



IN HISTORY: IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC HERITAGE

Lessons

They Are Not Like Us

Overview/Description

As part of a larger conversation about immigration, it is important to be able to discuss and address issues of racism. This exercise helps students understand that attitudes of fear or even hatred toward immigrants and “foreigners” have existed throughout the history of our country, as well as in other places around the world.

Grade Level

High School

Academic Standards for the Social Studies

- Indiana Standards (as of Jan. 2010):
 - High School, U. S. History, Standard 1, Early National Development: 1775–1877 (USH.1.2)
 - High School, Sociology, Standard 2, Culture (S.2.1, S.2.6); Sociology, Standard 4, Social Groups (S.4.10); Sociology, Standard 5, Social Institutions (S.5.7), Sociology, Standard 6, Social Change (S.6.2)

- National Standards (National Council for Social Studies): I Culture; II Time, Continuity, and Change; III People, Places, and Environments; V Individuals, Groups, and Institutions; VI Power, Authority, and Governance; and IX Global Connections

Social Studies/Historical Concepts

Racism and immigration

Learning/Instructional Objectives

Students will:

- analyze and assess the meaning of a historic speech by a familiar and well-known person
- identify stereotypical attitudes
- recognize that the cultural heritage of the United States has been enriched by each new wave of immigrants

Time Required

One hour (maximum)

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Materials Required

- Pencil and paper
- Student Handout: From a Speech by a Famous American

Background/Historical Context

Even though immigration is a fundamental characteristic of this country, it has been the source of constant debate and, more often than not, discord. Immigration presents a dilemma for America's continuing search for identity. Biases have been expressed by every generation, especially when large numbers of immigrants have come to this country or during time of economic difficulty. Generally, these biases are directed toward the "other"—anyone who is "not like us"—because they are of a different race, ethnicity, or religion. It's a difficult, long-standing issue that we need to talk about. How can we analyze anti-immigrant attitudes? How do we understand the origins of the fears and frustrations that cause animosity?

For more information, refer to the "INTRODUCTION: Ethnic History in America and Indiana" essay by John Bodnar from *Peopling Indiana: The Ethnic Experience* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1996). The "Introduction" section of the Indiana Historical Society's "IN History: Immigration and Ethnic Heritage" Web site provides a free download of this essay in PDF format.

Teacher's Instructional Plan

Introduction

As an introduction to this lesson on immigration, consider using a book talk to introduce student choice reading selections or read a selection as a class read aloud. Refer to the "Resources" section of the Indiana Historical Society's "IN History: Immigration and Ethnic Heritage" Web site for sample "Student Choice Reading Lists." Check with your school or local library for other selection options.

ACTIVITY

- As part of a broader discussion about immigration, provide student copies or prepare an overhead copy of the speech by a famous American.
 - Tell the students that this speech was written by a "famous American," but it has been revised slightly.
 - The speech was made by Benjamin Franklin in the late 1700s.
 - The immigrants who concern him most in this speech are German settlers.

From a Speech by a Famous American:

I agree that these people are a matter of great concern to us. I fear that one day, through their mistakes or ours, great troubles may occur. The ones who come here are usually the most stupid of their nation. Few understand our language, so we cannot communicate with them through our newspapers. Their priests and religious leaders seem to have little influence over them. They are not used to freedom and do not know how to use it properly. It has been reported that young men do not believe they are true men until they have shown their manhood by beating their mothers. They do not believe they are truly free unless they also abuse and insult their teachers. And now they are coming to our country in great numbers. Few of their children know English. They bring in much of their own reading from their homeland and print newspapers in their own language. In some parts of our state, ads, street signs, and even some legal documents are in their own language and allowed in courts. Unless the stream of these people can be turned away from our country to other countries, they will soon outnumber us so that we will not be able to save our language or our government. However, I am not in favor of keeping them out entirely. All that seems

necessary is to distribute them more evenly among us and set up more schools that teach English. In this way, we will preserve the true heritage of our country.

- Discuss the speech with your students.
 - Who do you think wrote this speech?
 - When could it have been made, and what group of people is being described?
 - What are the issues raised in this speech?
 - What is fact and what is opinion?
 - Do you agree or disagree with the speaker? Why do you feel that way?

Evaluation and Assessment

Consider using a rubric or checklist for evaluating student work.

Additional Resources

Refer to the “Resources” section of the Indiana Historical Society’s “IN History: Immigration and Ethnic Heritage” Web site for lists of educator and student resources on immigration and ethnic history.

Student Handout: From a Speech by a Famous American

I agree that these people are a matter of great concern to us. I fear that one day, through their mistakes or ours, great troubles may occur. The ones who come here are usually the most stupid of their nation. Few understand our language, so we cannot communicate with them through our newspapers. Their priests and religious leaders seem to have little influence over them. They are not used to freedom and do not know how to use it properly. It has been reported that young men do not believe they are true men until they have shown their manhood by beating their mothers. They do not believe they are truly free unless they also abuse and insult their teachers. And now they are coming to our country in great numbers. Few of their children know English. They bring in much of their own reading from their homeland and print newspapers in their own language. In some parts of our state, ads, street signs, and even some legal documents are in their own language and allowed in courts. Unless the stream of these people can be turned away from our country to other countries, they will soon outnumber us so that we will not be able to save our language or our government. However, I am not in favor of keeping them out entirely. All that seems necessary is to distribute them more evenly among us and set up more schools that teach English. In this way, we will preserve the true heritage of our country.

Discussion Questions

Who do you think wrote this speech?

When could it have been made and what group of people is being described?

What are the issues raised in this speech?

What is fact and what is opinion?

Do you agree or disagree with the speaker? Why do you feel that way?