



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1996 Volume IV: Remaking America: Contemporary U.S. Immigration

Las Voces del Caribe: Recent Immigrants from the Caribbean

Guide for Curriculum Unit 96.04.03
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This unit is prepared for a Spanish class at the high school level. Students should have reached the Spanish 4 level of proficiency. It is also appropriate for native speakers of Spanish, whether in a mixed class or in a separate class. It may also be adapted for a U.S. History course or Social Studies course at the high school level. This unit attempts to define the voices of the Hispanic Caribbean immigrants from three islands: Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico. By voices the author means the voices as heard in selected poems, literary passages, and music. A key part of this unit is authentic musical selections that profile the following: salsa from Cuba and Puerto Rico, and merengues or bachatas from the Dominican Republic. The selected poems are by the Puerto Rican poet, Tato Laviera. The musical selections are by Gloria Estefan, from Cuba, and Juan Luis Guerra, from the Dominican Republic. Selected passages from Julia Alvarez's book, *How the Garcia Girls Lost their Accent*, are also included. The students examine the stereotypes of these three immigrant groups and acquire information with which to challenge the stereotypes. Students will listen to music, critique it, and make oral presentations. Students will also research famous people from these countries who have made contributions to the United States as well as specific information from the three countries of origin. Overall themes include migration, racism, the homeland and nostalgia, identity, and brotherhood. Guest speakers from the community and field trips to such places as La Casa Cultural Julia de Burgos in New Haven and El Museo del Barrio in New York City are essential components. If possible, guests will include members of the Hispanic community in New Haven who will share their culture and traditions and teach the students to dance the salsa and the merengue.

(Recommended for Spanish (high school level 4 or higher), Spanish for Native Speakers, Social Studies, and U.S. History, grades 9-12)

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