



# COLLISIONS

STUDY GUIDE

CFI EDUCATION

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Using this Guide	2
About the Film	3
Letter from the Filmmaker	3
For the Educator	4
Before the Film	4
After the Film	4
Lesson 1:	5
Art Imitates Life	
Lesson 2:	8
Dispelling Myths about Immigrants	
Lesson 3:	12
Making Media for Social Justice	
Resources	15
Standards	16
Handouts	
Immigration Terminology	
Myths about Immigrants	

## KEY CONCEPTS

- Immigration
- Immigration Policy
- Undocumented Status
- Deportation
- Family Separation
- Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
- Sanctuary Cities
- Safe Haven School Districts
- Social Justice
- Narrative Filmmaking
- Storytelling

## SUBJECT AREAS

### GRADES 8-12

- English
- Social Studies
- History
- Media Arts

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

### LESSON 1: ART IMITATES LIFE

Examine ways that the film *Collisions* uses narrative storytelling to educate people about the realities of U.S. immigration policy and build empathy for immigrant experiences.

### LESSON 2: DISPELLING MYTHS ABOUT IMMIGRANTS

Learn to identify anti-immigrant myths and think critically about their effects on immigrant experiences and immigration policy.

### LESSON 3: MAKING MEDIA FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Develop a human rights framework for creating media that promotes social justice for immigrants and their families.

## USING THIS GUIDE

This study guide is designed to help educators use the film *Collisions* to start a discussion about immigration with their students. At a time when the debate over immigration policy has reached a fever pitch, it is important for students to hone their media literacy skills and think critically about what they hear. The film *Collisions* is a powerful way to anchor the conversation about immigration, particularly immigration from Mexico, in the experiences of the children of immigrant families. The standards-aligned lesson plans in this guide ask students to think about how narrative storytelling can help to illuminate the realities of immigrant experiences. Discussion questions enable students to practice participating in the immigration debate, and activities provide an opportunity for them to use media to take action.

# ABOUT THE FILM

## COLLISIONS

US 2018, 82 min

Director Richard Levien

The devastating impact of the United States' increasingly draconian immigration policy falls on one family in this breathtaking and timely first feature. With her passion for science and going to the mall, Itan Bautista is a typical San Francisco 12-year-old. But she is also responsible for caring for her little brother, Neto, while her mother, Yoana (Ana de la Reguera), works one of her four jobs—until the day the children return home to discover their mother missing after an ICE raid. The siblings end up on the doorstep of their estranged uncle Evencio (Jesse Garcia, *Quinceñera*), a hard-drinking truck driver with little interest in them. As ICE shuffles Yoana between detention centers, Itan is left with the burden of finding her mother, managing Evencio and Neto, and keeping up with her studies. Bay Area writer-director Richard Levien puts the weight of his film in the hands of young Izabella Alvarez as Itan to mesmerizing effect.

## LETTER FROM THE FILMMAKER

When I began work on the script, my wife was a third grade teacher, and a child in her class recently had her father taken away and deported. It took weeks of building trust to find out why this girl, previously bright and engaged in class, was suddenly listless and prone to anger or tears at the slightest provocation. I interviewed her as part of my research. Her sadness, but also her bravery, hit me in the gut in a way that no headline or statistic ever could.



Immigration recently became one of the most urgent topics. As U.S. President Trump has ended the DACA (Delayed Action for Childhood Arrivals) and DAPA (Delayed Action for Parents of Americans) programs, it is now up to Congress to enact legislation to protect the people previously covered by these programs. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of families continue to be forcibly separated every year. This film can be a focal point for those trying to understand the real families affected.

I am from New Zealand originally. I am now a US citizen, living in San Francisco's Mission district. As an immigrant myself, I share the story of all immigrants—that of moving away from home in search of a better life, in search of opportunity. So I'm drawn very strongly to stories of immigration.

– Richard Levien, Writer/Director

## FOR THE EDUCATOR

The film *Collisions* and the lessons included in this guide bring up issues of deportation, family separation, death of a parent, undocumented status, and anti-immigrant sentiment that may be triggering for some of the students in your classroom. They may have personal experiences with these issues that bring up strong emotions or make them reluctant to participate. It is important to be sensitive to these dynamics while assessing class participation.

A discussion on immigration also offers the opportunity to educate yourself, your students, and your students' families or guardians about school policies related to undocumented status. [This article from Teaching Tolerance](#) can help you familiarize yourself with the federal laws that protect students.

