

## *Immigration: Perception and Reality*

### *Lesson Plan*

Adapt this one-period **lesson plan** for any grade level and follow it with a simple and powerful **service project** on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The **reflection** brings learning and service impact together.

#### **Anticipatory Set:** (20 minutes)

Students do a SEE, HEAR, FEEL reflective activity while they watch a video (below) about understanding immigrants. Tell them to try to separate what they see, hear, and feel while watching.

- SEE: Record observations of things you see. The observations should be only facts, no feelings or opinions at this point.
- HEAR: Record observation of things you hear. The observations should be only facts, no feelings or opinions.
- FEEL: Lastly, record how the clip makes you feel. Do not record interpretation or beliefs, just feelings.

Allow some time for class discussion of the SEE, HEAR, FEEL activity. Talk about ways we can separate facts from opinion and use credible sources for facts.

#### **Videos for Older Students:**

- "Newcomers High School" (8 minutes) shows students in two different schools coming together to dialogue about differences and combat bias about immigrants.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33OINi3xVbc>
- "For a Better Future" (3 minutes) features a mother explaining why America offers better opportunity, especially for her daughter.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLXGWo3jMNw>

#### **Video for Younger Students:**

- Show the video "I'm New Here: Welcoming Immigrant Students"(first 3:45 min.) in which children express what it is like to be new to a school and how to welcome new students.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sziomv9rp5k>

#### **Part One:** (20 minutes)

Set up six stations in the room, each associated with a different common misconception about immigration, and butcher paper and markers. Students will be given 3 minutes per station to respond to each myth with the guiding questions, and by the end will have visited all 6 stations.

1. Why might some people believe this myth to be true and why did it come into existence?
2. Why is this myth false?

- Workstation 1: Most immigrants are here illegally.
- Workstation 2: Immigrants don't want to learn English or become citizens.
- Workstation 3: Undocumented immigrants take good jobs from U.S. citizens.
- Workstation 4: "The worst" people from other countries are coming to the United States and bringing crime and violence.
- Workstation 5: Undocumented immigrants don't pay taxes and burden the national economy.
- Workstation 6: We should ban immigrants from certain countries and/or build a wall to protect our country.



## Part Two: (20 minutes)

**Older Students:** Allow the students 5-8 minutes to develop a short presentation to deliver to the class with the truth of their myth. Have each of the six groups present to the class and allow discussion after each presentation.

### **Variation for Younger Students:**

Identify on a map the different parts of the world represented in the cultural/ethnic make-up of the class (if students know) or school (using school data). Talk about different traditions and unique characteristics as interesting traits that together make us stronger.

## Service Project

*This service project may be started in class and completed in subsequent days, either with the class or with friends and family.*

**Project Overview:** Create Immigration Myth-busters posters to hang all around your school to help spread accurate knowledge and prove myths wrong. Students may use the myths from their group activity above or research another myth. **Note:** Tell them to cite the original sources for the data so the facts have credibility, not based on emotion or misrepresentation of facts.

### **Procedure:**

1. Meet in groups to determine the myth they are busting.
2. Find sources for accurate information and list facts to share.
3. Brainstorm and decide on the message and design of their poster.
4. The groups should plan their design and language with the location where it will hang in mind (placement and audience).
5. Make a poster to accurately and clearly communicate an immigration truth that dispels a common myth.
6. Include a call to action for the reader.
7. Cite references, preferably primary sources.
8. Hang up the poster.

### **Variations for Younger Students:**

1. Create a booklet of useful resources and information for new immigrants (or people who move into your neighborhood). Brainstorm what someone who is new to this country (or school or community) might need. [Where to play, shop, school procedures, common words, local favorites, etc.] Make the booklets available in the school office and at local community organizations that serve immigrants and their families.
2. Students make a poster expressing a welcoming statement and picture for children who are new to the school or community. See the examples in the video "I'm New Here" above.

## Reflection:

Follow the project with a brief reflection.

In a written response address two of more points listed below:

- How can common perceptions mislead our actions when it comes to the issue of immigration?
- Why is it important to bust myths about immigration?
- What are ways that immigrants improve our country?
- What did you learn in this activity?

**Follow-up:** Discuss what they'd like to do next to continue improving their community.

