

5.6 ANTI-IMMIGRANT SENTIMENT

Essential Question(s): What are *anti-immigrant bias (xenophobia)*, *nativism* and *nationalism*? What are historical and current immigration policies? How do anti-immigrant sentiments impact immigration policy?

Overview

Immigration is a recurring topic in the current events cycle, and has been throughout this nation's history. While immigration has been a central feature of America's growth, it has also been a divisive topic, with differing views of how to approach immigration policy. Both supporters and opponents of more open immigration policies point to various aspects of our history to back up their respective cases. Today, many discussions about immigration surface anti-immigrant bias,* nativism and nationalism; all terms that describe prejudice against those who were not born in this country. Anti-immigrant sentiment and expressions of anti-immigrant bias have had a significant impact on immigration policy and the daily lives of those whose lives are touched in some way by immigration.

**ADL uses the term anti-immigration bias rather than xenophobia which is a commonly used term that refers to a fear of immigrants rather than a bias against immigrants.*

Snapshot

What Students Will Learn:

In this lesson, students will learn about historical and current immigration policies and how anti-immigrant bias, nativism and nationalism have impacted these policies in the United States.

Standard(s):

D2.Civ.3.9-12

Time: 50 minutes each



Objectives

- Define anti-immigrant bias (xenophobia), nativism and nationalism.
- Discuss the evolution of anti-immigrant policies in U.S. history.
- Connect previous immigration policies to current immigration policies.

Differentiation

Newsela provides articles at different lexile levels so you can differentiate to several reading levels if needed. (You will need to create a FREE Newsela account in order to access the article.)

What's Needed

- Writing utensil and paper or 1:1 technology
- WiFi, internet, computer, screen or projector, speakers
- (Optional) Chart paper and markers or computer and screen or projector
- Make enough copies of the following Newsela articles to be evenly distributed among three or six groups of students, depending on class size:
 - “Mexican Immigration History: Longer, more Complex than U.S.-Mexico Border” (Newsela, May 24, 2017, www.adl.org/media/16118/download)
 - “Immigration Act of 1924: Congress Sets Tough Quotas on Entering U.S.” (Newsela, May 10, 2017, www.adl.org/media/16119/download)
 - “Chinese Immigration and the Chinese Exclusion Acts” (Newsela, May 22, 2017, www.adl.org/media/16120/download)
- (Optional) Prepare the questions in step 8 to be projected for whole class viewing.
- Prepare the excerpts from U.S. Presidents “John F. Kennedy,” “Barack Obama” and “Donald Trump” as separate slides to be projected.

Classroom Setup

Students will work individually and collaborate in small groups. Desks should be set up to best support small group collaboration (groups of 3–4).

Key Vocabulary

anti-immigrant bias
bias
exclusion
immigrant
immigration
nationalism
nativism
patriotism
policy/policies
xenophobia



Direct Teaching

1. Welcome students to class. Start by asking students:

How do you, or your peers, respond when there's someone new to the school or the class?

Ask students to be honest, even if some of their responses may be uncomfortable to share.

2. Tell students that today we will be focusing on U.S. Immigration, and responses to immigrants and immigration policy, historically and now.
3. Share the following definition for immigrant:

Immigrant: A person who willingly comes to a non-native country or region to take up residence.

Note: Depending on how this, and other topics have entered the classroom space during the school year, it might help clarify for students that aside from indigenous Native American populations, virtually everyone else arrived from somewhere else during this country's history. Some came willingly (immigrants), some were forced (enslaved peoples), and some were driven out of their country of origin (refugees).

4. Establish some key vocabulary by first asking students to share what they know or understand about the following words:

- bias
- xenophobia
- nationalism
- immigrant
- nativism
- patriotism

Then, project the following definitions:

Bias: An inclination or preference either for or against an individual or group that interferes with impartial judgement.

Anti-immigrant bias: The marginalization and/or oppression of people who are of immigrant origin, transnational or outside the dominant national identity or culture.

Xenophobia: A fear or intense dislike of people from other countries.

Nativism: The policy of protecting the interests of native-born or already established people against those of immigrants.

Nationalism: Identification with one's own nation and a feeling that one's own country is superior to other countries.

Patriotism: A love or devotion to one's country.

