**Embracing Heritage**

**In this eight-week unit, students continue to read stories and informational text and discuss what they each reveal about our own country: the United States of America.**

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**Overview**

* + "***Remember, remember always that all of us, and you and I especially, are descended from immigrants and revolutionists.***" -Franklin D. Roosevelt

America has been described as "a melting pot" or “a tossed salad” because a variety of individuals who have come to America from around the world have made our country rich in ideas, traditions, and customs. Except for the Native Americans, everyone has immigrated—or has ancestors who have emigrated—from another country. People have come, and continue to come, to America to seek freedom and opportunity. Students read from a variety of texts and discuss the fact that while many voluntarily immigrated, others came involuntarily. Many who came to America have had to overcome racism and prejudice, and students discuss how we should be tolerant of each other’s similarities and differences. This unit culminates in a “Generations Project,” in which students consider the perspectives from different generations within a family to show how we are shaped by the experiences we have and the people we encounter. In addition, students create an individual [semantic map](http://chs.smuhsd.org/learning_community/content_literacy/semantic_word_map.html) of the phrase “embracing heritage” in order to represent visually their understanding of this phrase. A component of this project is an open-ended reflective epilogue that answers the essential question.

***Teacher Notes:*** *This unit provides an example of how cross-curricular collaboration can naturally occur between English and other content areas. Students can read informational text in history class, and compare those accounts to personal narratives and accounts about the immigrants' experience read in English class. Much discussion centers on the ways in which background information enhances understanding of literature (whether on immigration or any other history/science topic of teachers' choosing). This unit also demonstrates how the reading and writing standards provide instructional connectivity between learning in English and other content areas.*

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**Focus Standards**

* + These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.
    - **RL.6.6:** Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator in a text.
    - **RI.6.3:** Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).
    - **RI.6.9:** Compare and contrast one author’s presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).
    - **W.6.1:** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
    - **W.6.5:** With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
    - **SL.6.3:** Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
    - **L.6.4:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grade 6 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
    - **L.6.4 (c):** Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word ordetermine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
    - **L.6.4 (d):** Verify the preliminary determination ofthe meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

[Common Core State Standards, ELA](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/CCSSI_ELA_Standards.pdf) (1.5 MB)

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**Suggested Student Objectives**

* + - Define the word “heritage” and review the word “culture” (from grade 5).
    - Read a variety of historical fiction and nonfiction about immigrant experiences.
    - Analyze multiple accounts of immigration and describe important similarities and differences in the details they provide.
    - Interview family members.
    - Conduct research on countries from which family members immigrated.
    - Write opinion papers on America as the “land of opportunity.”
    - Write and perform poetry or songs for classmates.
    - Begin defining relationships between words (e.g., migrate, immigrate, emigrate, etc.).
    - Participate in group discussions.
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**Suggested Works**

* + (E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

**Literary Texts**

**Stories**

* + - *One More River to Cross: The Stories of Twelve Black Americans* (Scholastic Biography) (Jim Haskins) (EA)
    - *As Long as the Rivers Flow: The Stories of Nine Native Americans* (Scholastic Biography) (Paula Gunn Allen and Patricia Clark Smith)
    - *Esperanza Rising* (Pam Munoz Ryan)
    - *Project Mulberry* (Linda Sue Park)
    - *Weedflower* (Cynthia Kadohata)
    - *Escape from Saigon: How a Vietnam War Orphan Became an American Boy* (Andrea Warren)
    - “On Discovering America” (Pearl S. Buck) (*Survey Graphic Magazine*)
    - *One Eye Laughing, the Other Eye Weeping: The Diary of Julie Weiss, Vienna, Austria to New York, 1938* (Dear America Series) (Barry Denenberg)
    - *Something About America* (Maria Testa)
    - *Journey of the Sparrows*( Fran Leeper Buss)
    - *Behind the Mountain* (First Person Fiction) (Edwidge Danticat)
    - *An Indian in Cowboy Country: Stories from an Immigrant’s Life* (Pradeep Anand)

**Lyrics**

* + - “Coming to America” (Neil Diamond)

**Informational Texts**

**Informational Text**

*Easy Books for Building Background Knowledge*

* + - *Coming To America: The Story of Immigration* (Betsy Maestro and Suzannah Ryan)
    - *If Your Name Was Changed at Ellis Island* (If You[r]…Series) (Ellen Levine and Wayne Parmenter)

*General*

* + - *A History of US: Reconstructing America 1865-1890* (Book 7) (Joy Hakim) (EA)
    - *How People Immigrate* (Scholastic, A True Book) (Sarah De Capua)
    - *Immigrant Kids* (Russell Freedman)(EA)
    - *New Kids in Town: Oral Histories of Immigrant Teens* (Scholastic Biography) (Janet Bode)
    - *First Crossing: Stories about Teen Immigrants* (Donald R. Gallo)

*Genealogy*

* + - *Through the Eyes of Your Ancestors: A Step-by-Step Guide to Uncovering Your Family’s History* (Maureen Alice Taylor)
    - *Do People Grow on Family Trees?: Genealogy for Kids and Other Beginners, The official Ellis Island Handbook* (Ira Wolfman and Michael Klein)

