

PART 1

UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF AN ISSUE

“Nearly everyone agrees that America's immigration system is broken; what they don't agree on is how to fix it.”

OBJECTIVE:

Students apply their close reading skills to understand a societal issue as a context for various perspectives, positions, and arguments.



ACTIVITIES

1- INTRODUCING THE UNIT

The teacher presents an overview of the unit and its societal issue.

2- EXPLORING THE ISSUE

Students read and analyze a background text to develop an initial understanding of the issue.

3- DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUE

Students read and analyze a second background text to expand and deepen their understanding of the issue.

4- QUESTIONING TO REFINE UNDERSTANDING

Students develop text-dependent questions and use them to refine their analysis.

5- WRITING AN EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIM ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE ISSUE

Students develop and write an evidence-based claim about the nature of the issue.

MATERIALS:

Text Sets 1 and 2
Guiding Questions Handout
Forming EBC Tool
TCD Checklist
EBA Terms



ALIGNMENT TO CCSS

TARGETED STANDARDS:

RI.8.1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.8.2: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.8.3: Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

W.8.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

SUPPORTING STANDARDS:

SL.8.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

RI.8.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.



ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCING THE UNIT

The teacher presents an overview of the unit and its societal issue.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

INTRODUCE ARGUMENTATION

Introduce the central purpose of the unit: to develop, practice, and apply the skills of argumentation in the context of a societal issue by:

- 1) Understanding the nature of a challenging *issue* for which there are various *perspectives* and *positions*.
- 2) Understanding and comparing *perspectives* and *arguments* on the issue.
- 3) Developing an evidence-based *position* on the issue.
- 4) Developing, sequencing and linking *claims* as *premises* in an evidence-based *argument* for one's position.
- 5) Supporting one's premises with logical *reasoning* and relevant *evidence*.
- 6) Developing an argumentative *essay* through a series of guided editorial processes.

Emphasize that in this unit, students will learn and think about a complex societal issue for which there are many explanations, perspectives, and opinions, not simply two sides of an argument. to be debated. Let them know that they will read and research to better understand the issue and various perspectives on it *before* they form a position of their own and develop an argument in support of that position. Explain that the unit will culminate in a collaborative process for developing and strengthening an argumentative essay that each student will write on the unit's societal issue.

- Establish a clear definition of the term *issue* in general. An issue can be defined as *an important aspect of human society for which there are many differing opinions on an appropriate course of action*. Brainstorming a list of societal issues might be helpful.
- Using examples from various fields and topical areas, discuss the general question: *"How do strategic thinkers discuss and understand challenging issues or problems?"* Brainstorm a list of approaches and skills used by experts who regularly have to propose and support responses to issues or problems.

IMMIGRATION

The topic area and texts focus on the broad area of Immigration, and more specifically on issues and controversies related to immigration law and policy in the United States, both historically and currently. Immigration, and policy related to both legal and illegal immigration, is a complex topic with many possible perspectives and positions – not a simple “pro and con” arena for debate – which allows the teacher and students to approach and study the issue from many possible angles.

FORMULATE A PROBLEM-BASED QUESTION

Formulate a problem-based question from which students can begin their discussions, reading, and development of an argumentative position. Choose or develop a general, though still focused, question that causes students to think about the problem with many directions for argumentation, and that connects to students' backgrounds and interests. An example/option for a problem-based question with a historical context is:

E Pluribus Unum (“Out of many, one”):
Is this Latin phrase, adopted in 1782, still a fitting motto for the national seal of the United States? In what ways have US immigration laws and policies reflected – or contradicted – this motto?

If this question is selected, or a similar one developed, provide a little background to get students thinking; in this case, showing them the Great Seal and translating the Latin inscription may be enough of a start. Another option is to read and discuss the following quotation from a President Obama speech on immigration reform, delivered at American University on July 1, 2010:

“But I believe we can put politics aside and finally have an immigration system that’s accountable. I believe we can appeal not to people’s fears but to their hopes, to their highest ideals, because that’s who we are as Americans. It’s been inscribed on our nation’s seal since we declared our independence. “E pluribus unum.” Out of many, one. That is what has drawn the



ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCING THE UNIT (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES (CONT'D)

persecuted and impoverished to our shores. That's what led the innovators and risk-takers from around the world to take a chance here in the land of opportunity. That's what has led people to endure untold hardships to reach this place called America."

