Underground America Curriculum

Introduction

The topic of immigration has been a critical political issue since borders were built, yet immigrant voices continue to be excluded from this ongoing story within the United States. In the introduction to *Underground America*, editor Peter Orner writes, "We hear a lot about these people in the media. We hear they are responsible for crime. We hear they take our jobs, our benefits. We hear they refuse to speak English. But how often do we hear *from* them?"

The twenty-four narrators in the book come from twelve different countries on four different continents, and challenge stereotypical views of immigration. These oral histories offer readers the opportunity to experience the day-to-day realities of undocumented immigrants living in the United States. Readers have an opportunity to connect with and learn from their struggles, challenges, achievements, and hopes, and we honor their experiences by teaching about them. The adaptable Common Core-aligned curriculum we've created for this book focuses on centering these individuals who were brave enough to share their stories, while analyzing their experiences in the context of global migration, economics, civics, and what the "American dream" means to so many.

The lessons are suitable for older middle school through first year college students and cross different subjects and styles of learning, from History lessons that dive into the myths and facts surrounding immigration to English lessons that use poetry to examine themes within individual narratives. These lessons encourage empathy, inquiry, active listening, and critical thinking. They explore the historical and societal trends that influence current events about immigration, enabling students to challenge dominant narratives, and create personal connections to the stories.

We strive to make all our lessons accessible to a wide range of students, including language learners. There are options to scale down lessons and projects, and our additional Oral History Resource Guide for English Language Learners includes reading strategies, discussion strategies, and other activities for approaching first-person narratives and interviews in the classroom. The narratives within *Underground America* also range in length, with several one- and two-page stories that share brief glimpses into the lives of the narrators.

Our thanks to Maria Bucon-Scales from Envision Schools for playing a large part in creating these lesson plans.

With Respect,
The Voice of Witness Education Team

Curriculum Map

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Themes	The Human Face of Immigration	Living Sculptures	Recurrent Events: A Socratic Seminar in U.S. History
Language	English	English	English
Standards	Reading History RH9-10.1, RH9-10.2, Speaking and Listening SL.9–10.1, SL.9–10.5. RI.9-10.1, RI.9-10.2	Reading History RH9-10.1, RH9-10.2. Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.11-12.1, SL.9-10.2, SL.11-12.2.	Reading History RH9-10.1, RH9-10.2, Speaking and Listening SL.9–10.1, SL.9–10.5. RI.9-10.1, RI.9-10.2, Writing for History, Science and Technical Subjects WHST.9-10.1, WHST.9-10.2
Recommended Narrator(s)	Diana Roberto Abel Lorena Farid Adela Estella	Diana Roberto Abel Lorena Farid Adela Estella	Diana Mr. Lai Liso Olga Abel Lorena Farid Adela Estella
Student Objectives	Students will be introduced to the complexity of immigration through oral history and personal narrative, and by exploring reliable and unreliable sources in media.	Through writing, discussion, and analysis, and by utilizing theatre techniques, students will learn to how to make personal connections with the lives of the narrators in *Underground America.*	Students will engage in a Socratic Seminar to use their analytical, research, and speaking and listening skills to connect past and current events in U.S. immigration history.
Ethnic Studies-Aligned Topics	• Institutional Bias • Dominant/Master Narratives and Counter Narratives • Empathy and Understanding Others	• Origins, Identity, and Culture • Empathy and Understanding Others • Community Engagement	• Power, Privilege, and Oppression • Origins, Identity, and Culture • Resistance and Liberation • Cultural Hegemony and Counterhegemony

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Theme	Stories of Immigration Through Oral History and Poetry	Talking to the Text	Examining the Myths and Facts of Immigration
Language	English	English	English
Standards	Reading Literature RL9-10.1, RL9-10.2, Speaking and Listening SL9-10.1, Language Standards L9-10.3, L9-10.5	Reading History RH.9–10.2, RH.9–10.3, RH.9–10.4.	Reading Literature RL.9–10.1. Reading History RH.9–10.1, RL.9–10.2. Speaking and Listening SL.9–10.1, SL.9–10.3, SL.9–10.4.
Recommended Narrator(s)	Diana Mr. Lai Liso Olga Abel Lorena Farid Adela Estella	Any narrative from *Underground America*.	Diana Mr. Lai Roberto Liso Abel Lorena Jose Garcia Farid Adela Estrella
Student Objectives	Students will be able to discuss the essential questions of the lesson and build on the ideas of their classmates. Students will be able to identify a significant theme in a narrative, including evidence that supports their opinion. Students will be able to create a poem that reflects the nuance of the theme they identified.	Students will divide reading content into smaller parts to help students better organize and synthesize information in an oral history narrative.	Through reading, analysis, and discussion, students will enhance their understanding of U.S. immigration issues.

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Ethnic Studies-Aligned Topics	• Dominant/Master Narratives and Counter Narratives • Resistance and Liberation • Institutional Bias	• Institutional Bias • Dominant/Master Narratives and Counter Narratives • Empathy and Understanding Others	• Dominant/Master Narratives and Counter Narratives • Cultural Hegemony and Counterhegemony

Theme	Oral History/American Dream "Position Paper"		
Language	English		
Standards	Reading Informational Texts RI.9–10.1, RI.11–12.1, RI.9–10.2, RI.11–12.2, RI.9–10.3, RI.11–12.3. Writing W.9–10.1, W.11–12.1, W.9–10.2, W.11–12.2.		
Recommended Narrator(s)	Jose Garcia Elizabeth Mr. Lai		
Student Objectives	Students will use critical thinking, writing, and analytical skills to convey understanding of immigration issues through first-person narratives.		
Ethnic Studies-Aligned Topics	• Dominant/Master Narratives and Counter Narratives • Cultural Hegemony and Counterhegemony • Transformation and Change		

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Lesson One: The Human Face of Immigration

Time Needed: Three class periods. Narratives can be read for homework.

