A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS

ARRIVAL
Immigration Act of 1965 — Hart-Celler Act

How does immigration policy relate to the Civil Rights Movement?

NEW YORK STATE CORE CURRICULUM, GRADES 7–8 SOCIAL STUDIES:
UNITED STATES AND NEW YORK STATE HISTORY

UNIT 8: The United States as an Independent Nation in an Increasingly Independent World
UNIT 10: The United States Assumes Worldwide Responsibilities
UNIT 11: The Changing Nature of the American People from World War II to the Present

OBJECTIVES
• Students will review reasons why people immigrate to the United States.
• Students will make connections between the Immigration Act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Movement.
• Students will analyze statistics showing immigration change.
• Students will analyze cartoons to understand more fully Americans’ differing views of immigration.

INTRODUCTION ACTIVITIES: SKILLS VS. RACIAL QUOTAS

I. Class activity: Ask students to brainstorm about what qualifications a person should have to qualify for immigration into the United States. Tell them to think of as many as possible. What kinds of documents should an immigrant have? Write student responses on the board. Consider immigration issues facing U.S. communities as well as the whole country. Explore the push and pull factors that contribute to immigration, and describe how economic growth affects these factors.

II. Group or individual activity

DOCUMENT A: Sample Questions from the Citizenship Examination from the Department of Justice, Immigration and Nationalization Service.

Teacher should act as a government official and pass out some questions that the Citizenship Examination asks immigrants wishing to become a citizen of the United States (the students). The first person to fill out the questions correctly wins and can become a citizen.

** This can also be played in two teams, in “Jeopardy” fashion. The team that wins gets to be United States citizens. (Teachers may attach a prize to this if they wish.)

Ask students to discuss whether or not they think using such questions to decide on citizenship is fair.
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III. Background information

THE IMMIGRATION ACT OF 1965

Immigration law in the United States saw some changes between 1924 and 1965, such as the end of the total ban on Asian immigration and the admittance of refugees after World War II, but the quota system based on nationality remained essentially the same over the 40-year period. Emmanuel Celler was one of six members of Congress who had voted against the Immigration Act of 1924 and he dedicated his career to reversing the quota system, which he believed was racist because it discriminated against Southern and Eastern Europeans. Celler and other liberals failed to change the system significantly in 1952 when the McCarran-Walter Act was passed over President Harry Truman’s veto. McCarran–Walter ended bans on Asian immigration, but gave Asian countries only token quotas of 100 immigrants. In the 1950s, Senator John F. Kennedy took up the call for immigration reform and championed reform legislation as president. Thirteen years after the McCarran–Walter Act, Senator Celler co-sponsored with Senator Philip Hart the Immigration (or Hart-Celler) Act of 1965. It eliminated the country quotas created in 1924, gave priority to family reunification and job skills, and realigned the streams of immigration from Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa. The Act also set quotas of 170,000 for the Eastern Hemisphere and for the first time created a quota for the Western Hemisphere of 120,000 admissions. These changes would take place in 1968.

Passed at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, the Immigration Act of 1965 embodied the ideals of racial equality. For many years, the United States’ Cold War role as the champion of freedom in its struggle against Communism had been undermined by racism and Jim Crow segregation at home. By the 1960s, many Americans had come to see the immigration restrictions on Asians, Africans and Southern and Eastern Europeans as a form of racism. The Act is also an example of unintended consequences. Its supporters believed the Act would not increase overall levels of immigration, but they did not realize the effect that exempting family reunification from the hemispheric quotas would have on the overall levels of immigration. In addition, they did not expect that the new immigration would change the demographic balance of the U.S. population. From the mid 1970s onward, approximately 75% of immigrants would arrive from the developing world. Over the next 40 years, this legislation and the influx of undocumented immigrants would remake the United States again into a nation of immigrants.

Review the National Origins Act of 1924 from the previous lesson. Ask students why racial quotas are problematic. Show students countries of origin on a map. Ask the class how and why the Civil Rights Movement might affect attitudes toward restricting immigration based on nationality.

DOCUMENT

Suggested documentary: “Eyes on the Prize,” American Experience, PBS.
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesonthelprize/tguide/index.html
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesonthelprize/resources/res_video.html
(This is a video timeline.)
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IV. Activity: Analyzing statistics

**DOCUMENT B:** Persons Obtaining Legal Permanent Resident Status by Region and Selected Country of Last Residence, U.S. Office of Statistics

Compare and contrast charts.
1. Which areas/countries experienced the greatest increase in the number of immigrants entering the United States? What are some conclusions you can draw from this change?

