



**American Immigration Law Foundation  
Immigration Curriculum Center Lesson Plan**

## **An Immigrant's Experience**

### **An Interdisciplinary Technology, Language Arts and Social Studies Project**

**Grade Level:** 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grades

**Summary:** Video shorts written, produced and edited by 5<sup>th</sup> graders that retell the journeys of immigrants who now call the United States their home.

**Goal:** This project is designed to help fifth grade students gain a better understanding of an immigrant's experience. By conducting interviews and writing journal entries, students will be able to understand and appreciate their interviewee's unique journey by creating a first-person retelling of their experience using iMovie.

**Objective:** After completing this project, students will be able to:

- Effectively document and share an immigrant's experience
- Write effective interview questions
- Conduct a successful interview
- Understand how technology can be used to create a personalized document of a historical experience
- Use iMovie, iTunes and iPhoto to produce an iMovie product
- Use a scanner to import photos onto a computer
- Record narration using a microphone and portable recorder

How will you assess student learning as a result of the project?

- Written journal entries will be assessed using a teacher-created rubric
- Students will be given a checklist of the various elements needed to successfully complete their iMovie production (interview, journal entries, narration, scanned photos, titles, credit, music, etc...)

- The students and teachers will develop a rubric to assess the technical aspect of the assignment, which should include creativity, sound and image quality and overall impact of the project
- Students will share the movies and provide constructive criticism

### **Purpose and description of project:**

Throughout their fifth grade year, students investigate the theme of immigration in order to gain a greater awareness and empathy for people from of other cultures. With this project, students will engage in an authentic learning experience by acting out an immigrant's journey to America. First, the students will use a cassette recorder to interview a neighbor or relative who has immigrated here, asking about their decision to immigrate, their voyage, their first impressions of this country and their search for housing and a job in the United States. The student will also gather any pictures that their interviewee may have to help them illustrate their immigration experience. (The students will scan any photos or documents they receive into their computer and return them to their owners.)

Using the recordings of their interview, the students will then create a fictional, yet historically accurate, series of journal entries. These entries will become the narration for an iMovie project that gives a first-account of their interviewee's experience. After recording their narration, the students will import it into iMovie and incorporate it with the images they have scanned and other images that may be appropriate to help depict their interviewee's story. Next, the students will edit the project, adding music and titles to enhance their project.

### **How will you showcase your students work?**

Once all of the projects are complete, they will be combined into one class iDVD for each of the students to have. We will also have a screening night in our auditorium, in which parents and interviewees will be invited to attend. We will view each project in large format using the school's LCD projector and PA system.

### **Materials:**

Griffin USB Microphone  
 Sony Unidirection Enriched Sound Vocal Microphone  
 Sony Standard Cassette Voice Recorder  
 Fujifilms DVD-R discs, cases, labels  
 Maxell Cassette Tapes  
 Handouts (enclosed)

### **Procedure/Timeline:**

Describe your project time line. List the sequence of student activities. Include the culminating activity to which a foundation representative will be invited.

- January:       Introduce Project  
Students will choose a relative/neighbor/family friend to interview and write a letter requesting an interview; the class will discuss how to be a good interviewer and will brainstorm effective questions; students will conduct their interviews and gather pictures
- February:       Pre-production  
Students will learn to use the scanners to import their photos into iPhoto; students will use their interviews to write journal entries in the first person; students will edit their journals into narration for their iMovie project
- March/April:   Production  
Students will record narrations; students will be introduced to iMovie and will learn how to import and edit photos and add narration, music, titles and credits to their movies; students will edit their projects
- May:            Presentation/Culminating Activity  
Students will invite parents, interviewees and an Oppenheimer Foundation representative to a screening night to view all of the projects

#### An Immigrant's Journey Timeline

Task Description	Date Due	Done
Select an interviewee	2/14	
Set up interview	2/21	
Conduct interview and collect photos/documents to scan	2/28	
Send a thank you note to interviewee	3/1	
Scan photos/documents	3/8	
Transcribe interview	3/14	
Create journal entries/narration	3/18	
Complete voice over narration	4/1	
Collect any additional historical pictures needed to supplement those already scanned	4/1	
Have music selection available on CD	4/4	
Videotape impact statement	4/14	
Finish assembling movie	4/14	
Make and send invitations to Celebration Night	4/21	