Materials Needed:

- Copies of Mr. Lai's Narrative from *Underground America*
- Copies of "5 facts about illegal immigration in the U.S" by the Pew Research Center: http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/27/5-facts-about-illegal-immigration-in-the-u-s
- Copies of the following narratives from *Underground America*: Diana (pp. 19-32), Roberto (pp. 57-78), Abel (pp. 117-135), Lorena (pp. 183-204), Farid (pp. 283-302), Adela (pp. 305-326), and Estella (pp. 327-344)
- Printed version of Day 1's journal questions (or written on the board)
- Post-its
- Poster Paper
- Markers
- Student journals and pens

Objectives: To introduce students to the complexity of immigration through oral history and personal narrative, and by exploring reliable and unreliable sources in media.

Related Common Core Standards: Reading History RH9-10.1, RH9-10.2, Speaking and Listening SL.9–10.1, SL.9–10.5. RI.9-10.1, RI.9-10.2

Narrative Excerpt:

"We spent about five hours walking. I didn't care though. All I was thinking of was, 'America, America.' I could see it at the other end. Eventually we got to a wire fence. One of the leaders cut a hole in it. He pointed to the cornfields and said, 'This is Mexico.' Then he pointed to the other side of the hole in the fence and said, 'This is America.'"

—Mr. Lai, *Underground America*, p. 44

Essential Questions:

- What types of stories get amplified, and what kinds of stories don't?
- How does the story humanize facts, figures, and statistics?
- Who needs to hear these stories and why?

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Day One

Overview
In this lesson, students will reflect on and discuss their prior knowledge about immigration in America, considering the sources of their information and their reliability. Students will read background information as well, and form questions about what more they want to discover.

Step One: Begin class with either a short journaling exercise or pair share discussion by responding to the following prompts. Write the prompts on the board or on poster paper around the room (5-7 minutes).

- What are some of the facts of immigration in America? How do you know? Do you believe this is a reliable source of information? Why or why not?
- What are the stories of immigration in America? Who have you heard them from? Do you believe this is a reliable source of information? Why or why not?

Step Two: Based on their journaling or pair discussion, students write down two ideas from their exercise on post-its and place those post-its under the corresponding questions on the board or around the room (2-3 minutes).

Step Three: Gallery Walk: Give students a few minutes to silently read and reflect on each other's responses (3-5 minutes).

Step Four: Engage students in a class discussion responding to the following questions (10 minutes):

- What trends do you notice?
- Are there connections between the facts and the stories?
- Are there new questions that arise for you, and what do you want to learn more about?

Step Five: Have students read the following article individually or in small groups to help them build their background knowledge about immigration (15 minutes):

- "5 facts about illegal immigration in the U.S." by the Pew Research Center: http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/27/5-facts-about-illegal-immigration-in-the-u-s/

Step Six: Class Discussion (10 minutes): After students have read the article, facilitate a class discussion using the following prompts:

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- Is the information in this article similar or different to what you have heard in the news and social media? Why do you think that is the case?
- What information is still missing from this article?

Step Seven: Divide students into groups of three or four and give each group a piece of poster paper. Have students draw three concentric boxes or circles on their paper with space to write in each one. Ask students to write questions they currently have about immigration in America and the experience of undocumented immigrants inside the center box or circle. Students will fill in the other boxes/circles during the next class. Students could also include keywords of topics they want to learn more about (10 minutes).

Day Two

Overview
In this lesson, students will be introduced to *Underground America*, oral history, and the importance of primary sources in research and seeking truth. Students will use active reading strategies to read narratives from *Underground America,* and discuss them in groups.

Step One: Introduce students to *Underground America: Narratives of Undocumented Lives* and the concept of oral history. Students will be examining how primary sources can offer alternative truths to secondary accounts (5-7 minutes).

  - From the Oral History Association: "Oral history is a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving, and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events." You might use this definition or adapt as needed based on your students' experience with oral history.
  - The narratives in *Underground America* are based on in-depth interviews with the narrators and present their stories in their own words.

Step Two: Introduce Reading Strategy for Mr. Lai's Narrative (5 minutes): Encourage students to annotate the text using to the following guiding questions:

- Which moments evoke a particularly powerful emotional response in you? Why?
  - Underline or highlight these moments
- What surprising information did you learn from this story?
- Has this story transformed your understanding of what it means to be an undocumented immigrant in the U.S.? If so, how?

Step Three: Have students read Mr. Lai's narrative and respond to the guiding questions (20-25 minutes).

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Step Four: In their small groups of three or four, each student will read aloud one quote they want to add to their poster, write it inside the second circle, and explain why they chose this quote (10 minutes).

Step Five: As a group, students should choose 2-3 more quotes from Mr. Lai's narrative that they believe capture other significant moments from his life and relate to some of the questions at the center of the poster and add them to the second circle on their poster (10 minutes).

Step Six (Homework): Reading Jigsaw: Each person in the group will be reading a different narrative from *Underground America* and sharing information with the group in order to help answer the questions they have written on their poster.

- *Underground America* narratives to choose from: Diana (pp. 19-32), Roberto (pp. 57-78), Abel (pp. 117-135), Lorena (pp. 183-204), Farid (pp. 283-302), Adela (pp. 305-326), and Estella (pp. 327-344).
- The narratives can be changed out if there are other narratives that stand out to you as powerful. You can either assign the readings for homework or allow students to read their narratives silently during the next class. Encourage students to answer the same guiding questions from Day Two, Step Two, or a reading strategy from our Resource Guide for English Language Learners: http://voiceofwitness.org/lesson-plans/resource-guide-english-language-learners

Day Three

Overview
In this lesson, students will further engage with the narratives from *Underground America*, answering written and discussion questions about their emotional impact and importance to the conversation around immigration. Students will select excerpts which stood out most to them, and then come together as a class to connect the narratives to reflections from Day One.

Step One: Students respond to the following written prompt based on the narrative they have read (5 minutes):

- How does the story humanize facts, figures, and statistics about immigration?
- Who needs to hear this story and why?

Step Two: In their small groups, students share what they have learned from their individual narratives. The following process could be helpful (15-20 minutes):

- Each student chooses an excerpt from the narrative that they found particularly significant and want to share with their small group (up to 2 paragraphs).

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- After reading the text aloud to the group, the student explains why they chose that excerpt and how it relates to the narrative as a whole.
- Repeat for each student in the small group.

