap lifestyle” frame, which would bring attention to the employers who pay low wages and the consumers who buy their goods, thereby attracting laborers from other countries who are desperate for work.

None of these frames are neutral. They each reflect certain assumptions and beliefs. When reading or listening to others talk about immigration, it is important to be aware of the frames they have adopted and the language they use to advance those frames. This will help you to understand what viewpoints and biases they bring to the discussion, and to think beyond the limitations of one particular set of ideas, especially when those ideas promote stereotypes or intolerance.

The following are some common frames used to discuss immigration that may contribute to anti-immigrant prejudice and irrational fear about immigration.

The Illegal Frame: People often refer to “illegal immigrants” or “illegals” as if it were a neutral term, but this way of describing immigrants defines them as criminals, as if they are by nature bad people. Defining immigrants as lawbreakers overlooks the positive contributions they make to the U.S.—for example, by working hard for low wages—and suggests that they deserve to be locked up or punished in some way. Immigrants who cross into the U.S. outside of legal channels, though, are generally not dangerous criminals whose intent is to cause harm. Most immigrants are in search of honest work and a better life, and the “illegal” frame exaggerates the seriousness of their offense. It also ignores the unlawful acts of employers. Have you ever heard someone who has hired an undocumented worker referred to as an “illegal employer”?



The Alien Frame: The term “illegal alien” not only emphasizes criminality, but also otherness.



“Aliens” suggests nonhuman beings invading from outer space — completely foreign, not one of us, intent on taking over our land and our way of life. Along these lines, the word “invasion” is often used to discuss the wave of people crossing the border. The “alien” frame dehumanizes immigrants and limits our ability to recognize the commonalities we all share—the desire for a secure job, a safe home and a better future for our families. The U.S. prides itself on being a “nation of immigrants.” What message does it send when we set some of those immigrants apart as “alien”?

The Security Frame: Immigration is commonly talked about as a “security problem” or a “threat to national security.” If one believes that immigrants are criminals and invaders, it is a logical response to demand that the government protect its citizens from the danger they represent. Congress, in fact, has linked border security with Mexico to the larger “war on terror,” and has spent billions of dollars to place National Guard troops on the border and to construct a 670-mile border fence stretching from California to Texas. Most immigrants, of course, are not terrorists and pose no physical threat. They don’t want to shoot us or kill us or blow us up. They only want to share the opportunity of pursuing the American Dream.





The Amnesty Frame: Much of the immigration debate centers on whether or not those who have entered the U.S. outside of legal channels should be given “amnesty,” or pardoned for their illegal actions. Like the “illegal” frame, the discussion about amnesty implies that the fault lies with immigrants and that it would be merciful for the government to forgive their wrongdoings. This viewpoint overlooks the role of businesses that have knowingly hired undocumented workers and the government officials who have looked the other way. No one talks about granting amnesty to these parties because the issue has been framed as an “immigrant

problem.”

The Worker Frame: “Undocumented worker,” “temporary worker” and “guest worker” are terms that have been widely used to describe the status of immigrants. While these descriptions are more respectful than “illegal” or “alien,” there are some limitations to the “worker” frame. “Worker” suggests that immigrants’ only function in the U.S. is to labor, not to be educated, have families, form communities, vote and have complete lives. Some “temporary worker” plans allow for only short-term stays in the U.S. with few or no benefits or rights. This narrow way of defining people is undemocratic and treats immigrants as second-class citizens who are separate and apart from the rest of society.

Adapted with permission from Lakoff, George and Ferguson, Sam. 2006. The Framing of Immigration. The Rockridge Institute, <http://www.rockridgeinstitute.org/research/rockridge/immigration>.



MEDIA ANALYSIS: THE FRAMING OF IMMIGRATION

1. What frames or themes are used to define the issue and set the boundaries for discussion? Do you agree with these frames? Why or why not?

2. What specific language is used to advance the frames or themes presented? Do you think this language is fair or problematic? Explain.