You can also check the [California Department of Education website](#) to see if your school district has a "safe haven" policy. Consider reviewing these protections with your students (see the first activity in Lesson 3 for recommendations) and sending home a letter to parents informing them of school policies in advance of your discussion.

You can keep up to date on changing immigration policy throughout the school year via the [American Federation of Teachers website](#).

## BEFORE THE FILM

Explain to the class that they will be watching the film *Collisions* and having a discussion about U.S. immigration policy. Read the synopsis of the film from the "About the Film" section of this guide.

**Journaling Activity:** Ask students to do a five-minute free-write about their experiences or perspectives related to immigration. Make sure to be clear about your journal policies before students begin writing; check out [this resource from Facing History and Ourselves](#) for more guidance. If you would like to provide journaling prompts, here are some to consider:

- What have you heard about immigration in the media or from your family or friends?
- Do you have an opinion about U.S. immigration policy? If so, please describe.
- What feelings or personal experiences do you have about immigration, and how does that influence your perspective?
- What questions do you have about immigration?
- Do you have any concerns about participating in a classroom discussion about immigration?

## AFTER THE FILM

Distribute the "Immigration Terminology" handout and ask the class to review and agree upon the definitions collectively.

## LESSON 1: ART IMITATES LIFE

In this lesson, students will think about the ways that the film *Collisions* uses narrative storytelling to build empathy for immigrant families facing deportation in the U.S. today. Discussion questions encourage students to analyze the film for both its artistic and educational value and think about how fictional stories can allow filmmakers to make a strong emotional impact on their viewers. Activities ask students to apply their own creative interpretation to the issue of immigration.

### SET UP

Ask students to gather their thoughts and process their feelings about the film by assigning a five-minute free-write in their journals. If you would like to provide journaling prompts, here are some to consider:

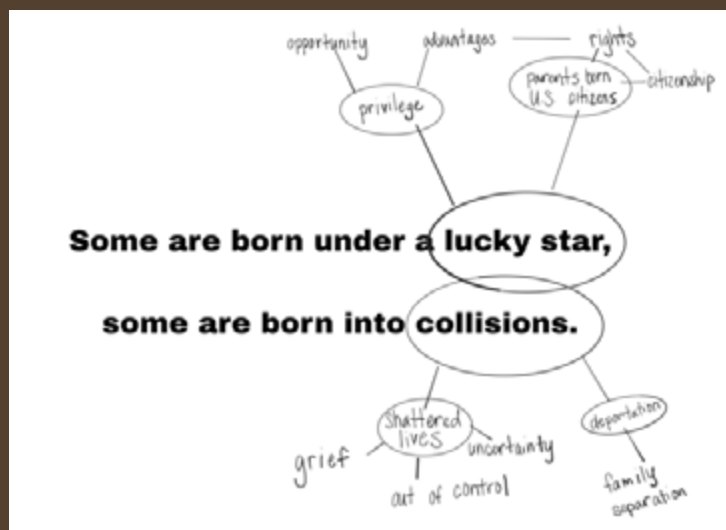
- How do you feel after watching the film?
- What scenes stood out for you in the film?
- What did you think about the characters?
- Did the film help to answer any questions about immigration you had before viewing? If so, which ones?
- Did the film bring up any new questions about immigration?

### DISCUSSION

- What are the main themes of the film *Collisions*? How would you describe it to a friend?
- Why do you think the filmmaker created this film? What message was he trying to convey?
- Define narrative filmmaking (creating a film based on a story that has been crafted by writers) vs. documentary filmmaking (creating a film by conducting interviews and research on real events, and writing the story as it unfolds). Why do you think the filmmaker chose to use the narrative film format, rather than, for example, a documentary format? What advantages does narrative storytelling provide?
- Is the story believable? Why or why not? How does the story relate to current events? (Remind students of the statistic in the opening title card of the film: "Every four minutes a U.S. citizen child is separated from a parent by deportation.")
- How would you describe the main character Itan? Was she relatable? Why or why not?
- What is Itan's impression of her uncle Evencio early in the film? How did the filmmakers communicate this visually or through dialogue?
- How did Evencio evolve during the film? Do you think he was a compelling character? Why or why not?
- What scenes stood out to you? What made them memorable?
- How did you feel when Itan and Neto were reunited with their mother at the end of the film? What do you think the filmmaker wanted you to feel, and why?
- If you were giving this film a rating from one to five stars (five being the best), how many stars would you give it, and why?

