



Analyzing Immigrant Contributions through Data, Story, and Voice

Overview

In this immigration lesson plan, students will explore the contributions of immigrants have made to their home states and localities through an analysis of data and story. Students will demonstrate understanding by writing an evidence-based argument that answers the question: *how have immigrants contributed to my state, district, city, or town?* Students will also be asked to reflect on common assumptions about immigrants and their roles in U.S. society.

Extensions and adaptations are available for English Language Learners and readers at multiple levels.

Objectives

Students will be able to...

- analyze data and story in order to understand how immigrants contribute nationally as well to their state and locality.
- write an argument using data, story [and personal experience, optional] in order to demonstrate how immigrants have contributed to their city or town.

Essential Questions

How have immigrants contributed to your state or locality? How are assumptions of immigrants supported or refuted by data and story?

Key Terms

- [Immigrant](#) – A person who is entering a country from another to take up new residence.
- [Unauthorized Immigrant](#)– A foreign-born, non-citizen who is not a legal resident.

Common Core Standards

High School

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.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.

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.1](#)
Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.1](#)
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

C3 Framework

- [D2.His.5.9-12](#) Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people’s perspectives.
- [D2.Geo.2.9-12](#) Use maps, satellite images, photographs, and other representations to explain relationships between the locations of places and regions and their political, cultural, and economic dynamics.
- [D4.1.9-12](#) Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.

Grades

- 10-12 (adapt as appropriate)

Texts & Materials

- [Immigrants & Their Contributions Survey](#) and [Answer Key](#)
- “[New Americans Infographics by State](#)” by the American Immigration Council
- “[New Americans Facts Sheets by State](#)” by the American Immigration Council
- “[The Caretaker](#)” by filmmaker Theo Rigby, Immigrant Nation (Short Film 7:09)
 - Vimeo link (if unable to view on Onward): <https://vimeo.com/channels/ination>
- “The Caretaker” [Discussion Guide Questions](#)
- Colored pencils or markers
- “[How do immigrants contribute to the state of _____?](#)” Graphic Writing Organizer (PDF)
- “[Entrepreneurship and Innovation profiles by State](#)” by the American Immigration Council

Lesson Preparation

- Make copies of the [Immigrant & Their Contributions Survey](#) handouts
- Make copies of “[New Americans Infographics by State](#)” “[New Americans Facts Sheets by State](#),” and “[How do immigrants contribute to the state of _____?](#)” Graphic Writing Organizer (PDF)
- Organize student work groups of 3-4 members.
- *Optional:* Cue links on [Immigrants & Their Contributions Survey Answer Key](#) to analyze evidence with students.

Consider making copies of the following for extension activities:

- Have computers available to access [The New York Times Interactive Maps](#) and [National Geographic MapMaker Interactive](#) if students are completing the activity on their own (see extensions at the end of the lesson for links and instructions).
- Make copies of [Library of Congress Analyzing Maps handout](#).

Additional Resource: [Teachable Moments: Executive Action and Immigration Myths](#) (Teach Immigration Education Blog)

Lesson Procedure

What are our assumptions about immigrant contributions?

1. Ask students the following: when you have to make up your mind about an issue or want to find out more information about an issue, are you to rely on data, stories, personal experience, or a combination? Why? After a brief discussion, tell students that today you are going to explore how data, stories, and experience inform our understanding of the contributions of immigrants.

Key point: Tell students that a good argument often has a combination of data, story, personal experience and analysis.

2. Have students complete the [Immigrant Contributions Survey](#).
3. Walk through the [Answer Key](#) with students demonstrating evidence with the maps and graphs provided.

Options: You may decide to share the answer key with students and have them correct their answers on their own or you can show them the maps and charts linked in the answer key and analyze them as a class.

What can we learn about immigrants from data?

I DO...

4. Tell students that they are going to look at the contributions of immigrants to U.S. society from the perspective of data. In groups, they are going to focus on learning the contributions of immigrants in the following 5 areas: *economics, politics, education, family, and language*.

You will demonstrate the analysis first at a national level using the “New Americans Infographic by State - U.S.A. Then, students will analyze the contributions at a state level in groups.

5. Distribute the “New Americans Infographics by State” and the “New Americans Facts Sheets by State”

to students. Ask them to briefly look the documents over, and as a first impression, ask them to explain what is similar and different about them. (Possible responses may include: the fact sheets offer more detail than the infographic, the infographic is easier to read, they both include data on the contributions of immigrants, etc.)

Assign each of the 5 areas: *economics*, *politics*, *education*, *family*, and *language* a color.

With the infographic displayed on a screen, circle and annotate how the data points fit into the categories. Demonstrate your thinking aloud for students.

- Please note that not every data point will fit into a category, and some data points will belong to more than one category. This is a good analytical discussion to have with students. For example, the facts “the purchasing power of Latinos is \$1.2 trillion” and “Asian buying power totaled \$718 billion” can be argued as both political and economic contributions.
 - Also note, that while there are no language data points on the U.S.A infographic, there are language data points on the state infographics.
6. Repeat the procedure above with the [Fact Sheet](#) except tell students that because these sheets are more detailed than the infographic that you are going to only circle *the most important data points* in your opinion and explain why they are important in notes on the margin. Tell students that some of this analysis will provide the evidence that you will need for your writing.