3. Are the opinions expressed supported by rational facts or do they seem unreasonable/unfounded? If you are not sure, what can you do to investigate further?

4. Are criticisms limited to specific policies or events, or are generalizations made that may not apply across the board?

5. Does the piece promote stereotypes, prejudices or unnecessary fear? Explain.

IMMIGRATION IN THE MEDIA: SAMPLE COMMENTARY

Articles/Book Excerpts (enclosed)

- Buchanan, Patrick J. 2002. *The Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization*. New York: St. Martin's Press. Pages 2-3.
- Buchanan, Patrick J. 2002. *The Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization*. New York: St. Martin's Press. Pages 133-134.
- Letiecq, Greg. 2007. Statement to the PWBOCS [Prince William Board of County Supervisors]. *The Front Line*, Volume I, Issue 1 (September 2007).
<http://www.helpsavemanassas.org/files/newsletter/HSMNewsletter0907.pdf>.

Print Ads (view at <http://www.capsweb.org>; click Newsroom/Recent Advertising)*

- *Americans may eventually find a way to live without oil. Water is another story.* (America's Leadership Team for Long Range Population-Immigration-Resource Planning)
- *Amnesty for illegal workers is not just a slap in the face to black Americans. It's an economic disaster.* (Coalition for the New American Worker)
- *Mass Immigration and Global Warming: Gives the Term Melting Pot a Whole New Meaning.* (Coalition for Sensible Immigration Policy)
- *Not all foreign tourists want to see the Grand Canyon.* (Californians for Population Stabilization)
- *One of America's Best Selling Vehicles.* (America's Leadership Team for Long Range Population-Immigration-Resource Planning)

Public Service Announcements (view/listen at <http://www.americanworker.org> and <http://www.capsweb.org>; click Newsroom/Recent Advertising)*

Television Ads

- American Worker Ad: It's Time to Protect American Jobs
- CAP's Children Ad
- Ecological Footprint
- Facts on Immigration and Employment
- Sanctuary City Television Ad

Radio Ads

- "The Air in Bakersfield is Killing Me"
- "The inconvenient truth is that population growth and environmental degradation go hand in hand."
- "Overpopulation Affects Beach Contamination"

* You can find out more about some of the groups behind these ads in the ADL report, *Immigrants Targeted: Extremist Rhetoric Moves into the Mainstream*, at http://www.adl.org/civil_rights/anti_immigrant.

IMMIGRATION IN THE MEDIA: ARTICLE

Leticq, Greg. 2007. Statement to the PWBOCS (Prince William Board of County Supervisors). The Front Line Volume I, Issue I (9/07).

Our country has been under assault from the influx of tens, if not hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens who have taken advantage of our lax enforcement of the law at the federal, state and local levels. These border crashers have contributed to rising crime rates, increasing burdens on our schools, hospitals and public services, and the very destruction of our American Culture. Prince William County is not the place it used to be, and as a result many of our productive citizens are leaving.

All of this is for the purpose of turning our citizens into the unwitting objects of a real-time social experiment in multi-cultural, diversity-worshipping social justice. They are told that to object to their involuntary participation in this replacement of our American culture would be nativist, racist or xenophobic. That they must, as good little cogs in the grand wheel of this experiment, be compassionate towards the eighteen men who have rammed themselves into the house next door, because they're hard workers. They must cheerfully turn over increasing portions of their wealth to lighten the burdens on these uninvited and unwelcome lawbreakers so that the children of illegal aliens can obtain free health care, free educations, and free food. Citizens are reminded that it would have chilling effects, or heaven forbid, create fear among the illegal aliens if they understood that the law would actually apply to them. The citizens must, in their role as involuntary guinea pigs, be meekly tolerant of their designated role in this grand experiment.

No more.