## ACTIVITIES | LARGE GROUP: USE WORD MAPPING TO ANALYZE THE MEXICAN PROVERB IN THE FILM (Time: 15 min)

- As a class, review the definition of a proverb: a short saying commonly used to describe a piece of wisdom.
- Write the film's proverb on the board for the class to see: "Some are born under a lucky star, some are born into collisions." You can also write the Spanish translation on the board and invite students that know Spanish to word map in Spanish: "Unos nacen con la estrella y otros nacen estrellados."
- Draw a circle around "lucky star" and one around "collisions." Ask students to provide related words and examples from the film to build out the word maps.
- Here's an example of a completed word map:



## ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

### SMALL GROUPS: BRAINSTORM A SEQUEL TO THE FILM (Time: 30-50 min)

- Divide students into small groups of 3-4 and ask them to work together in their small groups to brainstorm a sequel to *Collisions*. Encourage them to consider questions such as: What would happen next to Itan's family? Would she and Neto stay in Mexico with their mother? Would they split up or try to return?
- You can also invite students to create a poster / drawing / storyboard / comic strip / outline / skit / song or other representation of their ideas for a sequel.
- After 10-15 minutes of brainstorming, ask each group to present their ideas for the sequel to the class.
- After sharing is complete, have students read the story of a real family in Oakland that was separated by deportation as a way to ground this activity in reality:

Long read: [A Dream Deported](#)

Short read: [This Deported Nurse Is Now Raising Her Oakland Kids – From Mexico](#)

### INDIVIDUAL STUDY: WRITE A POEM USING A RECENT NEWS ARTICLE ABOUT IMMIGRATION (Time: 30 min)

- Ask students to review the guidelines of [The New York Times' Found Poetry Contest](#)
- Have them select an article about immigration from the newspaper's website and write a 14-line found poem based on the contest rules.
- As an extension, students can research how to submit to the next upcoming contest (Note: the 10th annual contest will take place April 4-May 6, 2019. [View the 2018-19 Student Contest Calendar](#))

### HOMEWORK: READ A WORK OF FICTION (Time: 3-5 days)

- Assign a short story from the collection *First Crossing: Stories about Teen Immigrants* by Donald R. Gallo (Editor).
- Ask students to write a one-page reflection paper about the story. If you would like to provide writing prompts, you can model questions on the discussion section of this lesson above.
- For more books by age level, check out [Social Justice Books](#)

## LESSON 2: DISPELLING MYTHS ABOUT IMMIGRANTS

This lesson helps students build their media literacy skills by learning to identify and deconstruct common myths about immigrants, particularly Mexican or Latin American immigrants. Yoana's job as a cleaner in the film provides an example of how immigrants contribute to local economies and allows students to think about how long hours and low pay for service work affects immigrant families. They will be asked to consider how these myths affect immigrant experiences and shape U.S. immigration policy. The activities provided will help them apply this knowledge in researching and writing fact and/or opinion pieces about immigration.

### SET UP

- As a class, review the definition of a myth: *a widely held but false belief or idea*. Distribute the handout "Myths about Immigrants" that is included in this guide. Ask three students to read aloud one of the four myths and corresponding facts.
- For more myths about immigration, check out [this article from Teaching Tolerance](#)



### DISCUSSION

- Have you heard of any of these myths before? If so, where?
- Do you think these myths refer to all immigrants equally, or just immigrants from particular places in the world? (Encourage students to think about how immigrants from Latin America and Muslim countries are often treated differently than immigrants from, for example, Europe, and how race and socioeconomic status influence how immigrants are treated and perceived.)
- How do myths become widely spread? How do they circulate in our society? (Encourage students to think about how myths are repeated through the news media, social media, and in conversations.)
- What effect do you think each of these myths have on the people who hear them? (Encourage students to think about how it makes both immigrants and non-immigrants feel.)
- Do you think these myths influence U.S. immigration policy? If so, how?



## DISCUSSION (CONTINUED)

- Itan’s mother works four different jobs. We see one scene of her at a job early in the film. What was it?
- What hours did Yoana’s cleaning job require her to work? How did this affect Itan and Neto?
- What crime did Yoana commit that caused her to be deported? Although it is not discussed in the film, what would you imagine the circumstances to be when Yoana committed this crime?
- Do you think shoplifting baby formula is the type of crime that people are imagining when they talk about the first myth of immigrants as criminals?
- Define stereotype: *A widely held, oversimplified idea about a person.* Does the film reinforce any stereotypes about immigrants? If so, which ones, and how do stereotypes feed into some of these myths? Why do you think the filmmaker made the choice to include those?
- Are there other myths that you have heard of that we haven’t discussed today?



