

COMING TO AMERICA AFTER THE WAR

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LESSON

Target Audience:

Grade: 11

Class: American Literature

Time Requirement:

Approximately 1 class period of 110 minutes

Content Standards Addressed:

California State Standards for English Language Arts

1. Reading 3.1 Analyze characteristics of subgenres that are used in poetry, prose, plays, novels, short stories, essays, and other basic genres.
2. Listening/Speaking 1.3 Interpret and evaluate the various ways in which events are presented and information is communicated by visual image makers (e.g., graphic artists, documentary film-makers, illustrators, news photographers).
3. Writing 2.2 (a-c) Write a response to literature short essay that demonstrates understanding of the significant ideas in works or passages, analyzes the use of universal themes, and supports important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text.

Lesson Overview

The course's overall theme is "The American Dream Through Race, Class and Gender." Keeping to that idea, this lesson is titled "Coming to America After the War" and focuses on the questions:

- Who does the American Dream belong to?
- Is the American Dream different for those who immigrate here than for those who are born and raised here?

The lesson covers migration stories from the 1600's (Pilgrims/Puritans) through the present and takes samples from 5 different cultural groups.

Student Objectives

- To identify the elements and critique the effectiveness of the narrative accounts—journal, third-person, and video testimonies
- To write a critical analysis of the American Dream concept as it applies to foreign born and U.S. born individuals/groups
- To discover a universal theme by comparing/contrasting American immigrant experiences throughout history, from early settlers to post World War II

Materials

- 4 testimony clips of Holocaust survivors, listed in order of presentation:
 - Sidonia Lax (2:43)
 - Leon Leyson (2:52)
 - Rose Korn (2:21)
 - Werner Coppel (3:18)
- Biographical Profiles
- Background Information Form

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Materials (cont'd)

- Excerpts from the following pieces of literature:
 - Bradford, William. "Of Plymouth Plantation." *Glencoe Literature: The Reader's Choice*. Comp. Beverly Ann Chin. New York, NY: Glencoe McGraw-Hill, 2002. pp. 68-73. Print.
 - Galarza, Ernesto. "North from Mexico." *Barrio Boy*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2011. pp. 149-57. Print.
 - Houston, Jeanne Wakatsuki, and James D. Houston. "Whatever He Did Had Flourish." *Farewell to Manzanar*. Austin, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2000. pp. 34-39. Print.
- Our American Melting Pot Venn Diagram
- American Dream Writing Prompt
- Six Point Rubric (available at http://www.calstate.edu/eap/documents/scoring_guide.html)

Context

This lesson is specifically designed for the 11th grade American Literature classroom, and is part of a course called "The American Dream Through Race, Class, and Gender." It will link to literature excerpts from the early settlers to the 1940's. These excerpts will come from William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*, Ernesto Galarza's *Barrio Boy*, as well as Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston's *Farewell to Manzanar*. Students will focus on the reasons each group, as represented by individuals, had for immigrating to the United States. While this lesson specifically uses the named readings, any migration to America stories that cover the person's journey and arrival experience will fit in.

Pre-Viewing Focus

Activating Schema: Students will begin by listing reasons why the early settlers (Pilgrims) migrated to North America. *Question: What were the reasons the first settlers migrated to America?* Then, as a class, we will fill in a Background Information Form for this group using facts presented in William Bradford's excerpt *Of Plymouth Plantation* as well as commonly known facts. This form will serve as a model for the other four they will complete.

Linking to Literature: (Jig-Saw) Students are grouped in fours. Two students are given the *Farewell to Manzanar* excerpt and the other two are given the *Barrio Boy* excerpt to read and gather information. Once the forms are filled in, the class can discuss their findings about the narrators and about the genre's characteristics and effectiveness.

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Viewing Focus

Just prior to viewing the clips, students will be handed a biography page of all video testimony interviewees. They will be asked to read and familiarize themselves with their background facts. They will be asked to select one to focus on and fill in the Background Information Form. They will then view one clip at a time, pausing after each to allow students to read the biographical profile for the next testimony clip. Once all clips have been viewed, they will be asked to complete their form.

Post-Viewing Focus

Once the students have viewed all the clips, they will have a class discussion of what they noticed and answer clarifying questions about the clips.

Closure Activities

When all accounts have been read and/or viewed, students will cooperatively complete the Our American Melting Pot Venn Diagram, a multi-level graphic organizer. This will enable students to compare and contrast the presented immigration experiences—Asian, European, Jewish, and Latino. Students will use all their Background Information Forms and work in groups to complete this step.

Assessment

As an assessment piece, students will be given the American Dream Writing Prompt. They will write a short essay answering the following question: *Is the American Dream different for those who immigrate to the United States than for those who are born and raised here?* Students will write at least two paragraphs explaining their opinions based on their reading, viewing, and experiences.

Suggested Supplementary Materials

- The excerpt from *The Life of Olaudah Equiano* can be incorporated prior to completing the Venn diagram. However, it will take an extra day to have students read it and analyze it, as it is a more challenging piece of literature. [Equiano, Olaudah. "The Life of Olaudah Equiano." *Glencoe Literature: The Reader's Choice*. Comp. Beverly Ann Chin. New York, NY: Glencoe McGraw-Hill, 2002. pp.188-95. Print.]
- Lesson plans from Facing History and Ourselves (<http://www.facinghistory.org>) titled, *Becoming American: The Chinese Experience*. This includes videos, available through the organization's check-out system, as well as additional downloadable materials needed for the unit.