ADL®

'Migrant Caravan' and the People Seeking Asylum

Compelling Question: Why are people traveling on a caravan and what are their hopes?

Grade Level		Time	Common Core Standards
K-2	3-5	50 Minutes	Reading: R1, R7 Writing: W2, W3 Speaking & Listening: SL1, SL3 Language: L6
MS	HS		

LESSON OVERVIEW

On October 12, 2018, a group of about 160 people from Honduras began traveling to the U.S. to seek asylum. Within two days, the group grew to 1,000 people. Because of the dangers along the way, many of the migrants decided to travel as a large group as they believed it would be safer. This is known as a "caravan." Over the past decade, there's been a rise in the number of unaccompanied children and families crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. People from the Northern Triangle of Central American (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador) say they are fleeing persecution, poverty and violence.

Since the journey began, more people have joined the caravan from Guatemala and Mexico. Estimates vary as to how many people are part of the caravan but there is believed to be between 4,000 and 5,000 people. The migrants have been traveling by foot and will have traveled over 2,700 miles to reach the U.S. border. Expressing concerns about security, President Trump deployed troops to the border with orders to shut down lanes of traffic and add barbed wiring and barricades to prevent people from crossing the border. The Defense Department anticipates the number to fluctuate between 5,500 and 7,000 troops.

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to learn more about the migrant caravan, understand what political asylum (referred to here as "asylum") is and reflect on the people's stories and situations.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

○ Students will understand what the migrant caravan is, the intention of the people on it and what asylum is.

○ Students will consider the perspective of the people who are traveling on the caravan by listening to and reading about their stories and situations.

○ Students will reflect on and empathize with people's situations by writing an essay or letter in response to stories and quotes about why people are seeking asylum.

MATERIALS & PREPARATION

○ Background Information: Asylum, Migrants and the U.S.

○ "The Migrant Caravan and the Midterms" podcast (*The New York Times'* The Daily, https://podcast.app/the-migrant-caravan-and-the-midterms-e42071214/?share=ios)

Web Related Connections

Lessons
Huddled Mass or Second Class?: Challenging Anti-Immigrant Bias in the U.S.

What is the Dream Act and Who Are the Dreamers?

What Should Be Done about DACA?

Who Are the Children at Our Border?

Why Are Families Being Separated and Detained at the Border?

Children's Literature
Books about Immigrants

Blogs
Listen to the Voices of Immigrant and Muslim Youth

Other Resources
Helping Students Make Sense of News Stories about Bias and Injustice

Myths and Facts about Immigrants and Immigration

Key Words

asylum	procession
caravan	prosthetic
economic	smugglers
fractured	stability
gangs	terrorize
luxuries	troops
migrant	unaccompanied
proclamation	

○ Migrant caravan in Mexico en route to the US – in pictures (*The Guardian,* www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2018/oct/31/migrant-caravan-in-mexico-en-route-to-the-us-in-pictures); choose 10 or all of the pictures, number them and post them around the room for display

○ Visual Stories of the Migrant Caravan Worksheet (one for each student)

○ *(Optional)* Prepare the questions in "Gallery Walk" step 3 on chart paper or board/smart board for class viewing

○ Voices from the Caravan: Why These Honduran Migrants Are Heading North (*The New York Times,* October 18, 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/10/18/world/americas/honduras-migrant-caravan-voices.html)

PROCEDURES

Homework (prior to lesson)

For homework the evening before teaching this lesson, assign students to listen to The Migrant Caravan and the Midterms, a 26-minute podcast with a New York Times reporter who spent time with people on the caravan in Huixtla, Mexico. Provide the title of the podcast and the link and inform them the podcast is provided by The New Times podcast segment called The Daily. They should be able to access the podcast via online or their smart phone.

Information Sharing

1. Start the lesson by engaging students in a discussion about the podcast by asking:

   ○ What did you know about the migrant caravan before listening to the podcast?

   ○ What did you learn about it while listening to the podcast?

   ○ Why did people organize or join the caravan? Why are they concerned about safety?

   ○ What did you learn about some of the people traveling on the caravan?

   ○ Why do you think President Trump, the media and others have been focusing so much on the caravan?

2. Share some or all of the background information on asylum, migrants and the U.S.

Gallery Walk: Pictures of Asylum Seekers

1. Explain to students that the people seeking asylum from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador have complex stories. Explain to them that they will do a gallery walk around the classroom and look at photos from the caravan and will "read" the pictures that tell the stories of the migrants. Explain that every picture that we see has a focus and it is important for us to understand the inferences that each picture holds for its reader.

2. Distribute the Visual Stories of the Caravan Worksheet to each student. Read through the instructions with students, explaining that they will walk around the room and "read" each photo while answering the questions on the worksheet for just 10 of the pictures they want to focus on, if you posted all of them. Give students ten minutes for this task. As students circulate around the room, check in with them.

   Note to Teacher: As an alternative, if your classroom cannot accommodate the gallery walk, project the images one-at-a-time on the board/smart board and have students complete the worksheet at their desks while viewing the images. In order for them to do so, you will have to pause for at least a minute on each photo so students have time to look at the image and record their observations.

3. After the gallery walk is completed, divide students into small groups of 4–5 and have them discuss each photo. They can use their worksheets to help guide their discussion, and/or they can answer the following questions (post the chart prepared in advance if you chose this option):

   ○ What photo stood out to you the most? Why?

   ○ What did you first observe in each photo?

- Why do you think the photographer took this picture? What is their intent in sharing it?
- What questions do you have about the photos?
- How do you think art impacts people?

Reading Activity

1. Explain to students they will now learn about the caravan and hear some of the stories of the people. Distribute *The New York Times* article "Voices from the Caravan: Why These Honduran Migrants Are Heading North" to each student and have them ready silently. Give students 15 minutes to read the article.