TEXT-BASED QUESTION

The motto on the Great Seal also provides a first opportunity for close reading and analysis, using a text-based question set such as:

What does the word "many" refer to – both historically and currently? The word "one"? How do (or have) "many" become "one" in the United States?

Let students know that they will be returning to these questions often as they read texts related to immigration history and policy in the US. Emphasize

that their task in this argumentation unit is not simply to answer them, but rather to use them as a stimulus for reading and discussion. Thinking about these question as they read, analyze, and discuss will eventually lead them to a perspective on immigration in the United States, and finally to a position about current immigration policy from which they can build an evidence-based argument.

KWL

Teachers might choose to use an activity to help students access their prior knowledge of the subject while also making sure to be careful of erroneous prior conceptions of the topic (KWL, class brainstorm, image brainstorm, free write, etc.).



ACTIVITY 2: EXPLORING THE ISSUE

Students read and analyze a background text to develop an initial understanding of an issue.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

READING

- Students read the text independently, annotating and making notes on how it relates to the unit's problem-based question.
- The teacher introduces one or more text-based questions to drive a closer reading of the text. Students then follow along as the text is presented to them.
- In reading teams, students discuss the text-based questions and search for relevant details, highlighting and annotating them in their text (and might use a *Forming EBC* tool to record their thinking).

WRITING CLAIMS

- The teacher models the development and writing of an explanatory claim that addresses something the text has presented about the unit's issue. The claim is explanatory not argumentative at this point.

- Students individually develop explanatory claims about the text's presentation of the issue (a *Forming EBC* tool can be used).
- In reading teams, students compare claims and the evidence they have found to derive and support them.

Students write a short claim-based synopsis of the text and the information it presents about the nature of the issue or problem, citing specific details and evidence to support their explanatory claim. [NOTE: Emphasize that at this point in the process, student claims should focus on interpreting what the text says about the nature of the issue, not on the validity of the text's perspective or position and *not* on articulating the student's own, still-developing position. Those sorts of claims will come later.]



ACTIVITY 2: EXPLORING THE ISSUE (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES (CONT'D)

NOTE ON TEXT SETS

Instruction in this unit links to a sequence of *text sets*. Each text set provides multiple entry points into the issue, giving teachers and students flexibility with respect to the time and depth with which they wish to explore the topic.

Teachers may choose to use the text sets in a variety of ways:

- Select one of the three texts for all students to read, analyze, and discuss. Provide links to the other two so that students can do additional reading if desired.
- Have all students read, analyze, and discuss all three texts (or two of the three) in a more extended instructional time sequence.
- Place students in “expert groups” and have them read and analyze one of the three texts. Then have students “jigsaw” into cross-text discussion groups to share and compare what they have learned from the text each has read. [Note: students might be grouped by reading level and assigned texts based on their complexity/difficulty.]

TEXT SET #1: TEXTUAL NOTES

Text Set I includes three texts that can be used to provide initial background information about immigration, immigration history, and immigration policy in the United States.

TEXT 1.1: “HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF IMMIGRATION”

Author/Source/Publisher: Center for Immigration Studies. CIS identifies itself as: “an independent, non-partisan, non-profit research organization founded in 1985. It is the nation’s only think tank devoted exclusively to research and policy analysis of the economic, social, demographic, fiscal, and other impacts of immigration on the United States”; **Date:** NA

Complexity Level: Measures at 1210L, but reads easily due to straightforward language and approach; should be accessible to most middle school students, given instructional support to promote close reading.

Text Notes: This background article from “an independent, non-partisan, non-profit research organization” is typical of the informational sources students may encounter when doing a Google-based Internet search. It is intended to provide background information for articles and blog posts about immigration written by CIS Fellows, which are also accessible through the CIS website. The text presents a concise but relatively detailed history of immigration and immigration policy in the United States, moving from historical background in the first three paragraphs to a chronological history of US immigration laws from 1965 (a landmark policy shift discussed by Lyndon Johnson in Text #4.4, a 1965 dedication speech) to 2007.

