

“TRAIN TO NOWHERE”

TEACHER RESOURCES

When eleven bodies are found inside a railway car in Denison, Iowa, a New York man is convinced his missing brother will be listed among the dead. The Guatemalan immigrant joins investigators in a search for the smugglers who locked the group of undocumented immigrants inside the railcar. The documentary offers an in-depth look at a tragedy that made headlines internationally, focusing on the perspectives of the Guatemalan-American, an immigration agent, and a train conductor charged in the case.

OVERVIEW (2-3 sentences)

Students will discuss the modern implications of immigration in America. The following materials have been constructed with ties to historical United States immigration studies in mind, but could easily align with Government and Geography courses.

OBJECTIVES (2-3 bullet points)

Students will:

1. Draw connections between current and historical immigration trends
2. Identify social and geographic factors affecting immigration
3. Describe cultural values based on knowledge of current and historical immigration and emigration trends

MATERIALS (List at least one document)

1. Train to Nowhere DVD
2. Teacher resources

RECOMMENDED TIME/GROUP (Number of class periods/time of class periods)

- *3-4 45 minute periods
- *9-12th grade

ACTIVITY OUTLINE

I. WARM-UP (2-3 sentences) – Prior to viewing documentary

1. Discuss, as a class or in small groups, “How has immigration changed the cultural landscape of the United States?”

II. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – AFTER VIEWING DOCUMENTARY

1. What factors in the immigrants' home towns and lives played a role in their coming to the United States? How does this compare to the historical waves of immigration?
2. What role did geography play in the immigrants' journey to the United States?
3. What sort of impact does human migration have on culture? What kind of physical impact does it have?

III. WRITTEN ASSESSMENT

How has the government reacted to immigration in the past? What effect has this had on the individual? How is the government currently dealing with immigration? What effect is this having? Compare government reactions to immigrants in the past and in the present. Provide concrete examples from the past and present to support your answer.

IV. EXTENSIONS

Divide students into teams to debate the following question: Are government restrictions and regulations on immigration helpful or harmful? For example, are the restrictions helpful for national security purposes or harmful to those trying to find a better life? Within their teams, students should evenly divide duties such as preparing an opening and closing, researching facts, and determining what types of rebuttals may be necessary from the opponent's point of view.

V. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

House Committee Meeting on Immigration Policy
July 14, 2010

Witnesses testify from a spiritual perspective about immigration policy and providing routes for legalizing immigrants. The video addresses economic, moral, and legal issues dealing with immigration.

<http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/ImmigrationPolicy18>

United States v. State of Arizona
Nov 1, 2010

Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals judges hear arguments on the constitutionality of Arizona Senate Bill 1070 which allows law enforcement officials to pull drivers over to check their immigration status.

<http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/StatesvS>

VI. SUGGESTED RELATION TO IOWA CORE CURRICULUM (SOCIAL STUDIES)

- SS.09-12.BS.02 Understand the influences on individual and group behavior and group decision making.
- SS.09-12.BS.04 Understand current social issues to determine how the individual is able to formulate opinions and responds to those issues.
- SS.09-12.BS.06 Understand the process of how humans develop, learn, adapt to their environment, and internalize their culture.
- SS.09-12.BS.07 Understand how personality and agents of socialization impact the individual.
- SS.09-12.E.05 Understand how universal economic concepts present themselves in various types of economies throughout the world.
- SS.09-12.E.06 Understand the local, state, regional, national and international factors that create patterns of interdependence in the global economy.
- SS.09-12.G.05 Understand how human actions modify the environment and how the environment affects humans.
- SS.09-12.G.06 Understand how culture affects the interaction of human populations through time and space.
- SS.09-12.G.07 Understand how cultural factors influence the design of human communities.
- SS.09-12.H.01 Understand historical patterns, periods of time and the relationships among these elements.
- SS.09-12.H.03 Understand the role of culture and cultural diffusion on the development and maintenance of societies.
- SS.09-12.H.04 Understand the role of individuals and groups within a society as promoters of change or the status quo.
- SS.09-12.H.05 Understand the effect of economic needs and wants on individual and group decisions.
- SS.09-12.H.06 Understand the effects of geographic factors on historical events.
- SS.09-12.H.08 Understand cause and effect relationships and other historical thinking skills in order to interpret events and issues.
- SS.09-12.PS.01 Understand the rights and responsibilities of each citizen and demonstrate the value of lifelong civic action.

VII. SUGGESTED RELATION TO MISIC STANDARDS

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| <i>SS.09-12.01.03</i> | <i>SS.09-12.04.01</i> |
| <i>SS.09-12.02.01</i> | <i>SS.09-12.04.02</i> |
| <i>SS.09-12.02.02</i> | <i>SS.09-12.06.04</i> |
| <i>SS.09-12.02.04</i> | <i>SS.09-12.07.05</i> |
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