

African American Voices Lesson Plans

Lesson Plan: Black Immigration Issues in the U.S.

Subject: American Government

Grade level: 12

NGSSS-SS: **SS.912.A.7.16**
Examine changes in immigration policy and attitudes toward immigration since 1950.



**Description/
Abstract of Lesson:** The students will critically analyze and express an informed opinion regarding immigration policies, comparing and contrasting how it affects different groups in the U.S. (i.e.j. Haitians, Cubans, Jamaicans, Bahamians, Mexicans, etc.). The students will design alternative, more equitable immigration policies.

Objective(s): The students will

- Understand the legislative process.
- Develop comprehension over immigration issues as they relate to different groups.

Materials:

- Internet Resources
- Computer with Microsoft Word

Duration: 2 class periods

**Lesson Lead In/
Opening:**

1. Show either a short webcast or video recording of a local news report focused on a recent immigration issue.
2. Discuss with the class what they understood from the video as it relates to their own community.

Activity:

1. Have the students read recent immigration laws passed (i.e. Cuban Adjustment Act) and articles from various news sources expressing different perspectives and different issues surrounding recent U.S. immigration policies. (Try to limit reading material between 2 to 4 sources)

Examples:

<http://www.ajc.com/news/dekalb/many-immigrants-leaving-georgia-967054.html>

<http://www.webwire.com/ViewPressRel.asp?ald=43258>

http://www.denverpost.com/immigration/ci_6015651

On Haitian Immigration:

<http://www.inmotionaame.org/migrations/landing.cfm?migration=12&bhcp=1>

<http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/haiti-immigration.htm>

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/international/july-dec02/haiti_10-30.html

<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/apr/24/world/la-fg-haiti-deportees-20110424>

http://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/more.php?id=818_0_2_0

Cuban Adjustment Act

http://www.state.gov/www/regions/wha/cuba/cuba_adjustment_act.html

On Cuban Immigration

<http://www.usimmigrationsupport.org/cubaimmigration.html>

On Hispanic Immigration

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/31/world/americas/31haitians.html?pagewanted=all>

http://www.dailypress.com/news/opinion/dp-ed_oppenheimer_0724jul24,0,1013214.story?coll=dp-opinion-editorials

On Caribbean Immigration

<http://www.caribbeannewsnow.com/immigration.php>

<http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?id=834>

2. After reading each article, prompt the class to engage in discussion using questions such as these:

- According to the article, what is the major difference between an economic refugee and a political refugee?
- Considering the political and economic circumstances of Cuba and Haiti, how fair or unfair is the Cuban Adjustment Act?
- What kind of effect do you think recent immigration laws will have on your community? Do you consider it fair? Why or why not?
- Considering that a high percentage of recent Hispanic and Haitian immigrants make low wages, is it fair to have them pay such high fees to renew their residencies?
- Considering that undocumented Hispanic and Haitian immigrants make low wages, would it be practical to have them pay thousands of dollars to become legal residents?
- Should other groups in this country, especially poor minorities, be worried about immigrants competing with them for jobs? Explain why or why not.

3. Have students write notes during the discussion.

4. Divide the class into groups/committees. Have each group/committee develop a proposal as to how to make immigration laws in the United States more equitable. Groups are to base their proposals on the information discussed in class. Major highlights of the proposals are to be written with a marker on giant sized "post-its"
5. Upon completion, each group/committee is to post their proposals on the board/wall and explain its proposal to the rest of the class.
6. After the group/committee presentations, the groups will discuss/debate and vote on which proposals they consider to be the most equitable.
7. The students will draft a final resolution on Microsoft Word.
8. After the teacher proofs the final resolution, all students in the class will sign the document.
9. The teacher will frame and hang up the final resolution in the class.

Extended Lesson: Have the students write editorials on recent immigration issues to be printed in the school newspaper and other community publications.

Assessment:

- Evaluate proposals according to legal and historical accuracy, grammar and neatness.
- Consider cooperation/participation and creativity grades for cooperative-oriented work.

**Suggested Books
In Lesson:**

- Stepick, A. (1997) Pride Against Prejudice: Haitians in the United States, Allyn & Bacon
- Zephir, F. (1996) Haitian Immigrants in Black America: A Sociological and Sociolinguistic Portrait, Bergin & Garvey
- Zephir, F. (2004) The Haitian Americans (The New Americans), Greenwood Press