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive closer reading and discussion):

1. What details does the author present (in paragraphs 1-4) about shifts in US immigration patterns and policies from pre-Civil War times until 1965?
2. In paragraph 5, information is presented about the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). What specific details in the paragraph suggest reasons why this attempt at immigration reform was not successful and instead lead to what the author refers to as “a lopsided ‘grand compromise’”?
3. What evidence does this text provide that influences your understanding of the issue of immigration and immigration policy in the US? In what ways?



ACTIVITY 2: EXPLORING THE ISSUE (CONT'D)

TEXT SET #1: TEXTUAL NOTES

TEXT 1.2: "IMMIGRATION"

Author: David M. Riemers; **Source/Publisher:** The New Book of Knowledge. Grolier Online; **Date:** NA

Complexity Level: At 900L, this encyclopedia article is at the lower end of the 8th grade range and should be an accessible information source for all students. Section headings should help students locate and frame the information presented.

Text Notes: This online encyclopedia article provides a second overview of the concept and history of immigration and of immigration policy in the US. The article begins with helpful definitions of terminology and a brief history of immigration throughout the world, then moves through a short historical summary of immigration in the US, and concludes by discussing current issues related to illegal immigration. Because of its easy readability and basic information, this article may provide the best foundational background source for some (or all) students. Grolier Online also provides a companion article with a similar title, content, and organization at a higher complexity level (also available through a Gale DB search).

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive closer reading and discussion):

1. In the first two paragraphs, the author provides definitions of "migration," "immigration," and "emigration." How are these three terms related, and how are they different?
2. What key details does the article provide about how and why "limiting immigration" and a "quota system" began to happen in the US in the early 20th century? How was the "golden door" re-opened to immigrants in 1965?
3. What details and ideas does the text provide about the more recent problem of illegal "aliens" or immigrants in the US?
4. What evidence does this text provide that influences your understanding of immigration and immigration policy in the US?

TEXT 1.3: "TIMELINE OF U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY"

Author: NA; **Source/Publisher:** PBS; **Date:** NA

Complexity Level: The text within the timeline measures at 1240L. However, the timeline format chunks text into small sections, making it somewhat more accessible for students, particularly if they only focus on reading a few sections of the timeline closely.

Text Notes: This PBS timeline, which accompanies a lesson plan on "Immigration Policy: Past and Present," provides a chronologically organized summary of the major events and legislation that have marked the historical development of US immigration policy from 1790 to 1996. The timeline can be used as a general reference for all students as they read texts about immigration, or students can be assigned eras on the timeline for which they can do close reading and become "experts," then share what they have learned about immigration history and policy with the rest of the class. [Note: the PBS online lesson plan provides a good set of questions to organize this sort of reading/research activity.]

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive closer reading and discussion):

1. In any year or era, what does the timeline's text say happened regarding immigration events, policies, or issues? What might the impact of these events, policies, or issues have been on people who had immigrated, or wanted to immigrate, to the US?
2. What evidence does this text provide that influences your understanding of immigration and immigration policy in the US? In what ways?

ACTIVITY 3: DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUE

Students read and analyze a second background text to expand and deepen their understanding of the issue.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

READING

- Students read the text independently, annotating and making notes on how it relates to the unit's problem-based question.
- The teacher introduces one or more text-based questions to drive a closer reading of the text. Students then follow along as the text is presented to them.
- In reading teams, students discuss the text-based questions and search for relevant details, highlighting and annotating them in their text (and might use a *Forming EBC* tool to record their thinking).

WRITING CLAIMS

- The teacher models the development and writing of an explanatory claim that addresses something the

text has presented about the unit's issue. The claim is explanatory not argumentative at this point.

- Students individually develop explanatory claims about the text's presentation of the issue (a *Forming EBC* tool can be used).
- In reading teams, students compare claims and the evidence they have found to derive and support them.

Students write a short claim-based synopsis of the text and the information it presents about the nature of the issue or problem, citing specific details and evidence to support their explanatory claim. [NOTE: Emphasize that at this point in the process, student claims should focus on interpreting what the text says about the nature of the issue, not on the validity of the text's perspective or position and *not* on articulating the student's own, still-developing position. Those sorts of claims will come later.]

TEXT SET #2: TEXTUAL NOTES

Text Set #2 includes three texts that can be used to provide additional background information about immigration, immigration history, and immigration policy in the United States.