## ACTIVITIES

### CLASS DISCUSSION: WATCH AND DISCUSS THE VIDEO *THE GOOD IMMIGRANT*

(Time: 20 min)

- Screen the video on the [Define American website](#)
- Then, discuss as a class:
  - How did the people interviewed in the video describe the idea of a “good immigrant” vs. a “bad immigrant?”
  - How did they feel about the negative things said about immigrants?
  - Based on the experiences shared in the video, does it seem easy to get a green card or become a U.S. citizen?
  - Could you relate to the experience of having to achieve an unattainable standard? If so, how did that make you feel about yourself?

## ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

### PAIR ACTIVITY: ANALYZE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FACT AND OPINION

(Time: 30 min)

- Ask students to partner with a classmate and assign each pair one term from the “Immigration Terminology” handout.
- Then ask them to work together to research online to find two news pieces about their term: one piece that they would describe as fact and one that they would describe as an opinion piece.
- For guidance, you can suggest major publications (NPR, *The New York Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, Huffington Post, Fox News, *LA Times*, *Washington Post*, PBS Newshour, CNN, etc.) and guide them through the different sections of the publication (headline news, Op-Ed, search function, about us, etc).
- Encourage partners to justify to each other the reasons why they should call one fact and the other opinion, and help them think about the nuances among fact (can be proven), opinion (cannot be proven) and informed opinion (a point of view that is backed by evidence).
- For more, see [this article from KOED education](#).

### INDEPENDENT STUDY: CREATE AN INFOGRAPHIC ABOUT IMMIGRATION

(Time: 2-3 class periods)

- Have students review the article “[How America’s Idea of Illegal Immigration Doesn’t Always Match Reality](#)” from NPR.
- Tell them they are going to design an infographic for social media using statistics from the story. Alternatively, you could have them conduct research to find other statistics related to immigrant family separation.
- Ask students to plan their infographic by selecting two or more statistics that convey a message about immigration. These questions can help them plan:
  - Who is the audience for the infographic?
  - What is the key message the infographic should convey?
  - What statistics will help deliver that message?
  - What text, images, or graphs will help convey that information clearly?
  - How will I source the information so that my audience knows it is credible?
- Then have them design a draft of their infographics and work with them to refine them. Consider having them publish their infographics online when they are complete. (Refer to the “Resources” section for free and inexpensive design software.)
- For examples of infographics, [view this collection from Piktochart](#).
- For more guidance, check out these [course modules from KOED Teach](#).

## ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

### HOMEWORK: RESEARCH ANOTHER PERIOD OF IMMIGRATION TO THE U.S. (Time: 3-5 days)

- Ask students to review the [KQED Interactive Timeline: History of Immigration in America](#).
- Have them select a period of immigration from the timeline and prepare a multimedia class presentation about it. Encourage them to look for images, video, audio, newspaper clippings, quotes, and other compelling elements to create an engaging presentation.
- Make sure they describe the historical context of the time, laws, or policies related to the influx of immigrants, and the prevailing sentiment toward the immigrants at the time.



## LESSON 3: MAKING MEDIA FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

This lesson asks students to think about the film in the context of human rights. Inspired by Itan’s use of technology and social media to advocate for her mother, students will experiment using different forms of media to promote social justice. By taking action for immigrant rights, your class can contribute to a welcoming, supportive school environment for students of immigrant and refugee families.

### SET UP

- Explain to the class that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a document created by the United Nations in 1948, and that the U.S. played a key role in its drafting.
- Summarize the UDHR as containing 30 articles that outline essential human rights, such as: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,” and “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.” Find the [full text on the United Nations website](#).
- Read Article 2, emphasizing the phrase “national or social origin” as a reference to people who immigrate:

“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or other status.” How did the filmmakers establish empathy between the audience and the children in the film?
- For more guidance, see [this lesson plan from The Advocates for Human Rights](#).

