

## American Born Chinese and Immigration

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**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Subject:** Social Studies

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**Overview:** Students discuss immigration in the United States including economic conditions and opportunity.

**Objectives:** Students recognize why people emigrate to America and the hardships they often face leaving home.

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### Suggested Ideas:

1. Ask students to list ten reasons people emigrate to America. Divide students into groups, in which they share and synthesize their individual lists to create a group list of ten items. Invite each group to share a list. Chart each group's contributions, and instruct the class to eliminate overlap and arrive at a class list. Have students analyze and discuss the items. Among these should be reference to employment and income.
  2. Have students discuss how job and income influence a person's decision to immigrate. Probing questions to pose include: What economic conditions in other countries propel immigration? What does America seem to provide immigrants with regard to career and financial opportunity? Does America meet immigrants' expectations in this regard? If yes, in what ways? If no, where does it fall short? What types of jobs do the majority of immigrants tend to get?
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**Overview:** Americans offer varied positive and negative perspectives regarding immigrants. There are points of view, for example, regarding immigrants' impact on the U.S. labor force and issues around terrorism and immigration. Gathering information on pro and con arguments can be helpful if making conclusions regarding immigrants' roles in the United States is to occur.

**Objectives:** Students will consider the validity of statements often cited regarding immigration and immigrants, research and debate the essence of these statements to support or negate presented perspectives and make informed decisions regarding the statements accuracy.

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1. Explain to students that they will be involved in an activity that introduces them to varied negative and positive points of view regarding immigrants. Emphasize that the lesson is not meant to offend, but rather have students think critically about immigrant issues. Request that they be mindful of the lesson's purpose and aware of their peers' sensitivity and feelings, thus remaining non-judgmental and empathetic.
2. *Four Corners Activity:* **Distribute the Statement about Immigrants handout.** Instruct students to indicate on the list their stance on each statement: strongly agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, strongly disagree.
3. Once they have completed the activity, have students stand up. Explain that as you read a statement, they are to go to the corner of the room that represents their stance. Read one statement to the group. Once students have arrived at their proper "corner," instruct them to share their perspective

- with other "corner" peers. Ask for volunteers from each group to share key discussion points. Repeat the "four corners" process for any or all of the remaining statements.
4. Point out to students that the National Immigration Forum reports that 30 percent of native-born Americans are strongly anti-immigrant. Another 40 percent characterize themselves as "on the fence," unsure whether immigrants constitute a positive or negative presence in America. Share these statistics with students and have them the connection between students' opinions and the real-world opinions of most Americans.
  5. Divide the class into teams, comprised of four students each (two for affirmative, two for negative). Tell students they will select and research one statement, that they will then debate, thus they must note source citations to defend their arguments. After they have completed their research (allow several days including class time), have each group debate before the class.
  6. After the debates, ask students to revisit the statements and their original stances. Have they changed in any way? If yes, why? If no, why not? What information, either from the Four Corners activity, their research and/or debate influenced their opinions?