2. Which areas/countries experienced the greatest decrease in the number of immigrants entering the United States? What are some conclusions you can draw from this change?

3. How many more Europeans were allowed to enter the United States during the years 1980–1989 compared with 1930–39?

4. Which country in Europe sent the largest group of immigrants to the United States 1930–1939? Why would so many people want to leave this country in that decade? Consider the political changes that took place.

5. Considering the push/pull factors that lead people to immigrate, why do you think so many Mexicans came to the United States during the 1980s and 1990s?

**Teachers are encouraged to have students figure out more math questions using the two charts.**

IV. Critical thinking: Why did the 1965 Immigration Act come about?


Questions to answer
1. What were the new qualifications Senator Hart proposed to allow immigrants to enter the United States after 1965? What evidence in the document helps you to know why it was written?

2. What does it mean to be a Nation of Immigrants? How can that relate to the National Origins Act of 1924?

3. Why do you think legislators such as Senator Hart were so passionate about changing the National Origins Act of 1924?

4. According to President Johnson, why was the old quota system wrong and how did the Immigration Act of 1965 solve this injustice?
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5. Based on your reading of President Johnson’s speech, how does the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 relate to the Civil Rights Movement?

6. Based on the statistics from the Office of Immigration Services, was President Johnson correct when he stated that “This bill that we will sign today is not a revolutionary bill. It does not affect the lives of millions. It will not reshape the structure of our daily lives . . .”? Explain why or why not.

CARTOONS 1–3: Interpreting Political Cartoons

1. Describe what you see in each cartoon. What is the message being presented?

2. Is there a mixed message in these cartoons? How and why does America send out mixed messages? [Hopefully students will connect to previous answers on what it means to be a Nation of Immigrants]

3. What groups of people would agree/disagree with the cartoon’s message? Why?

4. How long does it take to become a “native” and oppose immigration? This could be considered the life of an individual or generations of a family.

V. Activity: Legislation at work: Social History/Oral History

DOCUMENTS E AND F: A Dominican-American Boy and His Dreams [excerpt story/interview from 4th-grade curriculum]

ACTIVITY: Have two students read aloud the Oral History interview with Juan Rodriguez, conducted by Richard K. Lieberman and Steven Levine.

Questions to consider

1. How are both the Juan and Elvis stories examples of the effects of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965? Identify one of the new immigrant groups that came into the US as a result of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965?

2. Pick out examples of immigrant assimilation into the United States in both stories.

3. How will current immigrant groups change the United States? Issues to consider include culture, demographics and the economy.

4. Should there be more than one official language spoken in the United States? Is there more than one official language in other countries?

5. Juan and Elvis are second-generation immigrants and their dreams are different from their parents’. Do your dreams of the future differ from what your parents want? If so, why?
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CONCLUDING ESSAYS

What is the immigration policy of the United States and how has it changed over time? What kind of immigration policy is most consistent with the values/framework of the United States?

CLOSING ACTIVITY/HOMEWORK

Write a letter to a US senator, US representative or the editor of a newspaper explaining what system should be used to allow immigrants into the United States to become citizens.
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Sample Citizenship Questions from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service
For more questions, go to http://www.uscis.gov/files/nativedocuments/100q.pdf

1. What is the supreme law of the land?
   The Constitution

2. What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?*
   • Speech
   • Religion
   • Assembly
   • Press
   • Petition the government

3. What is the “rule of law”?
   • Everyone must follow the law.
   • Leaders must obey the law.
   • Government must obey the law.
   • No one is above the law.

4. What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful?
   • Checks and balances
   • Separation of powers

5. Who is one of your state’s U.S. Senators?
   Answers will vary. [For District of Columbia residents and residents of U.S. territories, the answer is that D.C. (or the territory where the applicant lives) has no U.S. Senators.]

6. Why do some states have more Representatives than other states?
   • (because of) the state’s population
   • (because) they have more people
   • (because) some states have more people

7. If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes President?
   The Speaker of the House

8. Who is the Commander in Chief of the military?
   The President

9. There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe one of them.
   • Citizens eighteen (18) and older (can vote).
   • You don’t have to pay (a poll tax) to vote.
   • Any citizen can vote. (Women and men can vote.)
   • A male citizen of any race (can vote).
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10. Why did the colonists fight the British?
   • because of high taxes (taxation without representation)
   • because the British army stayed in their houses (boarding, quartering)
   • because they didn’t have self-government

11. What is one thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for?
   • U.S. diplomat
   • oldest member of the Constitutional Convention
   • first Postmaster General of the United States
   • writer of “Poor Richard’s Almanac”
   • started the first free libraries