*Please note that there is no language data point for the [New Americans Facts Sheets by State](#), but that there are language data points on the state fact sheets students will be working with.

YOU DO...

7. Break students up into groups of 3-4. Distribute the “[New Americans Infographics by State](#)” and the “[New Americans Facts Sheets by State](#)” for your respective state. You can differentiate the fact sheets according to ability (see [adaptations](#)). Working together, students will categorize the contributions of immigrants as you demonstrated previously for them.

Option for Pair/Group Analysis:

- a. Students can each have a category and a color and be responsible for identifying and analyzing the data points for their group.
- b. Students can discuss and come to a consensus for each of the data points and analysis. This option could also be done in pairs.

Give students time to discuss and share their analysis with others in their group or pair.

WE DO...

8. As a class, select the 5 data points and explain the analysis for how immigrants have contributed to your state or district in the graphic organizer. Model as a class the first one or two points, and then have students complete on their own.

What can we learn about immigrants from story?

9. Watch and discuss “The Caretaker” on [Onward](#), a short film by award-winning documentary filmmaker Theo Rigby about caregiver, Joesy Gerrish, a Fiji immigrant and her Japanese-American client, Haru. Though they are not both immigrants, both have faced anti-immigrant sentiment, in Haru’s case, detention at a Japanese internment camp during World War II.

Before viewing, ask students to think about *how have Joesy and Haru contributed to the U.S. economy and society?* Check for understanding after watching the clip. (Possible responses may include: taking care of the elderly, raising a family, cooking, and cleaning).

You can dig deeper into the film with these questions excerpted from the [Immigrant Nation Discussion Guide](#).

- In what ways did you see Joesy care for Haru? What were some of Joesy’s responsibilities noted on her task list? What do you think are the biggest challenges to caregiving and this type of work?
- Joesy says, “In Fiji we take care of our elders because they took care of us.” How does Joesy think elders are treated in Fiji versus The United States? Do you agree? Why or why not? If you agree, what reasons do you think are behind this difference?
- Can you think of other examples of how elders are treated in other countries?
- Both Joesy and Haru come from migrant families. What else do they have in common and what other values and experiences bring them closer together?
- Joesy confesses her biggest fear. What is she afraid of, and how does her personal story challenge or uphold common stereotypes and beliefs held about immigrants?
- Joesy jokes about Haru’s children, “They said, ‘I don’t know how you’re going to get along with my mom’ As soon as I walked in the door, we clicked” Joesy and Haru have a special friendship and bond. Do you have a special intergenerational friendship or familial relationship with someone older or younger? Why is it important to you?
- Have you ever been a primary caregiver for a friend or family member, or had to hire someone to take care of a loved one?
- Describe the experience, and what you think is the biggest misconception about this work.
- Why do you think it’s important to honor and respect the professionals who take care of the elders in our community?
- Give examples of negative portrayals or stereotypes about immigrants. How do you think Joesy and

Haru’s friendship and the small glimpse we viewed of their lives positively defines the word “immigrant?”

Option: If you are unable to view the video in class, or if you want to extend the learning for students to make direct connections to your community, distribute copies of stories collected nationwide from immigrant entrepreneurs in the “Entrepreneurship and Innovation profiles by State.”

Have students read-aloud these stories, particularly the ones about their home state. How do these stories compare to their own communities? What similarities and differences do they notice? How are immigrants contributing to their community? Whose stories would they add?

Synthesis and Assessment

10. Ask students to retake the survey from the beginning of class. Now that they have analyzed the data and heard a story, discuss how their answers have changed.
11. Remind students of the key point that a good argument is based on data, story, personal experience, and analysis. Students will write a constructed response or brief argumentative essay on the following question:

Cumulative Task

Based on evidence and analysis, how have immigrants contributed to your state, district, city, or town? Choose one and use both data and story (personal or one that you have read) to support your writing.

ELL or low reading ability: Choose 2 pieces of evidence and analysis. Teacher can provide scaffolds.

Moderate: Choose 3-5 pieces of evidence and analysis.

Advanced: In addition to the task above, answer the following question: beyond the five categories discussed, how else do immigrants contribute to your town or city?

Extensions

- [“Immigration and Jobs: Where U.S. Workers Come From”](#), [“Immigration Explorer”](#), [“Diversity in the Classroom”](#) by the New York Times: Remade in America Series (Interactive Maps) Have students explore these maps and discuss what they learned in written or verbal reflections they can share with the class.
- Have students watch [“Dee and Vilma”](#) on Onward, a short film about one immigrant’s contribution caring for an elderly woman with dementia and leukemia. Compare and contrast with “The

Caretaker.” Discussion questions are provided on the website

- After watching the “The Caretaker,” students can explain how the report “[Critical Care: The Role of Immigrant Workers in U.S.](#)” (American Immigration Council) offers a fuller picture of immigrant health care workers.
- Ask students to write their own immigration stories or of someone they know using our [digital storytelling lesson plan](#).