## Tips for Conducting a Good Interview

- Make sure the location you choose to conduct your interview is quiet and comfortable
- Give a list of questions to your interviewee, so that they know what to expect. This is a good opportunity to explain the purpose of your project
- Be encouraging to you interviewee
  - Look at your interviewee and smile while they are talking
  - Be familiar with your questions so that you can pay attention to your interviewee, NOT the paper in your hand.
- Really listen to what your interviewee is saying
  - Make sure that they have answered your question and that you have received the information that you are looking for. If not, ask the interviewee to elaborate
  - Pay attention for something that you find interesting, so that you can ask a follow-up question. (Write it down if you need to, so that you don't forget to ask it!)
  - Don't be afraid to ask questions that you might not have written down. What your interviewee says might lead you somewhere unexpected
- Wait for at least 3-5 seconds after you think your subject is done speaking to ask your next question. They might surprise you and have more to say.
- Thank your interviewee for their time. Be sure to ask permission to contact them again if you need to clarify or get any additional information
- Explain to interviewee that they will receive an invitation to a Celebration Night in which they will have an opportunity to view the completed projects
- Be gracious and appreciative.

Have Fun!

## Immigration Project Interview Questions

The following list of question was taken from each table. They also include questions that we have brainstormed as an entire class. Questions are listed in NO particular order. You need to design your own list of question and put them in an order that makes sense to you. Using these as a guideline, I recommended that you choose those that will best help you understand you interviewee's immigration journey. Type your own list and print 2 copies, one for you and one for your interviewee. It is not necessary that you ask all of these questions. The best interview will be one where conversation back and forth feels natural. For example, a specific answers may encourage you to ask "follow-up" questions. Those answers may lead to others. Try to think of the interview as a comfortable conversation. Relax and have fun!

1. What is your full name?
2. Is your name different in your native language? Pronunciation/spelling?
3. Where did you live before you immigrated to the U.S.?
4. What specific circumstances caused you to immigrate?
5. Was it a personal decision or one that someone else made for you?
6. How old were you?
7. What had you heard about the U.S. before you came? What stereotypes/expectations did you have?
8. Had you seen pictures or photos of the U.S.? What did you think of them?
9. What had people told you about the U.S.?
10. Were your initial expectations accurate? Can you give me an example?
11. Where specifically in your former country did you live? (great time to pull out your atlas)
12. What was your life like there?
13. What was going on historically?
14. Can you tell me about the government in your native country before you left?
15. What year/date did you arrive in (present city)?
16. Did you immigrate alone, or with friends/other family members?
17. Can you share a memorable experience with me about what is like, how you were feeling when you first arrived?
18. Was it hard to leave or was it exciting?
19. Did you experience any "culture shock"? Was it hard to adapt? If so, what was challenging? Can you think of a story or experience that will give me an idea?
20. Do you miss family members/Friends? Are you in touch with them? How?
21. What possessions did you take with you? What important things, if any did you leave behind?
22. How did you arrive? Method of transportation? What route did you take?
23. Do you have a green card? How did you obtain it? Are you an official U.S. citizen?
24. When did you become an official citizen?
25. What did you have to do in order to become an official citizen?
26. How did you wind up in Chicago?
27. Did you consider living anywhere else?
28. Did you know anyone here when you arrived?

29. Did you feel welcome?
30. How did people treat you? Do you find people treat you differently now if you have been here for a while?
31. Who/What helped you get settled, find a place to live, etc.?
32. Tell me about any language barriers that you experience/or currently experience?
33. 'Did you know any English before you arrived?
34. Was it difficult to communicate when you first arrived?
35. What were your first 24 hours/days like?
36. Can you tell me how your life has changed since you came to this country?
37. What sacrifices if any have you made to live in the U.S.?
38. Are there specific things/people that you miss? Who/what? Why?
39. What is the best thing about your immigrant experience?
40. What has been most challenging or difficult about your experience?
41. What kind of job did you have in your home country?
42. What job(s) did/do you have in the U.S.?
43. How did you go about finding a job?
44. Did you bring any specific skills with you that you were able to use here?
45. If you had not immigrated, what do you think your life would be like today? Can you give me an example of how it might be different?
46. If you have children, were they born in this country? Do they speak your native language?
47. Do they know about your immigrant experience/native culture?
48. How might your children's lives differ if you had not emigrated?
49. What might your life, your family's life, be like today had you not emigrated?
50. How has this country changed since you arrived?
51. Can you tell me a story or give me an example of how your country has changed since you've been here?
52. Has your economic status or lifestyle changed since you left? Since you've been here?
53. Are there specific cultural traditions that you have brought with you?
54. Can you tell me about one of them or why/how you celebrate it? Why is it important to you?
55. Did you attend school here?
56. What were your school experiences like?
57. Did classmates/teachers treat you differently?
58. Do you feel that our culture appreciates immigrants?
59. How would you respond to the statement: "America is a nation of immigrants"?
60. What do you think about the future of immigration in our country?
61. What do you currently do? Do you enjoy it? Why or why not?
62. How do you feel about immigration in our country today?
63. Would it be possible to contact you if I have any additional follow-up questions?