12. Name one problem that led to the Civil War.
   • slavery
   • economic reasons
   • states’ rights

13. Who did the United States fight in World War II?
   Japan, Germany and Italy

14. Name one state that borders Canada.
   • Maine
   • New Hampshire
   • Vermont
   • New York
   • Pennsylvania
   • Ohio
   • Michigan
   • Minnesota
   • North Dakota
   • Montana
   • Idaho
   • Washington
   • Alaska
# A Nation of Immigrants

## Arrival

**Immigration Act of 1965 — Hart-Celler Act**

**Persons Obtaining Legal Permanent Resident Status by Region and Selected Country of Last Residence**

(from the Office of Immigration Statistics)

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<td>1,133,443</td>
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<td>23,780</td>
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**Selected Countries**

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<td>119,107</td>
<td>209,616</td>
<td>85,752</td>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>61,813</td>
<td>220,213</td>
<td>153,644</td>
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A summary of Senator Philip Hart’s statement before the Senate Immigration Subcommittee
January 13, 1964

The first witness before the Senate Subcommittee was Senator Philip Hart, Michigan, who summarized well a basic reason for reform:

Discriminatory provisions against immigrants from eastern and southern Europe, token quotas for Asian and African countries, and implications of race superiority in the Asian-Pacific Triangle have no place in the public policy of the United States.

A newcomer should not arrive at our nation’s door, hat in hand, apologizing for his parentage or birthplace. This is the great vice of the national origins quota system. True, we need a careful selection of immigrants. We should discriminate - but not with irrational concepts founded on the theories of ethnic superiority. Congress must enact a statute that will be discriminatory in the best meaning of the word - on the grounds of security and economic and scientific benefit; on the principles of family unity and asylum to the homeless and the oppressed.

The record of hearings held during the 88th Congress was not published by the Subcommittee.
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President Lyndon B. Johnson’s Remarks at the Signing of the Immigration Bill,
Liberty Island, New York, October 3, 1965

Mr. Vice President, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Ambassador Goldberg, distinguished members of the leadership of the Congress, distinguished governors and mayors, my fellow countrymen:

This bill that we will sign today is not a revolutionary bill. It does not affect the lives of millions. It will not reshape the structure of our daily lives, or really add importantly to either our wealth or our power.

Yet it is still one of the most important acts of this Congress and of this administration.

For it does repair a very deep and painful flaw in the fabric of American justice. It corrects a cruel and enduring wrong in the conduct of the American Nation. . . This bill says simply that from this day forth those wishing to immigrate to America shall be admitted on the basis of their skills and their close relationship to those already here.

This is a simple test, and it is a fair test. Those who can contribute most to this country—to its growth, to its strength, to its spirit—will be the first that are admitted to this land.

The fairness of this standard is so self-evident that we may well wonder that it has not always been applied. Yet the fact is that for over four decades the immigration policy of the United States has been twisted and has been distorted by the harsh injustice of the national origins quota system.

Under that system the ability of new immigrants to come to America depended upon the country of their birth. Only 3 countries were allowed to supply 70 percent of all the immigrants.

Families were kept apart because a husband or a wife or a child had been born in the wrong place.

Men of needed skill and talent were denied entrance because they came from southern or eastern Europe or from one of the developing continents.

This system violated the basic principle of American democracy—the principle that values and rewards each man on the basis of his merit as a man. . .

We can now believe that it will never again shadow the gate to the American Nation with the twin barriers of prejudice and privilege. . .

The days of unlimited immigration are past.

But those who do come will come because of what they are, and not because of the land from which they sprung. . .

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“Anti immigration 1620,” by Jeff Parker, Florida Today, November 1, 2006

"THEY SAY THEY'RE BUILDING A WALL BECAUSE TOO MANY OF US ENTER ILLEGALLY AND WON'T LEARN THEIR LANGUAGE OR ASSIMILATE INTO THEIR CULTURE..."
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Elvis Garcia, the son of Dominican immigrants, was ten years old and living in Queens with his four brothers and sisters in the early 1990s, when he wrote about his life and his dreams.

My mom and dad met in this country, so I was born here. I am a completely American citizen. Can you believe they named me Elvis? Actually, I kind of like it. They thought it was the ultimate American name.

My dad relied on the old customs when I was born, though. He put a small baseball mitt and ball in my crib. This was to guarantee that I would be a baseball player. I think he has already figured out that my two brothers weren’t going to be famous ball players. I was the last hope. I haven’t told him yet that I don’t want to be a ball player, either. He’s going to be really sad, so I’m just going to wait. I like it a lot for fun, but that’s it. In the Dominican Republic it is a really big deal, you know. Even more so than in this country, if you can believe it. I have a cousin, Manny, who plays pro baseball in California. He is kind of everybody’s idol because he makes a lot of money, and we watch him on TV. People are really poor here, too. So baseball is the big dream.