Adaptations

Students of low level reading ability and some English Language Learners can use the district level fact sheets which are more visual than textual. An example of one can be found [here](#). You can locate this district level analysis on your [state page](#).

About Us

The [American Immigration Council](#) is a non-profit, non-partisan, organization based in Washington D.C. Our legal, education, policy and exchange programs work to strengthen America by honoring our immigrant history and shaping how Americans think and act towards immigration now and in the future. We strive to promote a better understanding of immigrants and immigration by providing [free educational resources](#) that inspire thoughtful dialogue, creative teaching and critical thinking.

Tell Us How You Use This Lesson in Your Classroom

We’d love to know how you have adapted this lesson or any feedback you want to share with us. Please send us a message at teacher@immcouncil.org

Please note that as a teacher, you are eligible for community grants, books for your classroom, free professional development, leadership opportunities, and more!

We welcome contributing book reviews and guest blog posts from educators. Stay connected by following our blog, [Immigration In and Out of the Classroom](#), and our twitter [@ThnkImmigration](#)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Immigrants & Their Contributions Survey

Directions: Read the following statements and indicate whether you agree or disagree by writing an A or D in the space provided.

Key Terms:

Immigrant – A person who is entering a country from another to take up new residence.

Unauthorized Immigrant – A foreign-born, non-citizen who is not a legal resident.

_____ **1. There are more immigrants now than ever before.**

_____ **2. Unauthorized immigrants don't pay taxes, but they get benefits.**

_____ **3. Unauthorized immigrants contribute to the U.S. economy.**

_____ **4. Most native-born workers have experienced increased wages from immigration.**

_____ **5. Most immigrants come from Mexico.**

_____ **6. Most immigrants today learn English.**

Immigrants & Their Contributions Survey

Answer Key

1. There are more immigrants now than ever before.

Both Agree and Disagree. While there are more immigrants living in the U.S., the *percentage* of immigrants is about 13% in 2011 according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This percentage corresponds to previous immigration waves. Between 1880 and 1930, the foreign-born population represented between 12 and 15 percent of the total population and a similar increase occurred in the 1850s and 1880s. See this [graph by the U.S. Census Bureau](#) to depict this information visually for students.

2. Unauthorized immigrants don't pay taxes, but they get benefits.

Disagree. Ask students to explain how they pay taxes through sales tax. Undocumented immigrants also pay sales tax every time they buy clothing, an appliance, gas, or food at a restaurant. They also pay property tax, a main source of public school funding – even if they are renting, and in a report on [U.S. Immigration Myths and Facts](#), the U.S. Chamber of Commerce states, “more than half of undocumented immigrants have federal and state income, Social Security, and Medicare taxes automatically deducted from their paychecks.”

Unauthorized immigrants in the United States paid \$10.6 billion in state and local taxes in [2010](#), including \$8.1 billion in sales taxes, \$1.2 billion in state income taxes, and \$1.2 billion in property taxes, according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy.

While undocumented immigrants can receive schooling and emergency medical care, they are not eligible for benefits such as food stamps, welfare, or health insurance under the Affordable Care Act.

3. Unauthorized immigrants contribute to the U.S. economy.

Agree. Unauthorized immigrants comprised 5.2% of the U.S. workforce (or 8 million workers) in 2010, according to the [Pew Hispanic Center](#).

If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from the United States, the country would lose \$551.6 billion in economic activity, \$245 billion in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and approximately 2.8 million jobs, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a 2008 report by the [Perryman Group](#).

4. Most native-born workers have experienced increased wages from immigration.

Agree. Immigrants do not compete with the majority of natives for the same jobs because they tend to have different levels of education and to work in different occupations. As a result, immigrants usually “complement” the native-born workforce—which increases the productivity, and therefore the wages, of natives.

A 2010 [report](#) from the Economic Policy Institute estimated that, from 1994 to 2007, immigration increased the wages of native-born workers by 0.4%.

5. Most immigrants come from Mexico.

Agree. While most immigrants do come from Mexico, immigration to the U.S. is truly global phenomenon. According to the [Migration Policy Institute](#), the top five countries of birth for new long-term permanent residents in 2013 were Mexico (14%), China and India (7%), the Philippines (5%), and the Dominican Republic (4%).

Show students this interactive map from the [Migration Policy Institute](#) that shows immigrant and emigrant populations by country of origin and destination. Select “United States” from the pull-down menu and have students explore the numbers and see for themselves.

6. Most immigrants today learn English.

Agree. Researchers Claude Fischer, Mike Hout, and Aliya Saperstein found that the immigrants of today are learning English faster than the European immigrants of a century ago did. Show students this [graph](#) to demonstrate their findings and discuss some possible conclusions from this graph as Fischer describes [here](#).