TEXT 2.1: "THE GREAT IMMIGRATION DEBATE"

Author: Patricia Smith; **Source/Publisher:** NY Times Upfront; **Date:** September 6, 2010

Complexity Level: This article, from Upfront, a NY Times "newsmagazine for teens," measures at the upper end of the eighth grade complexity band [at 1310L] but should be readable for most students due to its journalistic and narrative approach.

Text Notes: This article focuses primarily on the controversial issue of illegal immigration and recent laws in response to that problem, notably Arizona's 2010 "tough new immigration law" and various reactions to it. The article moves from an initial focus on current debates into a brief historical overview of immigration and illegal immigration in the US, and concludes by discussing the legislative landscape as of 2010. Because the article was written with a teenage audience in mind, it presents students with a text characteristic of informational materials directed to them, and an opportunity to discuss its perspective relative to their age group. It also provides a second background source that more fully introduces the issues around illegal immigration and laws/policies designed to respond.

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive closer reading and discussion):

1. What does the text tell us are the conflicting perspectives of Erin and Andres regarding Arizona's restrictive immigration law? Why does the author use the examples of Erin and Andres to "represent the sharp divide not only between Arizonans, but also among Americans in general on the subject of immigration"? [paragraph 6]
2. The author concludes her article by quoting a professor of immigration history, who references an "old immigrant saying": "America beckons, but Americans repel." What do the words "beckons" and "repel" mean in this sentence? When read closely in light of what you know about immigration history and policy in the US, what does this saying imply?

ACTIVITY 3: DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUE (CONT'D)

TEXT SET #2: TEXTUAL NOTES

3. What evidence does this text provide that influences your understanding of immigration and immigration policy in the US? In what ways?

TEXT 2.2: "IMMIGRATION, ILLEGAL"

Author: Lawrence H. Fuchs; **Source/Publisher:** Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia - Grolier Online; **Date:** July 2013

Complexity Level: These two parallel online encyclopedia articles are intentionally written at different complexity levels, with the Grolier article measuring at 1200L and the New Book of Knowledge article at 800L. They provide informational sources at either end of the 8th grade text band.

Text Notes: These two, parallel encyclopedia articles expand on the background information provided in Text 1.2, the Grolier Multimedia article on "Immigration." They provide students with additional information more specifically related to the issues and controversies connected to illegal immigration in the US. The two articles might be provided as additional references, to be read independently by students as needed. Because they present similar information, at differing complexity levels (both complexity of the information presented and the language/syntax of the writing itself), they might also be used as foundational texts in a differentiated instruction model, wherein students work on close reading and research skills with text that is somewhat matched to their reading levels.

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive closer reading and discussion):

1. In the second and third paragraphs (of either article), what reasons are presented for why the US has a problem with illegal immigration?
2. What do the articles report are more recent "renewed reform efforts" or "new efforts at control" for illegal immigration? Why, in spite of these efforts, do the articles suggest that, "the problem will continue"?
3. What evidence does this text provide that influences your understanding of immigration and immigration policy in the US? In what ways?

TEXT 2.3: "CONGRESS TRIED TO FIX IMMIGRATION BACK IN 1986. WHY DID IT FAIL?"

Author: Brad Plumer; **Source/Publisher:** The Washington Post; **Date:** January 30, 2013

Complexity Level: This text measures at 1100L and presents information in the conversational tone of a blog post, so should be accessible to most eighth grade students.

Text Notes: Because this text is from a blog (published by the Washington Post), it presents students with a different, more contemporary (and potentially less credible?), informational source to read and analyze. It also presents substantial background information and analysis regarding the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), often cited and critiqued in current debates about US policy/law related to illegal immigration. While the text may not be fully objective in its analysis, it references a number of statistics about illegal immigration since 1986, and also presents two statistical displays that provide students with alternative forms of informational text to read and analyze.

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive closer reading and discussion):

1. In paragraph two, the author states a claim: "There was just one problem – the 1986 reform didn't work." What evidence does he provide in the article to support his claim?
2. The author quotes Doris Meissner about both the "major conceptual flaw" of the 1986 bill and reasons why a new round of legislation may succeed where the 1986 law did not. What specific reasons for a potentially more successful result do Plumer and Meissner note?
3. What evidence does this text provide that influences your understanding of immigration and immigration policy in the US?