My big dream is to design computer games. I am really good in math and stuff. I can already design programs on the computer at school. I got advanced placement. That’s the first time that has happened to anybody in my family. I am proud and so is my mom, I think. My oldest sister, too. She says I am going to be one of those computer geniuses you read about. You never know.

I really like living in Queens. My dad works with my Uncle Julio running a cab company. It took them a long time to do this, but now they are on their own. My mom likes it here, too. She cried sometimes because she missed her home country. Last year Dad gave her a ticket to the Dominican Republic as a Christmas present. She went for a visit and saw her sister and mother. She liked her visit a lot, and doesn’t miss her home as much now that she’s been back. She says she was imagining things were a lot better than they were. I guess missing things makes your imagination work like that.

We live near other people from the Dominican Republic. I speak Spanish. I like knowing two languages. I think this will help me one day, too. On weekends we have clubs that get together and play baseball. It’s fun because it’s for adults and kids and there’s music playing and the moms bring food. Not in the winter, of course, because it’s really cold here then.

I guess I’m going to have to tell my dad about the baseball thing pretty soon. Maybe he won’t be as sad as I think. He’s a good guy, and I think he would want me to be happy. He always says each of us should have a dream, that’s why we came here. You know, even though I have never been to my parents’ country, I think there are more dreams here than there.
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Juan Rodriguez is about the same age as Elvis, but he was born in the Dominican Republic and came here when he was 13. Juan is studying computer science at the City College of New York/CUNY and is a college assistant at the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives. He talked about his life with Steven Levine and Richard K. Lieberman, also of the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives, LaGuardia Community College/CUNY.

Richard: So, Juan, you read this letter from Elvis, what’s your reaction to what you read?

Juan: Oh, man, this letter resembles me in so many ways. In so many ways. I grew up watching baseball in the Dominican Republic and I admire a lot of ball players over there. And as a kid, a ten-year-old kid, I pictured myself to be like them. We didn’t have many resources, we made our own equipment. Our glove was a milk cardboard. We grabbed a sock and we wrapped it up, and that was our ball. And from time to time we climbed up to a lemon tree and grabbed like a dozen lemons and those were our baseballs. And the broomstick was our bat. So we really didn’t have many resources and like Elvis my father did not consider baseball a career. He said you have to become a professional, you have to go to school, and I didn’t get to play in a league until I was about 18 years old.

Richard: If [Elvis] was here, what advice would you give to this 10-year-old boy?

Juan: To go after his dream, you know, go after your dream, always keeping in mind what reality is, but don’t give up on your dream just because other people might not like it. It is your dream, it’s your life, be persistent and at the end it will pay up.

Richard: Say it in Spanish.

Juan: Sigue tus sueños y tu vas a salir adelante si tu sigues tus sueños y ser más persistente en tus motivos.

Steven: When you look back now and your father told you, “No baseball, I want you to become a professional.”

Right? When he told you that when you were 12 years old, no, wait, 13 years old, what did you think of that advice then? And what do you think of that advice now?

Juan: Well, back then I thought that it was just arrogance. I thought that it made no sense, you know, why wouldn’t somebody want me to make money, that’s the way I see it. But now I see it as, it’s important.
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DISCOVERING HISTORY IN TODAY’S NEW YORK TIMES

1. The Immigration Act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Movement embodied the ideals of racial equality. Both had positive outcomes over time and, in some cases, unanticipated outcomes. The legislation had a significant impact on immigration and also embraced the fundamentals of the Civil Rights Movement, advocating equality and opportunities for immigrants and others to fully participate in the American way of life. The New York Times publishes articles and editorials related to these issues. Locate an article, editorial, or Op-Ed piece (opposite the editorial page) that presents various positions on a legal issue related to immigration or civil rights and discusses the intended or unintended outcomes of the decision. You might need to review several issues of The New York Times if the legal matter requires time for resolution. After reviewing the article or articles, and the various outcomes, what position would you take on the issue and why? You might need to complete further research on a particular point. What do you think might be the unanticipated outcomes as a result of the decision?

2. Find a photograph or advertisement in The New York Times that you feel illustrates the diversity of this country, either in food, entertainment, business, or sports. Beneath this photograph describe how and why this country is enriched by the contributions of Americans from diverse backgrounds. Do you perceive any negative factors in this diversity?

Discussion: Have individuals from a specific country or region distinguished themselves in a specific profession or other endeavor?