5. Facilitate a brief discussion about these definitions by asking some or all of the following questions:

- Where have you heard these terms before?
- What surprises you about these terms?
- Can you think of examples of any of the words?
- What relationships do you see between all or some of these terms? In what ways are these terms like each other? How are they different?

6. Explain to students that they are going to complete a Jigsaw Activity in which they will be co-constructing knowledge with each other. They will work in small groups and each small group will read one article. They will then join a group of students that have read different articles. Together, they will share information

about each of the articles they read so they are teaching each other. They will discuss the summary, themes and facts from the article so that everyone can learn more about the given topic.

7. Depending on how large your class is, divide the class into either three or six large groups, so that each group has no more than 5–6 students. Distribute an equal number of copies of the following three articles:
Group 1 (and possibly 4): “[Mexican Immigration History: Longer, more Complex than U.S.-Mexico Border](#)”
Group 2 (and possibly 5): “[Immigration Act of 1924: Congress Sets Tough Quotas on Entering U.S.](#)”
Group 3 (and possibly 6): “[Chinese Immigration and the Chinese Exclusion Acts](#)”
8. Provide time for students to independently read their article in their groups, using the following questions to guide their reading. (Consider posting/projecting the questions so students can refer back to them.)
 - What time period in U.S. history did the article focus on?
 - Who are/were the main people involved?
 - What does this article suggest about U.S. Immigration policy during this time period?
 - How would you summarize your article? What new or significant information should your group know from your article?

Tell students to check in with each other, and when they have read the article, they should discuss their findings in their groups.
9. Divide students into new groups of three students each, so that each of the articles is represented in the new, small groups.
10. Tell students that each person in the new small group has two minutes to share about their article.
11. Facilitate a large group discussion by asking the following questions:
 - What are some similar themes and patterns across all the articles?
 - How did anti-immigrant bias (xenophobia) influence immigration policies related to the Chinese Exclusion Acts, the Immigration Act of 1924 and the history of Mexican immigration?
 - How do nativism and nationalism impact immigration?
 - *(If time permits)* What connections can you make to today, about how anti-immigrant sentiments impacted immigration policies?

Closing

Project the excerpts from U.S. Presidents “[John F. Kennedy](#),” “[Barack Obama](#)” and “[Donald Trump](#)” one at a time, asking three different students to read them. Then, ask students to respond to the following questions:

- What themes are common to all three excerpts?
- Where do the three Presidents differ in their messaging about immigration?
- In what ways do you relate to these excerpts?
- Do you agree with some, all or none of the points of view expressed?
- How is the current climate around immigration policy similar to and different from the perspectives shared in these excerpts?

35TH U.S. PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY EXCERPT

“Immigration policy should be generous; it should be fair; it should be flexible. With such a policy we can turn to the world, and to our own past, with clean hands and a clear conscience. Such a policy would be but a reaffirmation of old principles. It would be an expression of our agreement with George Washington that ‘The bosom of America is open to receive not only the opulent and respectable stranger, but the oppressed and persecuted of all nations and religions; whom we shall welcome to a participation of all our rights and privileges, if by decency and propriety of conduct they appear to merit the enjoyment.’”

— John F. Kennedy, *A Nation of Immigrants* (p. 65)



44TH U.S. PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA EXCERPT

“My fellow Americans, we are and always will be a nation of immigrants. We were strangers once, too. And whether our forbearers were strangers who crossed the Atlantic, or the Pacific or the Rio Grande, we are here only because this country welcomed them in and taught them that to be an American is about something more than what we look like or what our last names are, or how we worship. What makes us Americans is our shared commitment to an ideal, that all of us are created equal, and all of us have the chance to make of our lives what we will. That’s the country our parents and grandparents and generations before them built for us. That’s the tradition we must uphold. That’s the legacy we must leave for those who are yet to come.”

— President Obama’s [2014 speech on immigration reform](#)

45TH U.S. PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP EXCERPT

“Throughout our history, we have proudly welcomed newcomers to our shores. Out of many people, from many places, we have forged one people and one nation under God, and we’re very proud of it. We share the same home, we share the same destiny, and we pledge allegiance to the same, great American flag. Our policies have turbo-charged our economy. Now, we must implement an immigration system that will allow our citizens to prosper for generations to come.”

— President Trump’s [speech on immigration in 2019](#)