Step Three: Based on the quotes in their poster, the readings they have finished, and the discussions with their small group, students respond to the following prompt in the outermost circle of their poster (10 minutes):

- Why do these voices need to be amplified and who needs to hear them? Why do you think so?

Step Four: Class Discussion (15 minutes): Facilitate a class discussion based on the following questions. Encourage students to use examples from the narratives they read and quotes from their posters to expand on their responses.

- How do the narratives you read complicate or expand on the facts, figures, and ideas you have heard in the media?
- How do these current stories of immigration relate to another issue you have studied in this class?

Media Option (Film): *Roadtrip Nation: Beyond the Dream:* This 2016 PBS film explores the immigrant experience through the eyes of Alexis, Rachel, and Pratishtha: three immigrants who were brought to this country at a young age. http://www.pbs.org/video/roadtrip-nation-beyond-dream

Possible Oral History Project: Students can expand their understanding about immigration issues by conducting short interviews (20-30 minutes) with family members, friends, or community members who have an interest in sharing a personal immigration story. These stories can range from newcomers to individuals who arrived in the U.S. many years ago. Students can share short excerpts (100 words) and even share a photo portrait they took of their narrator. This project reinforces the lesson's incorporation of first person-narrative to illuminate the immigrant experience.

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Lesson Two: Living Sculptures

Time Needed: Two to three class periods. Narratives can be read for homework.

Materials Needed:

- Copies of the following narratives from *Underground America*: Diana (pp. 19-32), Mr. Lai (pp. 33-34), Roberto (pp. 57-78), Abel (pp. 117-135), Lorena (pp. 183-204), Farid (pp. 283-302), Adela (pp. 305-326), and Estella (pp. 327-344). If you did Lesson Plan 1, these narratives should be the same as what students have already read.
- Student journals, pens, and paper

Objectives: Through writing, discussion, and analysis, and by utilizing theatre techniques, students will learn how to make personal connections with the lives of the narrators in *Underground America.*

Related Common Core Standards: Reading History RH9-10.1, RH9-10.2. Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.11-12.1, SL.9-10.2, SL.11-12.2.

Narrative Excerpt:

"In San Jose, I got a job in a tortilla factory. They never asked us for papers or a Social Security card. All we had to do was show up, work, and then wait to see if they told us to show up the next day... The schedule was from midnight to noon, or from two in the morning until two in the afternoon. The problem was they paid us too little for all of those hours, only $4.50 an hour."

—Roberto, *Underground America*, (pp. 64-65)

Essential Questions:

- How can I use my body, voice, and emotions to "read between the lines of history?"
- How can I use my own interpretations and experience to connect with the lives of the book's narrators?
- How can I connect the realities of the life of an immigrant with my own life, community, and country?

Day One

Overview
Students will become familiar with *Underground America* and oral history, engaging in active reading strategies to analyze and respond to narrators' stories.

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Step One: If students have not already read narratives from *Underground America,* introduce students to the book and have them read one or two narratives. Consider using Day Two's strategies from Lesson Plan One, or another reading strategy.

Day Two

Overview
In this lesson, students will reflect on significant moments in their own lives and create living sculptures in small groups, to connect with the narrators of *Underground America* and understand the impact of first-person narrative.

Step One: Let students know that they will be reflecting on their own lives in writing and will be sharing their journals aloud with a small group. Students should only choose a moment they feel comfortable sharing with their classmates. Students respond to the following written prompts (10 minutes):

- Consider the significant moments you identified in the narratives you have already read. Now consider your own life. What is a significant moment from your education in school? "Significant" can mean challenging or joyful or anything in between, but it must involve an emotional response.

- Describe how that moment felt and what that moment looked like. What were you thinking? How did it feel in your body? Think about your heart rate, your breathing pattern, and the way you moved. What was the environment like around you? You might remember sounds, smells, and visuals that created the environment. Choose a word or phrase that captures this moment in your schooling.

Step Two: Divide students into small groups of three or four. Let students know that they will be getting to know their classmates better in the same way that they have gotten to know the narrators from *Underground America*. Ask students to share their journals with their small group and describe the significant moment they wrote about (10 minutes).

Step Three: Introduce the Living Sculptures Activity using the handout on page 14. As a warm-up, students will be performing a modified version of this activity focusing on just one significant moment someone shared in their small group (5 minutes).

Step Four: As a group, students should choose a moment they would like to create an inner monologue for. Ideally, one person could volunteer their significant moment. Each group will work together to craft the inner monologue based on the person's experience and decide how to physically represent this moment (15 minutes).

Step Five: Each group shares their sculpture and inner monologue with the class (10 minutes).

Step Six: Class Reflection (5-10 minutes): Engage students in a short reflection where they write about or discuss the following questions:

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- What was unique about this activity?
- How did this amplify a voice?

Optional Warm-Up: If students are not prepared to share their journals and engage with a personal moment from their lives, the following movement activity can be used instead of Steps Two through Four (25 minutes).

- Divide students into groups of three or four. Introduce the concept of a Living Sculptures Activity using the handout on page 14.
- As a warm-up, students will be creating a tableau with their bodies (still frame image with no movement or speaking) that captures a metaphor given to them, to practice using their bodies to represent an experience or idea.
- Each group will have 1 minute to create a tableau with their bodies.

  Possible metaphors:
  - A candle in the wind
  - A flower in the sun
  - A boat in a storm
  - A heart on fire
  - The rainbow after a storm

Day Three

Overview
In this lesson, students will participate in the Living Sculptures and Inner Monologue activity again, this time representing a narrative from *Underground America* with quotes from the stories.

Step One: Break students up into groups or let students self-select into groups based on narrative. Remind students of the purpose of this activity: they will be "walking a mile in their narrator's shoes" by reenacting pivotal movements from their lives through living sculptures. Review the Living Sculptures and Inner Monologue handout with the class (10 minutes).

