

# Immigration & Emigration

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What role has immigration played in shaping and defining America?
- How does immigration impact the U.S. economy and its politics?
- How do immigration policies impact individual attitudes and public opinion in the United States?

## Overview

In this activity, students explore the role that immigration has played in their own families' history and view eyewitness testimonies to analyze how immigration has impacted the lives of others. Students then research U.S. immigration policies and apply what they've learned to write arguments about current immigration policies in the United States.

## Target Audience

High School U.S. History, Civics, Ethics, English Language Arts

## Activity Duration

Two 45–60 minute class periods

## Enduring Understandings

- Immigration has shaped and defined the United States since its beginning.
- Immigration continues to be a major force in the United States economy and in political discussions.
- Public attitudes and the political landscape in the United States, which have often reflected negative reactions toward new groups of immigrants, have shaped immigration policies.

## Background Information/Links

The United States has been a land of immigrants since its original inhabitants crossed the land bridge connecting Asia and North America tens of thousands of years ago. By the 1500s, the Spanish and French had begun establishing settlements in what would become the United States. In 1607, the English founded their first permanent settlement in present-day America at Jamestown in the Virginia Colony.

### Materials

- Computer with Internet connection and a projector
- U.S. immigration resources:
  - [American Girl: A Story of Immigration, Fear, and Fortitude](#)
  - [In School for the First Time, Teenage Immigrants Struggle](#)
  - [U.S. Postwar Immigration Policy 1952–2018](#)
  - [Key facts about U.S. immigration policies and proposed changes](#)
  - [Time Magazine: Immigration Archive](#)
  - [The New York Times: Opinion—Immigration Archive](#)
- If available, devices with Internet access, one per student or student pair
- Handouts, one copy per student
  - Immigration Experiences
- Ideally, the teacher will have placed the clips in a location accessible to students prior to the lesson

Some of America's earliest immigrants came in search of freedom to practice their faith. Others came to America seeking economic opportunity. Another group of immigrants arrived against their will as part of the slave trade from West Africa.

A major wave of immigration occurred from around 1815 to 1865. The majority of these newcomers hailed from Northern and Western Europe. During the mid-1800s, a significant number of Asian immigrants also settled in the United States, lured by news of the California gold rush. The arrival of these newcomers resulted in anti-immigrant sentiment among certain factions of America's native-born population. The new arrivals were often seen as unwanted competition for jobs, while many experienced discrimination for their religious beliefs.

Between 1880 and 1920, a time of rapid industrialization and urbanization, America received more than 20 million immigrants. Beginning in the 1890s, the majority of arrivals were from Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe.

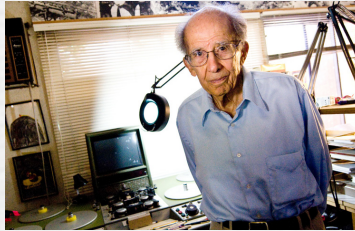
Immigration plummeted during the global depression of the 1930s and World War II (1939–1945). Between 1930 and 1950, America's foreign-born population decreased from 14.2 to 10.3 million, or from 11.6 to 6.9 percent of the total population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. After World War II, Congress passed special legislation enabling refugees from Europe and the Soviet Union to enter the United States.

In 1965, Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act, which did away with quotas based on nationality and allowed Americans to sponsor relatives from their countries of origin. As a result of this act and subsequent legislation, the nation experienced a shift in immigration patterns. Today, the majority of U.S. immigrants come from Asia and Latin America rather than Europe.

### Sources

- <https://www.history.com/topics/immigration/u-s-immigration-before-1965>
- <https://www.nap.edu/read/21746/chapter/2#3>

# Teaching with Testimony



## Procedure

### Ask

- 1 The teacher will ask students to sketch family trees, going back as far as they can. (Note: This can be assigned as homework prior to the lesson so that students can work with their families to complete the sketches.)
- 2 Students will pair up with a partner or a group and share their trees. The teacher will then ask volunteers to share information about how their families came to live in America.
- 3 The teacher will emphasize that immigration has shaped and defined America since its beginning and that immigrants have come from many different countries for a variety of reasons, including fleeing persecution and economic struggles.

### Analyze

- 4 Students will watch several eyewitness testimonies about various immigrants experiences and reasons for fleeing their countries of origin. The testimonies focus on the Holocaust and the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda. Students will complete a graphic organizer to collect information about where the person came from, why s/he emigrated, and what her/his feelings and experiences were like.
- 5 The teacher will ask students to consider and explain which testimony impacted them the most and why. Students will do a quick write and share their responses with a partner before volunteering to share with the class.
- 6 The teacher will point out that everyone's experience of immigration is unique and that many immigrants struggle to leave behind their old lives and build new ones.

### Apply

- 7 The teacher will explain that immigration is often a heated political topic and that people have differing views. S/he will explain that students are going to investigate current immigration policies in the United States and how Americans feel about them by looking at a variety of news stories and editorials.
- 8 Working in small groups, students will read and discuss selected news stories and editorials.

# Teaching with Testimony



- 9 The teacher will lead a class discussion to focus students' attention on key takeaways about U.S. immigration policy and attitudes toward immigration.

## Act

- 10 Students will write arguments stating the degree to which they agree or disagree with current immigration policies in the United States. Students will support their arguments with evidence from the texts they have read and learned about.
- 11 As an extension or alternative, students can choose to take action by contacting their representative to share their opinions on immigration.