No more tolerance for criminal illegal aliens who commit assault and battery, stalking indecent exposure, driving while intoxicated or hit and run because these crimes aren't supposedly serious enough to warrant even notifying immigration authorities. No more protection for illegal aliens who attempt to obtain taxpayer-funded services which they are not entitled to receive in order to make their continued unlawful presence in the country more comfortable. No more selective enforcement of our laws in order to make it easier for vast numbers of illegal aliens to remain in our midst only to demand that we accommodate their deficient grasp of the English language and change our laws to suit their interests at the expense of the American citizens.

Supervisor Stirrup's proposed resolution helps to dismantle this unconscionable social experiment at the local level. If it is enacted, the safe haven which county policies have previously created will no longer exist. It does so not by changing who receives benefits, or what is or is not lawful, but by putting an end to this malfeasance in which the citizens of the county are not just unwitting test subjects, but victims.

With passage of this resolution, the citizens will regain their rightful place as the masters of their government, rather than its subjects. We urge all of the supervisors to vote in favor of this long overdue proposal.

IMMIGRATION IN THE MEDIA: BOOK EXCERPT

From Buchanan, Patrick J. 2002. The Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization. New York: St. Martin's Press, pages 133-134.

In late 1999, this writer left Tucson and drove southeast to Douglas, the Arizona border town of eighteen thousand that had become the principal invasion corridor into the United States. In March alone, the U.S. Border Patrol had apprehended twenty-seven thousand Mexicans crossing illegally, half again as many illegal aliens crossing in one month as there are people in Douglas.

While there, I visited Theresa Murray, an eighty-two-year-old widow and a great-grandmother who lives in the Arizona desert she grew up in. Her ranch house was surrounded by a seven-foot chain link fence that was topped with coils of razor wire. Every door and window had bars on it and was wired to an alarm. Mrs. Murray sleeps with a .32-caliber pistol on her bed table, because she has been burglarized thirty times. Her guard dogs are dead; they bled to death when someone tossed meat containing chopped glass over the fence.

Theresa Murray is living out her life inside a maximum-security prison, in her own home, in her own country, because her government lacks the moral courage to do its duty and defend the borders of the United States of America.

If America is about anything, it is freedom. But as Theresa Murray says, "I've lost my freedom. I can't ever leave the house unless I have somebody watch it. We used to ride our horses clear across the border. We had Mexicans working on our property. It used to be fun to live here. Now, it's hell. It's plain old hell."

While Theresa Murray lives unfree, in hellish existence, American soldiers defend the borders of Korea, Kuwait, and Kosovo. But nothing is at risk on those borders, half a world away, to compare with what is at risk on our border with Mexico, over which pass the armies of the night as they trudge endlessly northward to the great cities of America. Invading armies go home, immigrant armies do not.

IMMIGRATION IN THE MEDIA: BOOK EXCERPT

From Buchanan, Patrick J. 2002. The Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization. New York: St. Martin's Press, pages 2-3.

While the awful events of September 11 created a national unity unseen since Pearl Harbor – behind President Bush and his resolve to punish the perpetrators of the massacres of 5,000 Americans – they also exposed a new divide. This chasm in our country is not one of income, ideology or faith, but of ethnicity and loyalty. Suddenly, we awoke to the realization that among our millions of foreign-born, a third are here illegally, tens of thousands are loyal to regimes with which we could be at war, and some are trained terrorists sent here to murder Americans. For the first time since Andrew Jackson drove the British out of Louisiana in 1815, a foreign enemy is inside the gates, and the American people are at risk in their own country. In those days after September 11, many suddenly saw how the face of America had changed in their own lifetimes.

When Richard Nixon took his oath of office in 1969, there were 9 million foreign-born in the United States. When President Bush raised his hand, the number was nearing 30 million. Almost a million immigrants enter every year; half a million illegal aliens come in with them. The adjusted census of 2000 puts the number of illegals in the United States at 9 million. Northeastern University estimates 11 million, as many illegal aliens as there are people in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. There are more foreign-born in California – 8.4 million – than people in New Jersey, more foreign-born in New York States than people in South Carolina. Even the Great Wave of immigration from 1890 to 1920 was nothing like this.