Step Two: In their small groups, students work together to represent a narrative from *Underground America* through living sculptures. The handout and following questions and statements might help students in the creation of the living sculptures (30-45 minutes):

- What are the details of your quote? How can you physically tell the "story" behind the quote?
- Allow your entire bodies to be expressive!
- You may find it helpful to write the "Sometimes I feel" paragraph after you have created each sculpture. Your body language will give you ideas about what your narrator is feeling.
- Make sure you "rehearse" all four sculptures, quotes, and inner monologues several times. It is a great way to check your work.

Step Three: Perform Living Sculptures Activity (15-20 Minutes). This might take place during the

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next class period if students need more time to rehearse.

Step Four: Facilitate a class discussion using the following questions:

- Did this physical activity activate your learning? If so, how?
- What can you learn about a story from this perspective?
- Did this activity help you make a personal connection with your narrator? If so, how?
- How does this connect you with stories of immigration?

Media Resources (Book): *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (*Routledge Books, 1992).*
The classic book by the founder of Theatre of the Oppressed, Augusto Boal. It sets out the principles and practice of Boal's revolutionary Method, showing how theatre can be used to transform and liberate.

Possible Oral History/Storytelling Project: Students can expand on the personal narratives they developed during the practice sculpture activity by adding more text and detail to their inner monologues. Student monologues can be grouped together by theme or content and performed in class as "reader's theatre." For more details about reader's theatre as a teaching strategy, refer to the useful description provided by Facing History and Ourselves:
https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/readers-theater

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Creating Your Sculptures Handout
Living Sculptures and Inner Monologue

Each group will create *four* sculptures that represent four important moments from the story of your narrator. They should be "impactful" moments in their story. Each sculpture needs to relate to a short selection from the narrative (no longer than a paragraph). Everyone in the group needs to be in each sculpture. One person in each sculpture needs to represent the narrator—make sure you trade off!

Sculptures can represent moments from your narrator's life in many ways—you can represent or "show" what is happening in the moment with other "characters" in the narrator's story, or you can create sculptures that represent the narrator's emotions or feelings. You can also create visual symbols and metaphors—the possibilities are endless!

Quote From Narrative
Once your group has arranged itself into each of your sculptures (four total), one member of the group will briefly step out of the sculpture to read the selection from the narrative that inspired the sculpture. When he or she is done, he or she should step back into the sculpture. You will repeat this for each sculpture.

Inner Monologue
Inner monologue is a term that describes the "voice" in each of our heads that represents the thoughts and feelings we have but do not say. If our "outer monologue" is what we choose to express out loud, then our inner monologue is the powerful stream of information we choose to keep to ourselves.

During each of your sculptures, whoever is portraying the narrator will *step out* of the sculpture and read a prepared inner monologue that begins with the phrase, "Sometimes I feel…" This inner monologue or speech should be no longer than a paragraph and should relate to the quote that the sculpture represents. Think about what your narrator is *feeling* but not *saying* and use it for your inner monologue. Whoever represents the narrator in each sculpture should write the inner monologue.

Running Order For Sculptures
1. Sculpture One (held throughout sequence).
2. Quote from Narratives
3. Inner Monologue ("Sometimes I feel…")

Repeat this sequence four times. Each sculpture/reading should take about sixty seconds.

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Lesson Three: Recurrent Events: A Socratic Seminar in U.S. History

Time Needed: Three to four class periods.

Materials Needed:

- The following narratives from *Underground America:* Diana (pp. 19-32), Mr. Lai (pp. 33-54), Liso (pp. 79-98), Olga (pp. 101-115), Abel (pp. 117-135), Lorena (pp. 183-204), Farid (pp. 283-302), Adela (pp. 305-326), and Estella (pp. 327-344)
- List of narratives with associated themes on page 16
- Socratic Seminar Rules and Goals
  Learning for Justice:
  https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/teaching-strategies/community-inquiry/socratic-seminar
- Graphic organizer or guiding questions as they research their chosen topic (optional)

Note: For this lesson, historical information and context from the current and past events listed below will be needed (if not previously covered in earlier units or classes). This will add more time to the lesson. In addition, for the research portion of the lesson, students can choose from curated sources or conduct their own research.

Objectives: Students will engage in a Socratic Seminar to use their analytical, research, and speaking and listening skills to connect past and current events in U.S. immigration history.

Related Common Core Standards: Reading History RH9-10.1, RH9-10.2, Speaking and Listening SL.9–10.1, SL.9–10.5. RI.9-10.1, RI.9-10.2, Writing for History, Science and Technical Subjects WHST.9-10.1, WHST.9-10.2

Narrative Excerpt:
"My visa was extendable for one year from January 2006. The first expiration date in my passport said April 24, so I needed to extend it. I kept asking the pastor's family to get it extended. They would say, "Okay, don't worry. We're going to do it for you." But they never did and they never explained why. So my visa expired and I have overstayed. And I know that it was intentional. They didn't want us to go because we were working for them. That's why they wanted us—for cheap labor. If we were legal, we might tell someone how we were treated, we might ask for help or go and work somewhere else."

—Liso, *Underground America*, p. 87

Essential Questions:

- How does past history of U.S. immigration and immigration policy connect to the present moment?

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- What are the social, cultural, and historical forces that impact the recurring events and issues in U.S. immigration?
- How can I gather evidence from a variety of sources and shape it into a compelling argument for a Socratic Seminar?

Day One

Overview
In this lesson, students will reflect on historical continuity, and then engage in active reading strategies to dissect a narrative from *Underground America*. Students will connect themes of the narratives to trends in the history of U.S. immigration or a specific historical event, highlighting quotes from the narrative.

Step One: Students respond to the following written prompt (5 minutes):

- What is an event from history (any time period) that reminds you of a current event or issue that is taking place now? How are they connected for you? Explain.

Step Two: Ask for three volunteers to share their answers with the class (5 minutes).

Step Three: Introduce oral history as a primary source, and the list of narratives and associated themes from *Underground America*. Working in groups of three, each student selects a narrative to read, taking notes about connections between their narrator's experience and a trend from the history of U.S. immigration, or a specific event they would like to explore further. Students should also highlight 3-5 quotes that resonate with them and/or connect to a larger issue surrounding immigration. Consider using a reading strategy from a different lesson, or a combination of reading and discussion strategy from the Resource Guide for English Language Learners, such as the Cue Cards activity (45 minutes).