## Connections

Connection to Student Lives	Connection to Contemporary Events	Connection to the Future
Students will consider the role that immigration has played in their own families.	Students will investigate current U.S. immigration policies.	Students will develop their own opinions about immigration policies, which will guide their future thoughts and actions.

## Clips of Testimony

### ■ Ida Chait on life as a refugee

Jewish survivor Ida Chait talks about her experience as a Jewish refugee in Komi, Russia and having to relocate to Samarkand, Uzbekistan in cattle cars on a journey that took over 30 days. She and her family had to live on the streets of Samarkand for 6 weeks until her father was able to get a job as a tailor.

### ■ Judith Ertsey on attitudes toward minorities in America

Holocaust survivor Judith Ertsey talks about how she has been treated as an immigrant and a Jew in America as well as attitudes toward other minority groups.

### ■ Paul Barna on immigrating to Canada

Paul Barna speaks on the difficulty of emigrating from Europe to Canada in 1957. He reflects on his life in Montreal including his participation in the local Jewish community.

### ■ Kizito Kalima on coming to America

Kizito Kalima speaks on how he received an athletic scholarship while living in a refugee camp, which eventually led to his immigration to America. He also describes how playing basketball was a positive outlet for him as a young man.

# Survivor and Witness Biographies



STUDENT HANDOUT

**Ida Chait** was born Ida Rosenberg on October 30, 1931 in Warsaw, Poland. Her father was a master tailor and her mother stayed at home to care for Ida and her sister. When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, Ida and her family fled to Minsk, Ukraine. After living in hiding for three months, they were discovered and sent to live in Siberia. Ida and her family were released and sent to Samarkind, Uzbekistan in 1943, two years after the Polish and Soviet governments declared amnesty for Polish captives held in the USSR. On September 25, 1949, Ida and her family emigrated New York City to stay with her two aunts who were already residents there. In 1953, Ida married her first husband, Abraham Schmidt, and they had four children together, two sons and two daughters. Ida worked as an obstetrician and gynecology nurse who specialized in delivery. She was interviewed on June 18, 1997, in Baltimore, Maryland.

**Judith Ertsey** (née Jutca Kalman), daughter of Francisc and Beatrice, was born on March 24, 1933, in Beius, Romania. She had an older brother, Emeric. Judit grew up in a traditional Jewish family. Romania joined the Axis alliance on November 20, 1940. Restrictive measures were immediately passed against Romanian Jews. The Kalman family was required to take in lodgers; they were later forced out of their home and had to live in the local Jewish school. For the remainder of the war, Judit's family had to live in mandatory, Jewish-restricted housing. Judit was liberated by Soviet Armed Forces in Oradea, Romania. Judit, her husband John, and her son Robert immigrated to the United States in 1973. At the time of her interview, Judit had two grandchildren. This interview was conducted on November 17, 2011, in San Francisco, California.

**Paul Barna** (né Pol Braun-Berger), son of Izidor and Margit, was born on June 4, 1925, in Baja, Hungary. He had an older sister, Julia. Paul grew up in a traditional, Orthodox family, and he celebrated his Bar Mitzvah in June 1938. Paul describes the antisemitism he experienced as slowly seeping in to society. After the German invasion of Hungary on March 19, 1944, Baja was occupied in less than three hours. Paul and some other boys his age were forced work for the Germans. The boys were forced to dismantle the synagogue, and the building was turned into a warehouse. A ghetto was established in Paul's neighborhood of Baja, and his family had to take people into their home. Izidor, Margit, and Julia were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where they were all murdered. For the remainder of the war, Paul was had to work in a labor battalion. The battalion was marched from Hungary to Austria, where Paul was liberated by the Soviet Army in April 1945. Paul immigrated to Canada in 1957. He and his wife, Martha, have one daughter and three grandchildren. This interview was conducted on August 22, 1996, in Thornhill, Ontario, Canada.

**Kizito Kalima** was born on June 3, 1979, in Rwanda. Kizito Kalima is the youngest of ten children. The Kalima family are Tutsi and were victims of increasingly worsening discrimination during the pre-genocide period in Rwanda. After the Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda began in April 1994, Kalima saw many family members assaulted, maimed, and killed in the course of a few months. He escaped and hid in swamps for months until he was liberated by the Rwandan Patriotic Front in late July 1994. Kizito Kalima left Rwanda looking for his brother in Kenya and was offered an opportunity to play basketball in Uganda and later in the United States where he stayed to attend high school and college. Today, he is Founder and Executive Director of the Peace Center for Forgiveness and Reconciliation. He and his wife live in Indiana with their two daughters—adopted orphans from Rwanda who are also survivors of the Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda. The interview occurred on July 24, 2010.

# Immigration Experiences



STUDENT HANDOUT

<b>Testimony</b>	Where did the witness emigrate from and immigrate to?	Why did she/he emigrate?	What were her/his feelings and experiences regarding immigration?
<b>Ida Chait</b>			
<b>Judith Ertsey</b>			
<b>Paul Barna</b>			
<b>Kizito Kalima</b>			

## National Standards

### College, Career & Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies Standards

D2.Civ.7.9-12 Apply civic virtues and democratic principles when working with other.

D2.Civ.10.9-12 Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interest and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.

D2.Civ.14.9-12 Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.

D2.His.1.9-12 Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

D4.6.9-12 Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems, instances of such problems in multiple contexts, and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.

D4.7.9-12 Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy, identification, and complex causal reasoning.

### Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts

RI.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

R.9-10.7 Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W.9-10.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W.9-10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.