### DISCUSSION

- If you were an immigrant traveling to a new country, what rights would you hope to have when you arrived?
- Did you see examples of human rights being violated during the deportation process in the film? If so, what were they? (Encourage students to think about Yoana’s access to her asthma inhaler, the psychological effect on Itan and Neto, the lack of due process during Yoana’s deportation, etc.)
- What obstacles did the Bautista family experience when they were trying to navigate the immigration and customs enforcement system? (Encourage students to think about how Yoana was frequently moved, how she struggled to make a phone call, or the expensive lawyers required to mount a defense against the deportation.)
- Itan says in the film, “I’m American, so is Neto. Our whole life is here. I’m going to stop them from deporting her.” Do Itan and Neto’s U.S. citizenship factor into their mother’s deportation process portrayed in the film? Do you think it should?
- How did Yoana’s deportation affect Itan’s right to an education? (Encourage students to think about Itan’s inability to concentrate in class and when she missed her SSAT exam.)

## DISCUSSION (CONTINUED)

- DREAMers (immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children) are not U.S. citizens, but they have spent their entire lives in the U.S. How might their human rights be at risk if they were deported?
- How did Itan use media and technology in the film to advocate for her mother?
- When they arrive in Mexico, Evencio explains to Itan that jumping over the border fence would get you caught immediately. "If you want to get across, you have to go somewhere hot," he says. Why do you think the construction of border walls and fences are a concern for human rights advocates? (Encourage students to think about Itan's father and how dangerous it is for humans to be crossing borders through the desert.)
- How well do you think the U.S. is fulfilling the human rights of immigrants?
- What might the U.S.-Mexican border or deportation look like if immigrant human rights were a higher concern?

## ACTIVITIES

### SMALL GROUPS: ADVOCATE FOR "SAFE HAVEN" SCHOOLS (Time: 2-3 class periods)

- Look to see if your school is a "safe haven" school district on the [California Department of Education website](#).
- If you are in a "safe haven" school district, ask students to create a public awareness poster campaign to display around your school to educate fellow students and teachers about what it means to be a "safe haven" school district. Encourage them to think about what images and information they can present to make their posters appealing and informative, and then help them refine their poster idea for accuracy and clarity before they construct them, using poster-making software. (Refer to the "Resources" section for free and inexpensive design software).
- If you are not in a "safe haven" school district, ask students to work together to prepare a presentation for your school board to ask them to adopt the policy. For more information, see the [California Department of Education website](#).

### INDEPENDENT STUDY: WRITE A PETITION (Time: 50 min)

- Remind students about the petition that Itan publishes in the film. Ask them to think about what she might have said in that petition and to write their own, advocating for Itan's family. Alternatively, you could ask students to make a real-life petition based on a family or an issue related to immigration in their community.
- Remind students about the petition that Itan publishes in the film. Ask them to think about what she might have said in that petition and to write their own, advocating for Itan's family. Alternatively, you could ask students to make a real-life petition based on a family or an issue related to immigration in their community.

## INDEPENDENT STUDY: WRITE A PETITION (CONTINUED)

- Have them read [an example of a petition](#) and identify its four main elements:
  - Context: background information about the issue
  - Ask: a clear demand
  - Target audience: the individual to whom the ask is addressed (Note: Itan addresses her petition to “ICE Field Officer.”)
  - Media: a visual to accompany the text
- Then ask them to write their own one-page petition with these four main elements included. Also have them sketch out or detail what type of media they would include.
- As an extension, have them practice publishing their petitions on a private blog or, in the case of real petitions, on a public petition site.
- For more guidance, see [this article from the Teaching Channel](#).

## PARTNER ACTIVITY: CREATE A PSA ABOUT IMMIGRANT RIGHTS (Time 3-4 class periods)

- Ask students to pair up and work together to record a public service announcement about immigrants’ rights when they come into contact with immigration agents and local law enforcement. Have them review the [United We Dream’s website](#) for content.
- Each pair should plan their video by writing a script and creating a shot list of what to record.
- Then have them record their video using a smartphone or tablet and edit it using video editing apps. (Refer to the “Resources” section for free and inexpensive editing software).
- Consider asking them to publish their work online when complete.
- This activity can also be adapted for foreign language classrooms by having students translate and record their PSA into languages other than English.