- Engage students in a brief discussion by asking the following questions:
- How did you feel as you read about people on the caravan's stories and situations?
- Did any of the stories resonate with you or have you heard stories like this before?
- What are some of the reasons why people are making this journey from Honduras?
- From the quotes and stories you read, what did you learn about what people want and need?
- What did you learn that you didn't know before?
- What concerns do you think the U.S. government may have?
- What is one thing you think the government and other organizations can do to help?

Writing Activity

1. Explain to students that they will write a written response to one of the voices of the people highlighted in the article. Tell them that that they can choose among the quotes of the following people cited in the article:

- Fanny Rodriguez
- Melvin Gómez
- Ever Escalante
- Lindell Marroquín
- Nery Maldonado
- Jennifer Paola López

2. Have students write a short reflective essay response to the quote they read or write a letter response to the person. They can use the following questions as a guide:

- What's happening with the person?
- How do you feel about what you read?
- What can be done about their situation?

3. When completed, have students share their written responses to a partner sitting next to them.

Closing

Have students share aloud one reflection about the photos and/or how photos can tell stories of people.

ADDITIONAL READING AND RESOURCES

- Asylum in the United States (American Immigration Council)
- "Federal judge blocks Trump's new asylum rules: 'He may not rewrite the immigration laws'" (*USA Today,* November 20, 2018)

- ○   "Migrant caravan: What is it and why does it matter?" (BBC News, November 21, 2018)

- ○   "The migrant caravan, explained" (Vox, October 25, 2018)

- ○   "Troops Sent To U.S.-Mexico Border Under Anti-Caravan Push To Start Heading Home" (*Huffington Post,* November 19, 2018)

- ○   "This Isn't the First Migrant Caravan to Approach the U.S. What Happened to the Last One?" (*The New York Times*, October 23, 2018)

Common Core Standards

CONTENT AREA/STANDARD
Reading
R1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
R7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
Writing
W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
W3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.
Speaking and Listening
SL1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
SL3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
Language
L6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

Background Information: Asylum, Migrants and the U.S.

○ Over the past decade, there's been a rise in the number of unaccompanied children and families crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. People from the Northern Triangle of Central American (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador) say they are fleeing persecution, poverty and violence.

○ On October 12, 2018, a group of about 160 people from Honduras began traveling to the U.S. to seek asylum. Within two days, the group grew to 1,000 people. Because of the dangers along the way, many of the migrants decided to travel as a large group as they believed it would be safer. This is known as a "caravan." Since the journey began, more people have joined the caravan from Guatemala and Mexico. Estimates vary as to how many people are part of the caravan, but it is believed that there are between 4,000 and 5,000 people. The migrants have been traveling by foot and will have traveled over 2,700 miles to reach the U.S. border.

○ President Trump deployed troops to the border with orders to shut down lanes of traffic and add barbed wiring and barricades to prevent people from crossing the border; the Defense Department anticipates the number to fluctuate between 5,500 and 7000 troops. The troops President Trump sent to the border ahead of the 2018 Midterm elections will reportedly soon be leaving, in spite of continued flows of asylum-seekers and other migrants coming to the United States.

○ In early November, President Trump made a speech about immigration in which he shared his perspective on the migrant caravan, saying:

"At this very moment, large well-organized caravans of migrants are marching towards our southern border. Some people call it an invasion. It's like an invasion. They have violently overrun the Mexican border. You saw that two days ago. These are tough people in many cases; a lot of young men, strong men and a lot of men that maybe we don't want in our country, but, again, we'll find that out through the legal process. But they've overrun the Mexican police, and they have overrun and hurt badly Mexican soldiers."

"Mass uncontrolled immigration is especially unfair to the many wonderful law-abiding immigrants already living here who followed the rules and waited their turn. Some have been waiting for many years. Some have been waiting a long time. They've done everything perfectly, and they're going to come in. At some point they are going to come in."

○ In early November 2018, President Trump signed a proclamation barring migrants who enter the U.S. without documentation from requesting asylum for up to 90 days. However, a U.S. district judge in San Francisco blocked the new rules put into place by President Trump that limit the ability of migrants to request asylum.

○ As of late November, more than 5,000 migrants have been camped in and around a sports complex in Tijuana, Mexico waiting for agents to process their asylum petitions; agents at the San Ysidro entry point are processing less than 100 a day. As conditions have worsened, some of the migrants peacefully protested near the border and then attempted to get through the fencing and wire separating the two countries. U.S. officials shut down the border crossing and border agents fired tear gas on hundreds of migrants.

○ Asylum is a protection given by a nation to someone who has left their home country because of a "well-founded fear of persecution," and it allows them to stay in their new country. Asylum in the United States has historically been granted to people from other countries already in the U.S. or at the border who meet the international law definition of a "refugee." The United Nations 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol define a refugee as a person who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her home country, and cannot obtain protection in that country, due to past persecution or a well-founded fear of being persecuted in the future "on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion." Congress incorporated this definition into U.S. immigration law in the Refugee Act of 1980.

○ From 2000 to 2016, the U.S. granted asylum to an average of 26,000 people a year, according to Department of Homeland Security data. Since 2017, there has been a severe decrease in the number of political asylum-seekers accepted into the U.S.

Visual Stories of the Migrant Caravan Worksheet

Instructions: For each picture, answer the questions provided. Write the number of the picture to help you keep track. There are no right or wrong answers, only what you see and infer.

Picture #:
1. What's happening in the photo?
2. What is the focus of the photo? What does the photographer want you to focus on?
3. What can you infer about the photo?
4. What questions do you have about the photo?

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