“American is God’s Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming,” wrote Israel Zangwill, the Russian-Jewish playwright, in his famous 1908 play *The Melting Pot*. But the immigration tsunami rolling over American is not coming from “all the races in Europe.” The largest population transfer in history is coming from all the races of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and they are not “melting and reforming.”

In 1960 only sixteen million Americans did not trace their ancestors to Europe. Today, the number is eighty million. No nation has ever undergone so rapid and radical a transformation. At Portland State in 1998, Mr. Clinton rhapsodized to a cheering student audience about a day when Americans of European descent will be a minority.

Today, largely because of immigration, there is no majority race in Hawaii or Houston or New York City. Within five years there will be no majority race in our largest state, California. In a little more than fifty years there will be no majority race in the United States. No other nation in history has gone through demographic change of this magnitude in so short a time.

Correction: No nation in history has gone through a demographic change of this magnitude in so short a time, and remained the same nation. Mr. Clinton assured us that it will be a better America when we are all minorities and realize true “diversity.” Well, those students are going to find out, for they will spend their golden years in a Third World America.

EXCERPT FROM “WHO IS TO BLAME FOR MARCELO LUCERO’S MURDER?”

By Marcelo Ballvé

Posted on December 2, 2008; Printed on April 20, 2009

SMITHTOWN, N.Y. —Why here? That’s still the question on the minds of many residents of Long Island, the archetypal New York suburb, after the murder of Marcelo Lucero, a 37-year-old Ecuadorean immigrant who was stabbed to death after being attacked by seven teenagers on November 8th.

Lucero’s death was labeled a hate killing by local police, who said the teenagers, all locals, embarked on a beer-fueled rampage in search of “a Mexican” to beat up.

It was only the latest, and most serious, in a chain of attacks on Latino immigrants in Suffolk County. In 2000, two Mexican day laborers in Farmingville were picked up by men ostensibly offering them work and were nearly beaten to death with gardening tools. Three years later, local teenagers firebombed a home, and the immigrant family of five living in it barely escaped with their lives. Low-level harassment is even more common. Community leaders say Latinos are regularly taunted, spit upon and pelted with projectiles.

Local soul-searching over the crime has focused on whether local politicians are partly to blame for Lucero’s death. Immigrant advocates say elected officials, through legislation and rhetoric, have created a xenophobic climate that breeds hate crimes.

Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy and his allies in the local legislature have very publicly championed measures aimed at stemming illegal immigration. Levy has won some of these battles (requiring county contractors to check workers’ status, cracking down on landlords with overcrowded housing) but lost others, most notably an effort to deputize local law enforcement to nab illegal immigrants.

Meanwhile, Suffolk’s Latino population—a diverse mosaic of Salvadorans, Colombians, Dominicans, Ecuadoreans and Mexicans—has continued booming. Suffolk is 13 percent Latino, according to U.S. Census figures.

The contradictions of life in today’s Long Island were apparent recently at a county legislative session.

On the morning of Nov. 18...the legislators got an earful about their portion of responsibility in Lucero’s murder, which happened 10 days earlier.

Charlotte Koons of the Suffolk New York Civil Liberties Union was the first speaker. She read a poem about Lucero's death, ending with this line: "We must all own our part in this crime ... We can legislate and educate the hate away." Suffolk resident Andrea Callan, also with the NYCLU, blasted the lawmakers for setting a bad example. "The policies coming out of this legislative body, and no doubt from the playbook of Steve Levy, have been divisive and unfair, and send a message of intolerance into our community."

Some in Suffolk may yearn for normality, but their county has forever become emblematic of a problem with national reach: the tension between the suburban myth of white-picket fences and orderly lawns and the realities of immigration. As job-seeking immigrants increasingly move from urban areas to outlying communities, suburbs must choose whether they will embrace diversity or scapegoat foreigners.

It's no secret many Suffolk residents moved from more urbanized areas to put some distance between themselves and what they perceive as the chaotic diversity of New York City and its immediate surroundings, said Patrick Young, program director of the Central American Refugee Center (Carecen), who also spoke at the session. Suburbia's irrational distrust and fear of minorities can manifest as anti-immigrant sentiment.