## HOMEWORK: MAKE A NARRATIVE FILM ABOUT IMMIGRATION (Time 5+ class periods)

- Ask students to browse the immigration stories from [the StoryCorps collection](#).
- Have each student select a story as inspiration for a screenplay of a narrative film about immigration. The screenplay does not have to follow the StoryCorps piece precisely; encourage students to be creative and add in elements in order to tell the most compelling story.
- For a tutorial on how to write and format a screenplay, have the students review [this Wiki-How article](#).
- Once complete, ask students to present their screenplays to the class. Have students nominate and vote on one that they would like to turn into a film. They can also combine elements from multiple screenplays in order to collectively write their own version of the film.

## HOMEWORK: MAKE A NARRATIVE FILM ABOUT IMMIGRATION (CONTINUED)

- Once the class has decided its screenplay, have them work together to make the film. Depending on your class size, assign one or more students to each of these roles:
  - Director – oversees all aspects of the film and guides people through their roles
  - Writer – writes the screenplay for the film
  - Actors – act out the screenplay and deliver the dialogue on camera
  - Cinematographer – determines the shot list and runs the camera during filming
  - Sound Recordist– oversees all audio recording during filming and coordinates music or sound effects
  - Editor – assembles footage and uses editing software to put all of the elements of the film together for its final presentation. (Refer to the “Resources” section for free and inexpensive editing software.)
- For more in-depth lesson plans, review the [Digital Pathways Video Curriculum from the Bay Area Video Coalition](#).

## RESOURCES

### IMMIGRATION EDUCATION

[Anti-Defamation League’s Education Resources on Immigration, Immigrants and Anti-Immigrant Bias Facing History and Ourselves Global Immigration Lessons](#)  
[Teaching Tolerance’s Immigration Resources](#)  
[Zinn Education Project Immigration Curricula](#)

### IMMIGRATION ADVOCACY

[American Immigration Council](#)  
[United We Dream](#)

### MEDIA LITERACY

[Bay Area Video Coalition](#) (BAVC)  
[Common Sense Media](#)  
[Educator Innovator](#) \_  
[National Association for Media Literacy Education](#) (NAMLE)

### FREE OR INEXPENSIVE PRESENTATION TOOLS AND VIDEO EDITING SOFTWARE

[Apple iMovie](#) (video)  
[YouTube Editor](#) (video)  
[Adobe Premiere Clip](#) (video)  
[Adobe Spark](#) (graphics and video)  
[Canva](#) (graphics)  
[Piktochart](#) (graphics) \_  
[Comic Life](#) (graphics)  
[Google Slides](#) (presentations)

# STANDARDS

## Common Core Standards English Language Arts

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1 – Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1 – Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3 – Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1 – Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.5 – Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

For more information, review <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>.

## History-Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools

11.11 – Students analyze the major social problems and domestic policy issues in contemporary American society.

12.8 – Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life.

For more, see: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/histsocscistnd.pdf>.

## Teaching Tolerance's Social Justice Standards

Diversity 9 DI.9-12.9 – I relate to and build connections with other people by showing them empathy, respect and understanding, regardless of our similarities or differences.

Justice 13 JU.9-12.13 – I can explain the short and long-term impact of biased words and behaviors and unjust practices, laws and institutions that limit the rights and freedoms of people based on their identity groups.

Action 20 AC.9-12.20 – I will join with diverse people to plan and carry out collective action against exclusion, prejudice and discrimination, and we will be thoughtful and creative in our actions in order to achieve our goals.

For more, see: [https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2017-06/TT\\_Social\\_Justice\\_Standards\\_0.pdf](https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2017-06/TT_Social_Justice_Standards_0.pdf).



# HANDOUT: IMMIGRATION TERMINOLOGY

**Asylum seekers** – People who arrive in the U.S. seeking refuge because of persecution or violence faced in their native country. Asylum seekers are detained immediately upon arrival while their case is reviewed.

**Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)** – An Obama-era immigration policy that allowed people brought to the U.S. as children to apply for a two-year deferment from deportation. In 2017, President Trump ordered an end to the policy. As of September 2018, it was still under review by the courts.

**Deportation/Removal** – The expulsion of a noncitizen from the U.S. Once removed, those who are deported cannot legally return for a period of time or permanently.

**Detention** – The incarceration of people while they wait for a decision on their immigration case.

**DREAM Act** – A bill in Congress that would have granted legal status to certain undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children and went to school here. Although several versions of the bill have been introduced in Congress since 2001, none have passed as of September 2018.

**DREAMers** – A movement of people who were brought to the U.S. as children and advocate for a path to citizenship, which was outlined in the DREAM Act.