Day Two

Overview
Students will discuss, in small groups, common themes among narratives they read. They will then choose a connected trend or historical event to explore through a research project.

Optional: If students are familiar with the Socratic Seminar method or research projects, they can conduct their research at home or the library and skip to Day Three when they meet in person in class.

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Step One: Ask for five volunteers to share a quote they highlighted from their reading yesterday, and a short one-sentence description of why that quote resonated with them or connects to a wider immigration issue (5 minutes).

Step Two: Students return to their small groups to discuss the common emerging themes among the narratives they read, and current or historical events the excerpts connect to. Together, each group should decide on a trend or historical event they would like to explore using all the narratives they read and the quotes they highlighted (10 minutes).

Examples of historical events include:
- Japanese American Incarceration
- Chinese Exclusion Act
- Muslim Travel Ban (current event)
- Building a Border Wall (current event)
- Separating families seeking asylum in the U.S. (current event)

Step Three: Students research their respective topic. Depending on student experience with research projects, you may consider curating a list of resources for students to use, and students can read and review an article together in their small groups. You could also provide graphic organizers or guiding questions for students to use as they research their topic (40 minutes).

Possible information students should record during research:
- Source: Title, author, where it comes from (website or citation), description of whether or not it is reliable, secondary v. primary
- Content:
  - Main argument or point of the article/video
  - 2-3 key pieces of evidence that are relevant to student's ideas
  - Description of why this article connects to their selected narrative quotes

Day Three

Overview
In this lesson, students will review the expectations of a Socratic Seminar, and prepare a structured argument based on their research to share in this seminar during the next day's lesson.

Step One: Review the expectations and format of a Socratic Seminar with the students, and how they will need to present their arguments in a concise and clear manner on behalf of their small groups (10 minutes).

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Step Two: Based on their research, students should refine their evidence and craft an argument about how the immigration trend or historical event they chose connects with the experiences of currently undocumented immigrants in America. In their small groups, students make a list of the evidence they would like to share in their Socratic Seminar, including a combination of narrative quotes and data from their research (45 minutes).

Day Four

Overview
In this lesson, students will participate in an Socratic Seminar on the history of U.S. immigration and its connection to current events represented by the narratives in *Underground America.*

Step One: Review the seminar format again, reminding students to be respectful of time spent speaking and making space for each other to present their arguments (10 minutes).

Step Two: Using the Learning for Justice or Paideia guidelines, begin the Socratic Seminar and allow students to drive the discussion. Allow some time for silent reflection at the end of the seminar. Students may also find it useful if they have a rubric for participation to evaluate their progress during the seminar (45 minutes).

Media Options:

Film: *The Chinese Exclusion Act*

This documentary film examines the origin, history and impact of the 1882 law that made it illegal for Chinese workers to come to America and for Chinese nationals already here ever to become U.S. citizens. The first in a long line of acts targeting the Chinese for exclusion, it remained in force for more than 60 years. A PBS film directed by Ric Burns and Li-Shin Yu:
https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/chinese-exclusion-act

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Underground America Narratives and Themes

Diana (pp. 21-32): Economic inequality, job insecurity, natural disasters, criminal justice system, immigration from Peru

Mr. Lai (pp. 33-54): Economic inequality, job insecurity, healthcare access, immigration from China

Liso (pp. 81-98): Economic inequality, job insecurity, freedom of religion, healthcare access, immigration from South Africa

Olga (pp. 102-115): Job insecurity, healthcare access, LGBTQ rights, immigration detention, immigration from Mexico

Abel (pp. 117-135): Indigenous rights, military violence, economic inequality, job insecurity, immigration from Guatemala

Lorena (pp. 183-204): Job insecurity, healthcare access, farmworkers, DREAMers/DACA, education, immigration from Mexico

Farid (pp. 283-202): Job insecurity, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, political asylum, immigration from Iran

Adela (pp. 305-326): Job insecurity, healthcare access, education, immigration from Mexico

Estella (pp. 327-344): Job insecurity, education, asylum, immigration from Mexico

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Lesson Four: Stories of Immigration Through Oral History and Poetry

Time Needed: Two class periods.

Materials:

- Copies of any narratives from *Underground America*
- Poster paper, markers, and post-its

Objectives:

- Students will be able to discuss the essential questions of the lesson and build on the ideas of their classmates.
- Students will be able to identify a significant theme in a narrative, including evidence that supports their opinion.
- Students will be able to create a poem that reflects the nuance of the theme they identified.

Related Common Core Standards: Reading Literature RL9-10.1, RL9-10.2, Speaking and Listening SL9-10.1, Language Standards L9-10.3, L9-10.5

Narrative Excerpt:
"My wife had asked me to take her ashes to Bolivia, but I didn't have a valid passport. I went to Immigration to get a U.S. passport, and they charged me some money, and just put a big stamp on the application: Denied."

—Farid, *Underground America,* p. 297

Pre-Work: Students should be assigned a narrative to read for homework from *Underground America*, or select one using the list of narratives and associated themes from Lesson Plan 3, page 16. As they read, students should highlight at least one quote that challenges the dominant narrative of immigration.

Day One

Overview
In this lesson, students will reflect on their reading from previous days and answer questions about their impact both silently and in a whole class discussion. Students will then write either Blackout Poetry from the *Underground America* narratives, or write their own poems inspired by and incorporating the narrative themes and content.

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Step One: To bring the voices of the narrators into the room, each student reads aloud one quote they selected from their reading. Students should say the name of their narrator, their country of origin, then read aloud the stand alone quote (15 minutes).

Step Two: Divide students into small groups. Give each small group a piece of butcher paper and let them know that they are going to have a silent conversation on the piece of paper. They will answer the following questions and respond to each other's answers on the piece of paper. They can write in sentences, words, drawings, symbols, and other visual representations. Possible questions to reflect on (10 minutes):

- Were these stories different from the dominant narratives we hear in the media? If so, how?
- Why is it important to hear these stories?
- Which themes resonate with you personally? Why?

