



**American Immigration Law Foundation
Immigration Curriculum Center Lesson Plan**

Issues in Immigration - Debate

Grade Level: 6th - 8th grade

Goal: Teach middle school students conflicts, myths and facts about immigration and immigrants. Increase student awareness about immigration issues.

Objectives: Students will develop their critical thinking, research, and discussion skills.

Specifically, students will:

- Judge the accuracy of statements commonly put forward in relation to immigration.
- Research and debate the real meaning of these statements.
- Take a position in relation to these statements' credibility.
- Identify the conflicts, myths and facts about immigrants.

Materials:

Computers with Internet Access

Subscription to [*Thomson Gale Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center*](#) or a class set of [*Opposing Viewpoints: Immigration Issues*](#), or assorted Pro/Con Immigration books from the school library

[*The New Americans: Finding Community*](#). 2004. DVD. 60 min. Kartemquin Films

[PBS: ActiveVoice](#), n.d.

On Immigration Handout. (attached)

Four Corners Statements Handout (attached)

Take a Position Handout (attached)

Debate Handout (attached)

Debate Rubric (attached)

Procedures:

1. Students will engage in an activity called: "On Immigration: An Excerpt from a Speech by a Famous American" (adapted from with permission of Bob Benoit, Butte County Office of Education, from *Social Education*, October, 1991, 396-397)
2. Students will engage in the Four Corners Activity (adapted from [The New Americans PBS Web Site](#)). (Four Corners Statements Handout).
3. Students will view segments of *The New Americans*. Students will respond through RAFT Writing.
4. Students will view a PowerPoint presentation on the History of Immigration. Students will respond to the information in three sentences and share their response with a peer.
5. The class will begin researching immigration issues by reading selected articles and sign up for issues, positions and teams. (Take a Position Handout)
6. Students will prepare to debate (Debate Hand-out) and present arguments, questions and rebuttals (Take a Position Handout)
7. The class will evaluate the debaters based on the Debate Rubric. (Debate Rubric Handout)
8. Based on the Rubric, take a class vote to determine which team more effectively argued its position and rebutted its opponent's position.
9. Repeat the Four Corners Activity.
10. Students will discuss views that had changed based on solid facts and research and compare those to earlier views based on feelings.

Extension Activities: [Interviews with recent Immigrants.](#)

Culminating Activity: Debate.

Assessment: Provide checklists and rubrics to assess responses and debate. Quizzes or tests may also be given to assess students' knowledge of material in the unit.

On Immigration: An Excerpt from a Speech by a Famous American:

I agree that these people are a matter of great concern to us. I fear that one day, through their mistakes or ours, great troubles may occur. The ones who come here are usually the most stupid of their nation. Few understand our language, so we cannot communicate with them through our newspapers. Their priests and religious leaders seem to have little influence over them. They are not used to freedom and do not know how to use it properly. It has been reported that young men do not believe they are true men until they have shown their manhood by beating their mothers. They do not believe they are truly free unless they also abuse and insult their teachers.

And now they are coming to our country in great numbers. Few of their children know English. They bring in much of their own reading from their homeland and print newspapers in their own language. In some parts of our state, ads, street signs, and even some legal documents are in their own language and allowed in courts.

Unless the stream of these people can be turned away from their country to other countries, they will soon outnumber us so that we will not be able to save our language or our government. However, I am not in favor of keeping them out entirely. All that seems necessary is to distribute them more evenly among us and set up more schools that teach English. In this way, we will preserve the true heritage of our country.

Who do you think is speaking?

When do you think the speech was made?

Which particular group of immigrants do you think is being described?

Adapted with permission of the author from *Social Education*, October, 1991, 396-397. Bob Benoit, Butte County Office of Education, #5 County Center Drive, Oroville, CA 95965.

The Four Corners Activity

Use this sheet to record where you will stand when each statement is read aloud.