**Green card** – A legal document that allows an immigrant, refugee, or asylum seeker to permanently reside in the U.S. Green card holders essentially have the same rights and obligations as citizens, except voting or public office, but they can be deported for certain offenses. After a period of time (typically 5 years), a green card holder can apply for citizenship.

**Illegal/Alien** – Words to avoid using when talking about immigration because they dehumanize and criminalize people.

**Immigrant** – Someone who lives in a country other than the one they were born.

**Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)** – The bureau within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that enforces immigration laws and conducts the apprehension, detention, and deportation of immigrants.

**Migrant** – Often associated with migrant workers, who move to a country temporarily for work and develop significant ties there.

**Sanctuary city** – A city (or county or state) that refuses to assist ICE in locating or detaining immigrants within its limits.

**Undocumented or unauthorized** – The status of not having citizenship, a green card, or a visa to live in a country.

**Visa** – A legal document that says a person can stay in the U.S. temporarily for tourism, work, or education.

# HANDOUT: MYTHS ABOUT IMMIGRANTS

## **Myth 1: “The worst” people are immigrating to the U.S. and bringing crime and violence.**

**Facts:** Studies consistently show that immigrants are less likely to commit serious crimes or be behind bars than people born here. From 1990-2013, the number of immigrants in the U.S. doubled, but FBI data reveals that violent crime nationally decreased by 48 percent in that same period. This trend is consistent in cities with large immigrant populations, such as Los Angeles and San Diego. People who immigrate to the U.S. come for a few primary reasons: to work, to be reunited with family, or to escape dangerous situations. They are typically highly motivated to stay in the U.S. and do not want to jeopardize that opportunity by committing a crime.

Source: Ewing, Walter, Ph.D., et al. “The Criminalization of Immigration in the United States.” American Immigration Council, July 13, 2015, [www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/criminalization-immigration-united-states](http://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/criminalization-immigration-united-states).

## **Myth 2: Immigrants take good jobs from U.S. citizens.**

**Facts:** Immigrants, whether authorized or not, typically do not compete with U.S.-born workers for the same jobs. Many immigrants fill jobs that are considered “low skill,” meaning they pay less (such as service work) or require workers to move around the country (such as migrant farm labor). U.S.-born workers often fill jobs that are “high skill,” meaning they require more education or English fluency. Therefore, immigrant and U.S.-born workers typically serve complementary roles in the workforce. Immigrants to the U.S. are more likely to add jobs to the economy because they tend to be very entrepreneurial. In fact, immigrants are 30 percent more likely than people born in the U.S. to start businesses, which results in more jobs on the whole.

Source: Greenstone, Michael and Adam Looney, “Ten Economic Facts About Immigration” The Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, September 2010, [www.brookings.edu/research/ten-economic-facts-about-immigration](http://www.brookings.edu/research/ten-economic-facts-about-immigration).

## **Myth 3: Immigrants are overrunning the country and most are here illegally.**

**Facts:** The current percentage of immigrants in the U.S. is not much different than at other times in U.S. history. For example, immigrants make up approximately 13.5 percent of the U.S. population today, the same as it did between 1900-1930. About half of the foreign-born people living in the U.S. are naturalized citizens, while the other half are a combination of visa and green card holders and undocumented immigrants. The number of people living without documentation in the U.S. has decreased over the last decade, and the number of people arriving to the U.S. each year is about equal to the number of people leaving the U.S.

Source: Gonzalez-Barrera, A., and J.M. Krogstad. “What we know about illegal immigration from Mexico.” Pew Research Center, 2017, [www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/03/02/what-we-know-about-illegal-immigration-from-mexico](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/03/02/what-we-know-about-illegal-immigration-from-mexico).

## **Myth 4: Immigrants should just “get in line” to immigrate legally.**

**Facts:** There is actually no “line” for undocumented immigrants hoping to immigrate legally to the U.S. Immigrants receive authorization to live in the U.S. in three ways: employment, family reunification, or humanitarian protection. These paths to citizenship are difficult to obtain because they have strict requirements and only allow a certain number of immigrants each year. Most undocumented immigrants do not have an employer or family member to sponsor them, and none qualify as asylum seekers for humanitarian protection from their home country because they already reside in the U.S. For those that do qualify for one of these three paths, it can take years—even decades—to get green cards because of mandatory waiting periods or backlogs in the system.

Source: American Immigration Council. “Why Don’t They Just Get In Line?” 2016 [www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/why-don't-they-just-get-line](http://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/why-don't-they-just-get-line)