Step Three: Silent Gallery Walk: Give students the chance to see what other groups wrote. Students may physically write on the posters or write on post-its that they can place on other group's posters (5-7 minutes).

Step Four: Facilitate a class discussion using the following suggested prompts (10 minutes):

- Do any common themes emerge from the posters? Any seeming contradictions?
- Does oral history help personalize the story of immigration? If so, how?

Step Five: Let students know that they will be selecting a narrative from *Underground America* and a theme from their discussion to turn into a poem. Depending on students' familiarity with writing poetry, students can complete a blackout poetry activity or write their own poem that captures the ideas of the narrator. Review the descriptions of either Blackout Poetry or Student Written Poetry/Spoken Word with the students (15 minutes).

- **Blackout Poetry:** Students will create poems using the exact words from the narrative by blacking out some words and phrases to create a coherent poem that captures the narrator's story in 50-75 words.

    1. Students select the narrative they want to focus on, then choose 1-2 pages of text they feel capture the most significant ideas or experiences of the narrator.

    2. Make copies of the pages for the student.

    3. Keeping in mind the theme of their discussion or the message they would like to share, students use a sharpie or pen to cross-out words, sentences, or paragraphs to create a poem that captures the spirit of their narrator's experience.

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- **Student Written Poetry or Spoken Word:** Students will create poems using their own words mixed with the words of the narrator to capture a significant theme from the narrative and their discussion.

    1. Students identify a theme they want to focus on. They might consider words or phrases the author uses often, moments that are described in great detail, or moments that resonated with them as readers.

    2. Students begin to write a poem or spoken word piece that takes that theme and connects it to a current issue in their life or the world today. Their poem can include:
        a. Words or phrases that the narrator used (in quotes)
        b. Descriptive details, metaphors, or similes that capture the narrator's experience
        c. A combination of original writing and Blackout Poetry

    Students can work on their poems for homework or during the next class.

Day Two

Overview
In this lesson, students will complete and share their poems/spoken word pieces with the class. Students will then reflect on the experience, considering the importance of individual words in a story and how poetry helps us understand experiences of immigration in America.

Step One: If needed, give students time to complete their poems (10 minutes).

Step Two: Students share their poems or spoken word pieces with the class (25 minutes).

Step Three: Students respond to the following written prompts in their journals (10 minutes):

- How did creating your poem help you think about the power of individual words in a story?
- Did reading these narratives and listening to your classmates' poetry impact your understanding of immigration in America? If so, how?

Step Four: Facilitate a small group or whole class discussion where students share their reflections and learning (10 minutes).

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Media Option (print and audio): *Poems on Immigration and Immigrant Life.* A collection of poetry from The Poetry Foundation that explores the personal experiences of immigrants and refugees from around the world.
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/collections/144265/poems-on-immigration

Oral History/Storytelling Project: Students conduct their own oral history interviews around the theme of immigration and using the lesson poetry format, create a public reading of poems based on their interviews.

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Lesson Five: Talking to the Text

Time Needed: One to two class periods (or homework assignments).

Materials:

- *Underground America*
- Sticky notes, bookmarks, or journal/binder

Objective: To divide reading content into smaller parts to help students better organize and synthesize information in an oral history narrative.

Related Core Curriculum Standards: Reading History RH.9–10.2, RH.9–10.3, RH.9–10.4.

Connections: This activity can be done with any narrative from the Voice of Witness series.

Narrative Excerpt:
"It wasn't long after I got married the second time that a church from Houston sent a letter to my pastor in the Eastern Cape. The American church was asking our church for missionaries to volunteer. My pastor's wife called me that Saturday. She said, 'There's a church in the USA that needs a missionary. Are you still interested in going to America?' I said yes right away because—to tell the truth—I have a lot of debt at home. And, you know, we have the idea that everything in America is perfect because that's what we see on TV and in the movies. In America, you find dollars lying in the grass, every leaf on a tree is a dollar. Right now, if you call somebody in South Africa and say, 'Do you want to come to America, even if it's to wash my pig?' I promise you that that person will say, 'Oh yes, please let me come and wash your pig!' People will do anything to get here, to make money to send home. So, even though missionaries don't get paid, I was sure people in America would help me."

—Liso, *Underground America*, pp. 81-82

Step One: Use the chart on the following page to help students organize their thoughts as they read Liso's narrative (18 pp) from *Underground America* (30 minutes).

Step Two: Students work in small groups and share their results from the activity. They should compare questions and predictions and make connections to other related readings and their own lives (10–12 minutes).

Step Three (optional): If desired, questions, predictions, and connections can become the basis for student personal essays.

Possible Oral History Project: Class creates an oral history project focusing on moments of change or how specific choices have impacted their lives.

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Media Option: African Voices Podcast

African Voices (*https://uniteafricans.org/archive/uniteafricans.org/africanvoices/index.html*) is the official podcast of the United African Organization, a coalition of African national associations that promotes social and economic justice, civic participation, and empowerment of African immigrants and refugees in Chicago.

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Chart

Chunk it!: Break the text into bite-size pieces, e.g., a paragraph or two that you can read easily.

Read: Read the text to yourself one time first.

Talk to the Text: Think about any questions, predictions, or connections (to things you already know) you have with the text. Mark these right on the text itself, or on sticky notes if you are reading from a book.

Repeat: Keep reading and Talking to the Text with the next chunks.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Metacognitive Reflection</th></tr>
<tr><td>I think/believe/wonder...</td><td>This reminds me of...</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>I'm confused about...</td><td>I'll reread...</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>I can picture...</td><td>I predict that...</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td rowspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td>This is like...</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
</table>

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Lesson Six: Examining the Myths and Facts of Immigration

Time Needed: One class period and one homework session, or two class periods.

Materials:

- *Underground America*
- Learning for Justice Ten Myths About Immigration: https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/spring-2011/ten-myths-about-immigration
- Large pieces of butcher paper or large (poster-size) sticky notes, markers

Objective: Through reading, analysis, and discussion, students enhance their understanding of U.S. immigration issues.

Related Core Curricular Standards: Reading Literature RL.9–10.1. Reading History RH.9–10.1, RL.9–10.2. Speaking and Listening SL.9–10.1, SL.9–10.3, SL.9–10.4.

