Reforming the US Immigration System

\*\*\*This lesson plan is designed after the students have had some background information on US immigration policy. Much of this lesson was taken from CSPAN.

***Bell Ringer:*** Have students view the following video - “Why do you believe the US immigration system need reform?” (1:18) - <https://video.choices.edu/media/why-do-you-believe-us-immigration-system-needs-reform>

***Individual Reflection***: Write the following three statements on the board. Have students choose which statement they most agree with and free write for two minutes on on why they support that statement. Allow students to share their answers with the class (at least one per statement).

* + 1. The primary consideration in determining whether to grant immigration permissions to an individual should be the family connections that individual has in the United States.
    2. The primary consideration in determining whether to grant immigration permissions to an individual should be the skills and assets that individual can offer to the United States economy.
    3. As long as an individual passes a basic security screening, he or she should be granted immigration permissions, whether or not that individual possesses family connections or valued skills and assets to the United States.

***Take A Stand*:** Write the following prompt on the board - “To what extent should the federal government impose limits on immigration?”

Have students line up on a continuum with what they agree with - one end of the continuum should be “No limits” and the other end should be “Strict Limits”. Ask various students on different places on the continuum why they are standing where they are.

***Pair Share*** - Have students research and fill out the vocabulary preview chart plus two background articles Some of this information may come from knowledge from prior lessons on immigration. Some of this information comes from these articles. Some of this information will have to be Googled. Vocabulary preview chart at end of lesson.

*Background articles*:

“Trump-backed bill would hinder families’ legal immigration to US” - 89.3 KPCC

<https://www.scpr.org/news/2017/09/21/75835/trump-backed-bill-would-hinder-families-legal-immi/>

(You can also play the audio of this instead of having the kids read - it is 3:52 in length)

“Trump unveils legislation limiting legal immigration” - NPR

<https://www.npr.org/2017/08/02/541104795/trump-to-unveil-legislation-limiting-legal-immigration>

“Would the US benefit from a merit-based immigration system?” - PBS

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/economy/analysis-u-s-benefit-merit-based-immigration-system>

***Video Watching***: Students will be watching two videos - one that supports more restrictions and one that opposes. Students should jot down key arguments from these videos in the note-taking chart that they may want to use in their upcoming structured deliberation (found at bottom of lesson plan). A few more videos for supplemental materials will be at the end of the lesson plan write-up.

(1) “The nation must set and enforce a limit on how many immigrants we admit each year” - Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced the Trump administration’s plan to rescind the Obama administration’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, with an unspecified time for Congress pass a replacement for the program that deferred the deportation of some immigrants who came to the United States illegally as children.

<https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?7190> (3:02)

(2) “This is really not the American way” - Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) details her concern with the provisions of the Criminal Alien Gang Member Removal Act.

<https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?7178>

***Preparation for Student Deliberation***: Give students 15 minutes of preparation time for the upcoming deliberation. Students will be asked to take a side on the question - *To what extent should the federal government impose limits on immigration?* Students will need to choose to be FOR strict limits or AGAINST strict limits.

Students should use this time to gather additional arguments and research from independent research. They can fill in this information on the note-taking chart that they started with the videos.

***Student Deliberation:*** You may use whatever format works best for you in regards to student deliberation. For this one, I envision a “fish bowl” activity. Students that are FOR strict limits will first sit in the inner circle and discuss the question amongst themselves for five to seven minutes. Students that are AGAINST strict limits sit in an outer circle watching the discussion. They should take notes on what is said. Students then change places after the first circle is done. The students AGAINST strict limits than have time to talk for five to seven minutes.

I then usually advance this to an engaged deliberation. After each side is in the fishbowl, each side picks two of their own to represent their side in front of the class. The four students engage in a deliberation in front of the class about the question for four to five minutes. Students should respect turn-taking to some degree. I liken this format to the PF Grand Cross-Fire. All four students should speak multiple times during this and it should ping-pong back and forth.

*Supplemental resources to give students to prepare for deliberations*:

--”Our first priority must be to keep Americans safe” - Rep. Martha Roby (R-AL) speaks in support of the Criminal Alien Gang Member Removal Act.

<https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?7175> (1:54)

--”Focus on highly skilled, permanent workers who can add value to our economy” - Senator David Perdue (R-GA) speaks in favor of new, more stringent, restrictions on the issuance of green cards, outlined in the RAISE Act he co-sponsored with Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR)

<https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?7186> (1:30)

--”I am strengthened, if not emboldened, by these young people” - Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) announces the introduction of the Dream Act of 2017.

<https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?7179> (2:32)



1. First, define these terms and phrases by using prior course information and/or searching Google or a dictionary for a definition.
2. As you are reading the articles to define or watching the videos shortly or from our upcoming class discussion, write down quotes from people using these words in context.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Term | Definition | Explanation/Quote |
| Family-based immigration system |  |  |
| Merit-based immigration system |  |  |
| DACA |  |  |
| DREAM Act |  |  |
| RAISE Act |  |  |
| Criminal Alien Gang Member Removal Act |  |  |
| Green Card |  |  |
| Visa |  |  |
| Quota |  |  |
| Immigration Act of 1924 (National Origins Act) |  |  |
| Immigration Act of 1965 (Hart-Celler Act) |  |  |



**Note-taking Chart -** Directions: Use this chart to take notes on the strongest arguments for and against the question as you watch C-SPAN’s videos and read the linked articles. For each argument include the source (the name of the speaker or writer), a direct word-for-word quote, and a summary in your own words. Then use the chart in your classroom deliberation, debate, or simulation.

**Deliberation Question: To what extent should the federal government impose limits on immigration?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **For Strict Limits** | **Against Strict Limits** |
| Source:  Quote:  Summary: | Source:  Quote:  Summary: |
| Source:  Quote:  Summary: | Source:  Quote:  Summary: |
| Source:  Quote:  Summary: | Source:  Quote:  Summary: |
| Source:  Quote:  Summary: | Source:  Quote:  Summary: |