

U.S. Immigration: Linking Past to Present

Film Discussion Guide produced by

Arizona State Museum and Center for Latin American Studies

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Sample Questions to Stimulate Discussion in your Classroom

Was there anything in the film that affected you emotionally (surprised you, angered you, made you proud, made you sad, etc.)?

How did you feel about immigration before watching this film? How did you feel about immigration after watching this film?

How is immigration different today than 500 years ago?

How did early immigration and later U.S. annexation of territories affect those already living in America?

What examples of historical events can you think of that have caused people to leave their homes to come to the U.S.?

What examples can you think of for reasons the U.S. has encouraged immigration during different periods of history?

What are some examples of people coming to the U.S. against their will (past to present)? How did that effect those immigrants and their families? What was the impact of their forced immigration on the U.S.?

From what countries have large numbers of immigrants and migrants come to the United States over the centuries?

How have immigrants contributed to the United States (culturally, socially, economically, scientifically, politically)?

What thoughts or feelings do the stories of the people in the video bring up for you?

Why do people choose to immigrate or migrate to the United States?

Why do some people advocate for closed borders and restrictive immigration policy?

Who decides immigration policy (state vs federal)? What's your role?

How have fear and racism shaped immigration policy in the United States?

What comes to mind when you hear the word immigrant (migration, border, illegal)?

How do the border and immigration laws affect people with families on both sides?

How has immigration touched your life?

Thinking about today's refugee crises (examples Syria, Central America) and the history of immigration in the United States, what values affect how we respond to these events?

Imagine that you have been granted the ultimate power to set immigration policy. What would you do? What would the criteria for entering the country look like?

Of the topics covered in the film, did anything make you want to take action or get involved? If so, how might you get involved?

Resources on Immigration, Migration & Policy

Migration Policy Institute: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/>

MPI provides analysis, development, and evaluation of migration and refugee policies at local, national, and international levels. It aims to meet the demand for pragmatic and thoughtful responses to the challenges and opportunities that large-scale migration, whether voluntary or forced, presents to communities and institutions in an increasingly integrated world.

Binational Migration Institute: <http://bmi.arizona.edu/>

Unlike other immigration studies centers in the U.S., BMI's interdisciplinary focus has been shaped by the unavoidable issues in our own backyard, especially the ways in which immigration policies and practices impact the lives of hundreds-of-thousands of migrants and Arizona residents. Arizona has the most active migratory transit, the most militarized, and most deadly border area in the U.S. This harsh and complicated situation has profound consequences for the state, the nation, and U.S. relations with Mexico. The University of Arizona's Dept. of Mexican American Studies has, therefore, established the *Binational Migration Institute (BMI)*.

Pew Hispanic Center: <http://www.pewhispanic.org/>

Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. We conduct public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis and other data-driven social science research. We do not take policy positions.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home>

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the

option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country. It also has a mandate to help stateless people.

International Rescue Committee: <http://www.rescue.org/>

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) responds to the world's worst humanitarian crises and helps people to survive and rebuild their lives. At work in over 40 countries and 25 U.S. cities to restore safety, dignity and hope, the IRC leads the way from harm to home.

Latin American Network Information Center: <http://lanic.utexas.edu/>

LANIC's **mission** is to facilitate access to Internet-based information to, from, or on Latin America. Our target audience includes people living in Latin America, as well as those around the world who have an interest in this region. While many of our resources are designed to facilitate research and academic endeavors, our site has also become an important gateway to Latin America for primary and secondary school teachers and students, private and public sector professionals, and just about anyone looking for information about this important region.

National Dialogues on Immigration: <http://www.dialoguesonimmigration.org/about/>

Beginning in January 2014, twenty museums and historic sites across the country launched the National Dialogues on Immigration Project: a bold, new public initiative to use historical perspective to foster dialogue on immigration issues among people with diverse perspectives and backgrounds through visceral encounters with the past. The goal? To make opportunities for safe, open dialogue on immigration accessible in every community—including yours. Dialogue scripts and an immigration history timeline are among the resources on this site. The National Dialogues on Immigration Project is facilitated by the [International Coalition of Sites of Conscience](#).