Connections: Lesson can also be used with the following narratives from *Patriot Acts*: Rana Sodhi, Usma Naheed Abbasi, Anser Mehmood, Farid Rodriguez; *Out of Exile*: Panther Alier, Abuk Bak Macham; *Nowhere to Be Home:* Law Eh Soe, U Agga Nya Na.

Essential Question:

- How do the stories from *Underground America* complicate your thinking about immigration issues?

Narrative Excerpt:

"The day before the hurricane arrived, I went to work at the casino as usual. That day the management made us work like never before. We cleaned absolutely everything, working extra hours. People were saying that Katrina was coming but I wasn't sure what it was. Where I'm from we'd never heard of hurricanes.

Everyone on the overnight cleaning crew was Hispanic. There were Americans who worked the night shift, too, but my American coworkers didn't clean. They did other jobs, like security and food service. That day, some of them said to me, 'Diana, what are you still doing here cleaning? Let's go! Katrina's coming!' But everyone on cleaning crew had been told by the supervisor to stay longer than our usual hours that night, that there was going to be an inspection the next day. Everyone else was leaving. They left us there to go on working: cleaning and cleaning."

—Diana, *Underground America*, pp. 23-24

Preparation: Download and photocopy Learning for Justice's Ten Myths About Immigration. Create reading groups for ten of the narratives from *Underground America* (to correspond to the ten myths/facts of immigration), using the following narratives: Diana (12 pp.), Mr. Lai (20 pp.), Roberto

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(19 pp.), Liso (18 pp.), Abel (17 pp.), Lorena (20 pp.), Jose Garcia (17 pp.), Farid (18 pp.), Adela (19 pp.), and Estrella (16 pp.). Other narratives from the book can be substituted for the ones listed above.

Step One: Hand out copies of Ten Myths About Immigration to be read during class or as homework (20 minutes).

Step Two: Assign each group one of the ten selected narratives from *Underground America*. Groups can read their narratives silently, aloud during class, or they can be assigned as homework. While students are reading their assigned narratives, they should copy three to six direct quotes from their narrators that seem to align with or contradict the ten myths and facts of immigration (45 minutes).

Step Three: Groups should be given time to discuss individual quotes. Each group should assign a facilitator and should be prepared to discuss the following (10–15 minutes):

- Why quotes were chosen and how they specifically connect to particular myths and realities of immigration.
- How chosen quotes helped students empathize with the personal experiences of the narrators.
- How chosen quotes enhanced student's understanding of immigration issues.

Step Four: On ten poster-size sticky notes or large pieces of butcher paper, write each immigration myth at the top and the fact at the bottom. Hang them up in various places around the room. Have several pens placed near each "station." Give students time to move around the room, writing their chosen quotes directly on the particular myth/reality of immigration that it relates to (15 minutes).

Step Five: Class silently examines the quotes at each station (5–7 minutes).

Step Six: Circle Of Voices: Students return to their narrative groups. Using three minutes of silent time, each group considers their responses and reactions to what they have just viewed at each myth/fact station. Each group member then has three minutes of uninterrupted time to discuss his or her responses, reactions and questions. Then, members may react to the comments that have been expressed (15–20 minutes).

Step Seven (optional): Using the Circle of Voices format, have groups consider the following questions (courtesy of Teaching Tolerance):

- Where do you think these myths come from?
- Who benefits from these myths?
- Why are these myths untrue?

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Possible Oral History Project: Using quotes from the narratives and responses during the Circle of Voices activity, students can craft potential interview questions for an oral history project focusing on immigration issues.

Media Option: Use Wordle (*www.wordle.net*) or Tagxedo (*www.tagxedo.com*) to create "word clouds," which are visual representations of words that appear in a text. Words or phrases that are used more frequently appear larger. Class could create an additional representation of the myths and facts of immigration.

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Lesson Seven: Oral History/American Dream "Position Paper"

Time Needed: One to two class periods and two to three homework sessions.

Materials:

- *Underground America*
- Butcher paper or poster-size sticky notes, pens, paper (student journals)
- Computers (classroom or library)

Objective: Use critical thinking, writing, and analytical skills to convey understanding of immigration issues through first-person narratives.

Related Core Curriculum Standards: Reading Informational Texts RI.9–10.1, RI.11–12.1, RI.9–10.2, RI.11–12.2, RI.9–10.3, RI.11–12.3. Writing W.9–10.1, W.11–12.1, W.9–10.2, W.11–12.2.

Connections: Lesson can also be used with the following narratives from *Patriot Acts*: Rana Sodhi, Usma Naheed Abbasi, Anser Mehmood, Farid Rodriguez; *Out of Exile*: Panther Alier, Abuk Bak Macham; *Nowhere to Be Home*: Law Eh Soe, U Agga Nya Na.

Essential Questions:

- To what extent is the American Dream a reality for immigrants?

Narrative Excerpt:
"The feeling that I had to find a way out for myself and my family grew stronger and stronger over the next few years. We just couldn't go on like this. This was no way to live. And I had so much anger toward the government that I really got to thinking, if I didn't get out then I'd probably just end up in jail. I just had no faith in China. I didn't know how I was going to do it, but I knew I had to go to America."

—Mr. Lai, *Underground America,* p. 38

Overview

This lesson can serve as a basic introduction to position papers, giving students an opportunity to practice their critical thinking and writing skills.

Day One

Overview

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In this lesson, students will reflect on the meaning of the "American Dream," using outside resources to inform their discussion and formation of a definition. Students will then read narratives from *Underground America,* and create an "American Dream poster" on which to write comments, quotations, and questions for the remainder of the unit.

Step One: Students respond to the following prompt in their journals or binders (10 minutes):

- What is the American Dream?

