

# Asking Questions About Immigration

## Suggestions for Teachers

*by Elsa Roberts Auerbach*

This time of national debate on immigration presents a “teachable moment” for our students. Here are some suggestions for starting classroom conversations about immigration.

1. Introduce the topic by asking students to define “immigrant” and “immigration.”
2. Then pass out the student worksheet on the next page. Have students individually complete the sentences on the top part of the page stating their beliefs and ideas.
3. Make a list of the class beliefs about immigration. Discuss the differences noting where beliefs conflict.
4. Have students turn these ideas and beliefs into questions using the sentence starters on the bottom of the worksheet. Discuss as a class.
5. Post sheets of paper around the classroom. Have students post their immigration questions then add information relating to them as they find it. Add new questions as they arise.

### **Ten Questions Activity**

1. Split up the class in small groups. Each group should choose one of the following words and write ten questions about immigration on newsprint starting with that word: WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, HOW
2. Post the newsprint around the room. Suggest that students walk around and place checks next to the questions that they think are most interesting or most important, adding their own questions.
3. The class might then choose three questions from each list that have the greatest number of checks and discuss why they are important.
4. Have students build timelines, collages, and murals that answer the questions and use the information they have discovered.

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## Naming Your Beliefs and Ideas

Finish the following sentences individually; then compose a class list of beliefs about immigration. Some of your ideas and beliefs may conflict with each other.

Example: I've heard that immigrants don't pay taxes.

1. I think that immigrants \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I'm afraid that immigrants \_\_\_\_\_.
3. I believe that immigration \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I hope that immigration \_\_\_\_\_.
5. I've heard that immigrants \_\_\_\_\_.
6. I worry that immigration \_\_\_\_\_.

## Sentence Starters

Now, turn these beliefs and ideas into questions:

Example: Do immigrants pay taxes?

1. Do immigrants \_\_\_\_\_?
2. Do immigrants \_\_\_\_\_?
3. Do immigrants \_\_\_\_\_?
4. Does immigration \_\_\_\_\_?