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

Crossing the Border, A Study of Immigration Through Literature

Guide for Curriculum Unit 96.04.07
by Jennifer Kennedy

Immigration is the story of our country: we are a nation of immigrants. Through the study of immigration, children learn how and why numerous, diverse cultures have woven their way into the societal fabric of the United States. On a more personal level, studying immigration allows students to gain an appreciation for their own family histories as well as an understanding of the hopes and challenges faced by documented and undocumented immigrants. This unit, designed primarily for the Language Arts classroom, has an oral history component in which students learn interviewing, note taking and writing skills while they gain knowledge of the various aspects of immigration and assimilation. The unit also focuses on reading as a meaning making process, and thus, students will be keeping reader response journals as they read two young adult novels about immigration and assimilation. The novels, *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* and *Lupita Manana*, will be used to stimulate critical thinking and discussion about the political, social and economic issues involved in contemporary immigration. Responding to this literature will help students to understand the dynamic process of assimilating into our culture. This unit will help students develop a global, empathetic view of immigrants and their plight.

(Recommended for Language Arts and Social Studies, grades 6-8)

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