



Honoring the Spirit of America

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“Becoming An American”

Grades: 6 –8

All Subjects

Objective

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge of the immigration laws.
- 2 Understand the difficulty non-Americans experience in their attempt to become citizens.

Character Education Terms

- Patriotism
- Respect
- Citizenship

Teacher’s Overview

- Students will take a citizenship test
- Students will realize through role-playing and simulation the intensity the immigrant’s experience in their desire to become an American.
- They will develop a greater appreciation for their American heritage.

Materials

- Poster board
- Markers
- Secret Ballots
- Internet <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/13442226/>
<http://cltr.co.douglas.nv.us/Elections/100QuestionTest.htm>

Introduction

- 1 Have students respond to the following question: *What are some of the qualities that you believe we should use to measure whether a person is allowed to become an American citizen? Should we even allow people*

- into the United States to live?*
- 2 Discuss the answers with the class.

Activity

- 1 Print and pass out one of the sample immigration tests to the students
- 2 Review results with class.
- 3 Select five students to be prospective immigrants based on responses. The rest of the class will comprise the fictitious Board of Immigration Control.
- 4 Give each prospective immigrant one of the biographies below, and each member of the board a copy of the immigration policies.
- 5 Each board member should have the following policies as they are questioning the immigrants:
- 6 Have each one of the immigrants to come into the room with their information below written on a poster. Ask the first prospects to explain why they should be allowed to enter the United States.

Activity

- 1 Implore them to present their arguments for their admission as persuasively as possible.
- 2 Members of the immigration board may ask questions looking at the specific policy guidelines.
- 3 Debrief the class before the voting. Tell the board members they can admit only one person to the country. Let them discuss the qualifications of each before they vote. Explain the underlying reasons for immigration policies and devices such as quotas but also the hardship such as policies can cause.
- 4 The teacher must be sensitive to students' personalities about immigration.
- 5 Remind students that the immigration policy remains a controversial political issue.

Immigration Policies

1. First priority will be given to immigrants fleeing dictatorships.
2. The United States encourages immigration to rejoin families that have been separated.
3. The United States encourages immigration of persons with skills that would benefit the American economy without taking jobs from citizens.
4. The United States discourages immigration of persons likely to become dependent upon public assistance.
5. The United States refuses to take persons with a history of criminal behavior or radical political activity.

Biographies

1. Male, German, age 50, married, no children, no relatives in the USA, college graduate with a degree in computer technology.

2. Male, Chinese, age 22, unmarried, aunt and uncle live in Atlanta, graduate of dental hygienist school, bilingual in Chinese and English
3. Female, South African, age 44, unmarried, no relatives in the United States, petroleum engineer's assistant, speaks English and French
4. Female, Canadian, age 45, widowed, two older children live in Texas, high school education, does not speak English
5. Male, Iranian, age 30, secretary, speaks English and Arabic, no relatives in the United States

Becoming an American Lesson Plan

Individual Practice/Reflection

- 1 Have students write in their journals about their reaction to the simulation.
- 2 Ask them to explain how it would feel if you were the immigrant who was denied entry into the United States.
- 3 Have them react to their classmate's feelings and try to empathize with people who want to become Americans and cannot gain entry.

Assessment

- 1 Assess each student on their selections and explanations on the secret ballot.
- 2 The students who role-played can be assessed on their performances.

Enrichment

Call the Immigration office and locate a person who has just become an American citizen to speak to the class. Have the class prepare questions about the citizenship process before the presentation.

* The immigration laws and instruction were adapted from a similar simulation in Simulations, Games and Lab Activities.