Step Two: Write the words "American Dream" on the board and have students share out the responses from their journals, while capturing their ideas on the board so everyone can see them. (5–7 minutes)

Step Three: Based on student responses on the board, and from a brief analysis of the economic, cultural and political factors of immigration, class comes up with a working definition of "American Dream" (20–25 minutes). To aid in student analysis, have a class reading/brief discussion using the Learning for Justice Ten Myths About Immigration from Lesson Plan 6. Have students discuss the myriad factors that determine their responses. Students may also reflect on differing family experiences, for either first-generation Americans or families that have been in the United States for generations. As an additional analysis tool, students may wish to explore the National Archives (*www.archives.gov*) for speeches by U.S. presidents and members of Congress that reference the American Dream. This may provide meaningful context regarding national political definitions of the term.

Step Four: Introduce *Underground America* and assign the following narratives: Jose Garcia (17 pp.), Elizabeth (18 pp.), and Mr. Lai (20 pp.). Use most of the remainder of the class period for students to begin their reading. The rest can be done as homework and/or during the following class period. Encourage students to use active reading strategies (10–15 minutes).

Step Five: Before the end of class, write the class definition of American Dream on a large piece of butcher paper or poster-size sticky note and hang it in an accessible location in the room. During the remainder of the unit, students will write comments, quotations, and questions related to their reading on this poster. What they write can help shape their ideas for their position paper (2 minutes).

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Day Two

Overview
In this lesson, students will begin to outline their position papers, brainstorming methods of creating a strong thesis statement as a class, and connecting their topics to quotes from the narratives they've read.

Step One: If needed, give students additional time to finish their reading (15 minutes).

Step Two: Allow the class some time to write on the American Dream poster (5–7 minutes).

Step Three: Give students the Position Paper handout, discussing the format and answering any questions about the assignment. The goal in introducing the assignment is to encourage students to think deeply about their topic/writing and not to get too bogged down by format (15 minutes).

Step Four: Have a brief discussion about student responses to the reading. Ask students if they can connect any quotes to their definition of American Dream (5–7 minutes).

Step Five: Students may find it helpful to have a class brainstorm session for creating a strong thesis sentence. For this brainstorm session, pose the following questions (10 minutes):

- Does my thesis sentence attempt to answer or explore a challenging question?
- Does my thesis sentence inspire other points of view?
- Is my thesis sentence too general or vague? Should I focus on some more specific aspect of my topic?

Step Six: Any remaining class time should be used for students to create drafts of a thesis sentence followed by a basic outline of their paper. If desired, students can work in small groups to develop their ideas. For homework, students should finish their outlines and begin working on their rough drafts.

Day Three

Overview
In this lesson, students will start to write their position papers in a class "writing lab," using the thesis statements they've brainstormed during the last lesson.

Step One: As a warm-up activity, students should work in groups of three and share their thesis sentences and any quotes from the narratives that back up their thesis. Encourage them to refer back to the previous day's questions about thesis sentences and to the American Dream definition

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(7–10 minutes).

Step Two: Address any questions regarding thesis sentences, outlines, quotes, etc. (5 minutes).

Step Three: Create a class "writing lab," allowing students to work on their position papers. Offer assistance and ideas as needed (25–30 minutes).

Step Four: Before the end of the class period, allow students to write on the American Dream poster (5 minutes). For homework, students should revise and finish their final drafts.

Day Four

Overview
In this lesson, two opposing student position papers will be presented to the class, after which students will participate in an informal debate about immigration issues to probe the ways this assignment has complicated or informed their thinking around immigration issues and their own definitions of the American Dream.

Step One: Select two opposing student position papers to be read or presented to the class (students can also create two groups based on similar positions). Create an informal class debate about immigration issues. Class can also do a "fishbowl" discussion.* Refer to Contracting or class agreements if necessary (30 minutes). In conclusion, pose the following questions to the class:

- How has this process "complicated" your thinking about immigration issues?
- What quote from *Underground America* inspired your position most?
- Did your definition of the American Dream change during the process? If so, how?

Possible Oral History Project: Create an oral history project focusing on different aspects of the American Dream. Potential interview questions could include:

- What does it mean to be an American?
- Who gets to be an American?
- What is the American Dream?
- How does the American Dream compare to American realities?

Media Option: Organizational websites:
67 Sueños: A youth-led collective based in San Francisco that strives to tell the stories of everyday young people who are often left out of the national narrative on immigration reform.
(*https://afsc.org/es/programs/67-suenos*)

Define American: Define American brings new voices into the immigration conversation, shining a

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light on a growing twenty-first century underground railroad: American citizens who are forced to fill in where our immigration system fails. (*www.defineamerican.com*)

* A fishbowl is a teaching strategy that encourages students to both contribute to the discussion and be active listeners. It requires a small circle of 6-8 chairs (or however many would best suit your classroom needs) to create the inner "fishbowl," and an outer ring of students sitting or standing around the inner circle. The students in the inner circle, or "fishbowl," take turns responding to a prompt or discussion topic while the students in the outer circle listen. After a designated amount of time (typically 10-15 minutes), the inner and outer circles switch. Fishbowls can be particularly effective for challenging or difficult discussion topics.

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Position Paper

"Good thinking is good writing."

What is a Position Paper?

A position paper is a relatively short piece of writing that communicates your understanding of an assigned text. The goal is for you to put forth a clear and organized essay of your thoughts, rather than writing a summary of what you read.

The Assignment: For your assignment, you must take a position on the following question:

To what extent is the American Dream a reality for immigrants?
Your evidence should come from the assigned narratives from *Underground America*. You may also use information and ideas from the American Dream poster. Your position paper should be no more than two typed pages (double-spaced), incorporating the following format:

I. Introduction:
Introduce the issue and provide background. The introduction should include your definition of the American Dream (which can differ from the class definition). As with other essays, your thesis should be the last sentence of your introductory paragraph.

II. Body:
Assert your first claim, providing textual evidence or proof (but please do not fill your entire paper with quotes). Explain how your evidence or proof supports your claim. You should strive to make three claims with proofs and explanations.

III. Conclusion:
Restate the strongest points of your argument and provide a "plan of action" for addressing the issues presented. Sample question: What needs to change in American society for the American Dream to be realistic?

The Process:
Over the course of several days, here is how you should develop your position paper:

1. Thesis and outline
2. Work on rough draft
3. Revise draft
4. Work on final draft
5. Turn in final draft

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