ACTIVITY 4: QUESTIONING TO REFINE UNDERSTANDING

Students develop text-dependent questions and use them to find additional evidence and further refine their claims.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

QUESTIONING TEXTS

Students now apply skills they have developed in a *Reading Closely for Textual Details* unit to frame their own, more focused questions about the issue and texts. They use these questions to drive a deeper reading of the previous texts, or of additional texts providing background and perspectives on the topic.

- Starting from the unit's problem-based question, students work in reading teams to develop a set of more focused, text-based questions to drive further inquiry into the issue. (Students can use the *Reading Closely for Details: Guiding Questions* handout to help them develop their questions.)
- Individually, students use these new questions to re-read one of the two background texts, find additional details, and further refine their explanatory claim.
- If additional background information is necessary or desired, students then use their question sets to drive close reading and analysis of one or more additional texts. (Note: Suggested texts are listed in the Instructional Notes or may be identified by the teacher or found by the students. Students might work in teams to become "experts" and develop explanatory claims about one or more of these additional texts, then "jigsaw" into new groups and share what they have learned. In this way, all students can become familiar with a wider range of background texts.)
- Students write or revise one or more explanatory claim(s) based on additional evidence they have found through further or deeper reading.

TEXTUAL NOTES

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND TEXTS

To expand their understanding of the topic, students might be assigned any of the texts from Text Sets #1 and #2 that have not been read by the class. They might also access other sources found by the teacher (or by students themselves) or the four additional source texts listed in the unit plan.

Those four listed source texts provide additional, and different, information about the immigration debate in the US, and can be used to expand students' understanding and/or as independent reading/research assignments. "Lessons from the Immigration and Control Act of 1986" is a policy brief that provides a more sophisticated analysis similar to that found in Text II.3. "The Fundamentals of Immigration Reform" is a thoughtful discussion from the head of the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS is also the source for Text I.1), which can provide deeper reading and insight for more advanced students. The resources that report results from a 2004 Harvard/NPR survey-based study of Americans' attitudes about immigration present interesting (if somewhat dated) statistics. Finally, the Henry Commager Encyclopedia Britannica filmstrip from 1946 provides a video-based historical survey of earlier immigration eras in the US and a delightful example of both how a noted historian talked about the subject and how earlier eras in film production compare to contemporary videos.

ACTIVITY 5: WRITING AN EBC ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE ISSUE

Students develop and write an evidence-based claim about the nature of the issue.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

In the culminating activity for Part 1, students now develop a synthesis claim about the nature of the issue that they will expand and revise when drafting their final argument. Before they can take a position and make their case for a response, they must be able to use evidence to explain their understanding of the issue or problem.

- The teacher models the development of an evidence-based claim that synthesizes information from multiple sources and presents the writer's understanding the unit's issue.
- In reading teams, students go back to the background texts to find additional evidence/details that support this synthesis claim. (An *Organizing EBC* tool can be used).
- In reading teams, students review the explanatory claims they wrote about each text.
- In reading teams, students brainstorm alternative ways of viewing or understanding the problem, based on evidence from the background texts.
- Individually, students develop a multi-part claim that synthesizes how they have come (so far) to view and understand the nature of the issue and its components. (An *Organizing EBC* tool can be used).
- In reading teams, students compare their synthesis claims and the evidence that supports them.
- If teachers and students are familiar with the *Evidence-Based Claims Criteria Checklist* and the *Text-Centered Discussion Checklist* from work in previous units, students can use them as criteria for evaluating their claims and reflecting on their discussions and participation in their reading teams.
- As a class, return to the unit's problem-based question to consider revising it based on the emerging understanding of the issue.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As a formative assessment, and a building block for their final argument, in Activity 5, students draft a written, multi-part claim that:

1. Synthesizes what they have learned about the nature of the unit's issue.
2. Presents their current way of understanding the issue and its components.
3. Cites evidence from multiple sources that explains and substantiates their perspective.
4. Represents their best thinking and clearest writing.

Teachers can use an *EBC Criteria Checklist* to evaluate student writing as well as each student's initial comprehension of the background texts and understanding of the issue.