"It has become an acceptable part of the culture of this area, and this is a culture that's pandered to by these politicians and stirred up by them," he said.

But Levy denied there was a link between Lucero's death and his attitude toward illegal immigration. "Advocates for those here illegally should not disparage those opposed to the illegal immigration policy as being bigoted or intolerant," he said.

In the past, Levy has cited the dream of a suburban lifestyle to justify his beliefs on immigration. "People who play by the rules work hard to achieve the suburban dream of the white picket fence," he said in 2007 to *The New York Times*. "Whether you are black or white or Hispanic, if you live in the suburbs, you do not want to live across the street from a house where 60 men live. You do not want trucks riding up and down the block at 5 a.m., picking up workers." With such statements Levy is advancing a polarizing vision, said immigrant advocates.

It's the same rhetoric the teenagers who killed Lucero have been hearing since they were old enough to understand it, said Carcen's Young, who added, "this constant branding of people as illegal is the most dehumanizing thing."

At the street corner in the tidy, seaside village of Patchogue where Lucero died, an improvised shrine has been set up, with flowers, candles, and photos. A line of orange spray-paint left by police still marks the path the mortally wounded Lucero followed before falling. A sign written in black marker reads: "God Loves All People, and All People Should Love One Another."

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TAKING ACTION ON IMMIGRATION ISSUES

As of this writing, the following are active policy and legislative issues that students might investigate further. Consult the organizations and Web sites below for the most current information on immigration issues.

Policy and Legislative Issues

- **Comprehensive Immigration Reform:** The Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007 was not passed, and Congress will likely deliberate on some version of this act again in the future. While there is much debate about what such legislation should include, many experts agree that a holistic approach to improving the U.S. immigration system should provide a path for undocumented people to earn legal status; establish fair and lawful ways for businesses to hire immigrant workers; reduce the backlogs in family and employment-based immigration; create a border security strategy that includes fair and humane treatment of immigrants; and offer equal access to human services such as healthcare and education without discrimination based on immigration status.
- **Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act:** 50-65,000 students graduate from U.S. high schools each year who face limited prospects for completing their education or working legally in the U.S. because they were originally brought here by parents lacking immigration status. The DREAM Act would address this issue by deleting a federal provision that interferes with a state's right to determine which students qualify as "residents" for purposes of in-state tuition or other state education benefits; and by providing a mechanism for certain long-term resident immigrant students with "good moral character" to apply for legal residency so that they can work and otherwise fully participate in their communities.
- **E-Verify:** Formerly known as the Basic Pilot/Employment Eligibility Verification Program, E-Verify is a voluntary program run by the U.S. government to help certify that employees hired by companies are legally authorized to work in the U.S. However, the E-Verify database is error-ridden and often wrongly identifies naturalized U.S. citizens as undocumented and ineligible to work. In addition, some employers have used information from the database to obstruct union organizing and to force immigrant workers to accept lower wages and poorer work conditions.
- **Local Immigration Enforcement Programs or 287(g)s:** Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act allows for the authorization of state and local law enforcement officials to identify, process and detain immigration offenders they encounter as a part of their regular duties. Reports indicate that, among other problems, these programs create climates of fear and insecurity by increasing racial profiling, targeting Latina/os for arrest, discouraging immigrants from reporting crimes and failing to provide complaint systems for immigrants.

Resources for Further Information

- Anti-Defamation League Immigration Reports and Resources
http://www.adl.org/civil_rights/immigration.asp
- Immigration Policy Center/American Immigration Law Foundation
<http://www.immigrationpolicy.org>
- Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
<http://www.civilrights.org/issues/immigration>
- Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund
http://www.maldef.org/immigration/public_policy and <http://www.truthinimmigration.org>
- National Immigration Forum
<http://www.immigrationforum.org/policy/legislation>
- National Immigration Law Center
<http://www.nilc.org>