



Yale-New Haven  
Teachers Institute®

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

---

## Coming to America

Guide for Curriculum Unit 96.04.04  
by G. Casey Cassidy

Over the past eleven years, I have participated in several wonderful seminars developing innovative curriculum units to supplement my teaching and this year's unit "Coming To America" is no exception. These projects have motivated my students and myself to investigate new and exciting areas of learning.

This year I participated in Professor Pessar's seminar on Remaking America: Contemporary U.S. Immigration because it addressed the issues of assimilation into American culture and language which are primary concerns for many of our Hispanic students at Clemente Middle School who have recently migrated from Puerto Rico to the New Haven area.

The central focus of my curriculum unit highlighted the fictional account by Edwin Rivera of an extended family who moved from the rural hillsides of Puerto Rico to Spanish Harlem in New York City in a wonderful, warm and moving novel entitled Family Installments. This story gradually follows a family through the migration process as they raise enough money after they have borrowed the rest to purchase plane tickets which will bring them to their "new life" in America.

The unit itself is developed in a day-by-day format over twenty days which allows for a nice blending of teacher-led discussions, oral and silent reading, and a wide selection of student-planned activities. Additionally, these lessons lend themselves nicely to creative thinking and shared enthusiasm for the experience. Many teachers may choose to devote additional time to certain activities and less to others. I must admit that these lessons are a bit ambitious at times, but they have been designed to allow for flexibility, and I hope that the instructor will tailor the unit to meet the needs of their classrooms.

(Recommended for Social Studies (Immigration Studies), English Literature, and Art, grades 7-12)

---

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>