Name _____ Teacher _____ Date _____ Period _____

STATEMENTS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. There are too many immigrants in the United States.				
2. Restricting immigration will make Americans safer.				
3. Illegal immigrants take away jobs from U.S. citizens.				
4. U.S. immigration policy has been fair to all groups entering the U.S.				
5. If a country is having economic problems, the U.S. should allow its residents to come here for a better life.				
6. Immigration has helped the United States.				
7. Immigration is a drain on the economy.				
8. Most immigrants come to the U.S. just to get on welfare.				
9. Everyone who comes to the U.S. should be required to learn English.				
10. The United States should admit more refugees suffering human rights abuses.				

Adapted from The New Americans PBS Web Site
http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans/foreducators_lesson_plan_02.html

Debate Rubric	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic
Constructive	Arguments are well organized and clear with many relevant supporting examples and facts.	Arguments are organized and clear with relevant supporting examples and facts.	Arguments are somewhat organized and clear with supporting examples and facts.	Arguments are unclear with few supporting examples and facts.
Questions	Questions clarified and weakened the other debater's points	Questions weakened the other debater's points	Questions sought to clarify the other debater's points	Questions neither clarified nor weakened the other debater's points
Answers to Questions	Answers clarified and expanded upon the constructive points	Answers expanded upon the constructive points	Answers somewhat clarified the constructive points	Answers neither clarified nor expanded upon the constructive points
Rebuttal	Rebuttal is effective and specific to arguments made in the opposing team's constructive points	Rebuttal is specific to arguments made in the opposing team's constructive points	Rebuttal is somewhat specific to arguments made in the opposing team's constructive points	Rebuttal is not specific to arguments made in the opposing team's constructive points
Presentation Style	Style features (tone of voice, use of gestures, and level of enthusiasm) are used forcefully to the audience.	Most style features are used forcefully to the audience	Few style features are used forcefully to the audience	No style features are used forcefully to the audience

Debate Handout

Each team is allotted constructive speeches to deliver its case, questions and answers to clarify points, and rebuttals to damage the other team's argument and defend its own

The debate structure:

- Team A position debater presents **constructive debate points**. (6 minutes)
- Team B position debater **cross-examines** A points. (3 minutes)
- Team B position debater presents **constructive debate points**. (7 minutes)
- Team A position **cross-examines** B points. (3 minutes)
- Team A position offers first **rebuttal** (4 minutes)
- Team B position offers first **rebuttal** (6 minutes)
- Team A position offers second **rebuttal** (3 minutes)

Constructive Debate Points: Present the main arguments for the team

Cross-examination: Ask questions about the main arguments presented. Clarify confusing points made by the opponent. (But you may use the questions to weaken the other debater's points and the questioned debater may try to supply answers that expands the questioner's fixed time and expands upon the original constructive points.)

Rebuttal: Focus on damaging the opponents' arguments and defending your own. (Rebuttal presenters take notes as the other team is presenting and respond to every point with specific information to disprove the points.)

Take a Position on Immigration Issues:

Positions:	A Team Member Present points (6 mi)	B Team member to question A's points and A answers (3 mi)	B Team Member Present Points (7 mi)	A Team member to question B's points and B answers (3 mi)	A Team member 1 st rebuttal (4 mi)	B Team member 1 st rebuttal (6 mi)	A Team member 2nd rebuttal (3 mi)
Group 1: A. The US should admit more refugees suffering human rights violations. B. There are too many immigrants							
Group 2: A. More restrictions will not impact terrorist threats to the US B. More restrictions will make the US safer							
Group 3: A. Immigrants contribute to the US by filling essential jobs B. Immigrants take jobs from natives							
Group 4: A. Immigration is a drain on the economy B. Immigrants contribute more to the economy than they take.							
Group 5: A. Immigrants are loyal contributing members of this nation. B. Immigrants are still loyal to their old countries							
Group 6: A. Illegal immigrants should be able to become legal B. America must take stronger measures to halt illegal immigration							
Group 7: A. Children born in this country to illegal immigrants should have the rights of citizens B. Children born in this country to illegal immigrants should not be granted any rights.							
Group 8: A. Diversity contributes to American culture. B. Immigrants should be forced to assimilate							