

Overview

This lesson asks students to look at a number of current proposals for immigration policy, categorize them according to the values behind immigration policy as laid out in the National Migration Policies video, and then to analyze them.

Length

Two–three class periods

Materials

[National Migration Policies video \(World101\)](#)

[How Trump’s Immigration Proposal Compares With Other Plans \(NPR\)](#)

Current Immigration Policy Worksheet (below)

Letter to Member of Congress Worksheet (below) or Letter to the Editor Worksheet (below)

Instructional Plan

1. Have students watch the “National Migration Policies” video.
2. Pass out the Current Immigration Policy worksheet and ask students to answer the first question about their personal views on the values to consider in immigration policy. Optionally have students share their answers out loud or using a strategy like four corners.
3. Pass out “How Trump’s Immigration Proposal Compares With Other Plans”. Assign each student one of the proposals to analyze and ask them to take each element of the proposal and place it in the box below the value that that element reflects. If an element seems to fit in more than one box, write it more than once.
4. When they finish, ask them to answer the final question on the worksheet about the predominant value underlying their assigned proposal. Have students share their conclusions in brief presentations to the class.
5. Have students compose letters to their representatives in Congress or to their local newspaper in support or opposition of one of the plans they analyzed in class.

Extension and Additional Resources

Analyze Current Immigration Policy

- The “How Trump’s Immigration Proposal Compares With Other Plans” article has extensive footnotes that you can use to have students work with more detailed summaries or primary sources in place of the chart in the NPR article.

Analyzing Current Immigration Policy

The National Migration Policies video presents three values that underlie most national immigration policies: economic needs, national security priorities, and national values. In general, which of these do you think are most important for government officials to consider when making policy? Why?

Immigration Proposal name: _____

Place each element of the proposal in the box below the value that that element reflects. If an element seems to fit in more than one box, write it more than once.

Economic Needs	National Security Priorities	National Values

According to your analysis, which value does your chosen plan focus on most?

Analyze Current Immigration Policy

Writing a Letter to a Member of Congress

Every state in the United States is represented by two senators and is divided into one or more congressional districts represented by a member of Congress who sits in the House of Representatives. Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Washington, DC, have nonvoting delegates in the House of Representatives and are not represented by senators.

If you do not already know who your representatives are, enter your address on the website <http://house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative> to find your representative. You can look up your senators at http://senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators/contact. Make sure that you are writing to your own representative—members of Congress give much more weight to letters from their own constituents.

Most communication is read by staff members, who tally up the issues raised and give the member of Congress they work for statistics on the issues. Adding your voice can raise the profile of your issue. Particularly well-written letters could get passed on the member of Congress to read personally. Sometimes members of Congress will respond, although often with a form letter.

Your letter should include four parts:

1. Salutation
 - a. For representatives, use “Dear Rep. Smith.”
 - b. For senators, use “Dear Sen. Jones.”
2. Make your point
 - a. Say what issue you are writing about. If you are writing about a specific bill, mention it.
 - b. Say what you want the member of Congress to do—vote a certain way, make sure a certain policy is included in a piece of legislation, or raise a certain issue.
 - c. Be sure to mention you are a constituent.
3. Support your point
 - a. Keep your letter short: pick your two or three best arguments.
 - b. If you have one, a personal story or description of a local impact can go a long way.

Analyze Current Immigration Policy

4. Closing
 - a. “Sincerely” is always a good choice for a formal letter like this one.
 - b. Include your full name and address; it shows the member of Congress that you are a constituent and allows the member’s office to write back.

Additional tips:

- Keep it short! Members of Congress get a lot of mail.
- Be respectful, but remember that members of Congress are there to represent you.

Letter to the Editor Worksheet

Most newspapers and magazines print letters to the editor: letters that readers send in, usually in response to recently published articles. These can be a useful way to get your voice heard.

Choose your target wisely: national and big city newspapers get thousands of letters a day and have room to print only a dozen or so. A neighborhood or small town paper will have fewer people writing to it and often more space to devote to printing letters. Whichever publication you choose, make sure to get a copy and look at previous letters to get a sense of what kind of letter that outlet likes to publish.

Some tips

- Always write in response to an article published in the last few issues. Cite the article by using the headline and day of publication.
- Agreeing with the article will almost never get you published. Look for something you disagree with, or raise an issue that the article overlooked.
- Be brief. Often letters are only a few sentences long, although small papers may print longer letters. As a result, you should make just one point in your letter.
- Be as clear and memorable as possible—editors receive many letters, make yours stand out.
- If you have a personal experience about or expertise on the issue, use it.