**Informational Text (Read Aloud)**

* + - *Colors of Freedom: Immigrant Stories* (Janet Bode)
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**Sample Activities and Assessments**

* + **Class Discussion**

What is meant by the word “heritage”? Which elements does one look for when learning about a culture? Write your ideas down on a Post-It note and “[Give one, get one](http://rrisdmathteam.wikispaces.com/Give+One+Get+One).” *(Teacher Notes: “Culture” was discussed and defined in Grade 5, but you may want to review it. Answers to the elements of heritage may include: something that is passed down from previous generations, a tradition, our family members’ culture, etc.)* Let’s create a class chart of elements to look for, and we will look to find examples in texts read during this unit. We will also continue to add to this list as we gain additional insights during this unit. (SL.6.1a, b, c, d)

**Class Discussion**

How do the stories from this unit provide insight into the immigrants’ experience? How are their stories alike? Different? Cite specific information from the text read to justify your response. Did the story turn out as you expected? Why or why not? Your teacher may ask you to write your own response in your journal and share it with a partner before class discussion.(SL.6.1a, b, c, d, SL.6.3, RL.6.1)

**Literary Response**

After reading one of the immigrant stories, respond in your journal to this James Arthur Baldwin quotation (from the character’s point of view): “Know from whence you came. If you know whence you came, there are absolutely no limitations to where you can go.” Be sure to cite specific examples from the text to justify your response. (RL.6.1, RL.6.6, L.6.1a, b, c, d, L.6.2a, b)

**Research/Travel Brochure**

Conduct research on a country from which an immigrant you read about left, drawing on several sources (e.g., print, digital, video, multimedia, etc.). Write a report or create a travel brochure that entices people to visit that country he/she came from. For the travel brochure, what should visitors learn that would increase understanding of how we are similar to and different from people of that country? Work with peers to get feedback and improve your report or brochure. (W.6.7, RI.6.7, RI.6.9)

**Genealogy/Multimedia Generations Project**

As a way for you to personalize immigrations stories, you are encouraged to learn about the countries from which your family immigrated. Interview three family members (or family friends) from different generations for this project, asking questions about significant aspects of their respective childhoods and growing up. The purpose of this project is to get perspectives from different generations within one family to show how we are shaped by the experiences we have and by the people we encounter. You will share what you learn in a multimedia format with the class, and upload it to class webpage to facilitate sharing with family members far away. (RI.6.3, RI.6.7)

**Class Discussion**

Analyze various accounts of immigrant experiences, then identify and distinguish among facts, opinions, and reasoned judgments presented in texts. How do these sources combine to give you a better picture of the immigrant experience than informational text or literature alone? Your teacher may ask you to write your own response in your journal and share it with a partner before class discussion. Be sure to write down the page numbers of facts and opinions or mark your book with Post-It notes so you can go back and cite the text during class discussion. (RI.6.3, RL.6.9, RI.6.8, SL.6.3)

**Essay**

People have been immigrating to the United States for more than 200 years. Even today, there are people who immigrate to America.  Do you think the reasons for current immigration are more alike or different from those who immigrated 200 years ago?  Write your position on a Post-It note, and discuss your preliminary ideas with classmates. Then, research and compare the reasons people immigrated 200 years ago to the reasons people immigrate today.  Then, individually write your argument about whether the reasons are more similar or different. (W.6.1a, b, c, d, e, W.6.4, W.6.5, RI.6.8)

**Dramatization/Fluency**

Write a poem or a song for two voices about an immigrant’s experience. The poem should be modeled after *Joyful Noise* by Paul Fleishman (read in fifth grade), and the song modeled after Neil Diamond’s lyrics about “Coming to America.” The song or poem should accurately reflect information historical (or present-day) information. Work with classmates to present the song or poem as a dramatic reading. (SL.6.6)

**Word Study**

Keep an index card file of words studied while reading about immigrant experiences*.* Keeping the words on index cards will help you when we sort words by prefix, suffix, root words, meaning, country of origin, spelling feature, etc. Just as we can trace the path of our ancestors, we can trace the path of words. Choose some words and trace back from modern-day uses of the words to their historical origins (e.g., culture, heritage, immigration, emigration, immigrant, endowment, lineage, racism, tolerance, legacy, ancestry, etc.) (Note: This will be an ongoing activity all year long.) In addition, you will create an individual [semantic map](http://chs.smuhsd.org/learning_community/content_literacy/semantic_word_map.html) of the phrase “embracing heritage” in order to represent visually your understanding of this phrase.(RL.6.4, L.6.4a, b, c, d)

**Reflective Essay**

Write an essay response to the essential question (“How can we learn to appreciate our similarities and differences through literature?”). Prepare it for publication. Be prepared to make an audio recording of your essay and upload it as a podcast to accompany your Genealogy/Multimedia Generations Project (see above). (W.6.5, W.6.9a, b, L.6.1a, b, c, d, L.6.2a, b)

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**Additional Resources**

* + [Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges: Critical Discussion of Social Issues](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/breaking-barriers-building-bridges-86.html) (ReadWriteThink) (RL.6.9)

Note: Students read and discuss a series of picture books that highlight social barriers and bridges of race, class, and gender.

[Annie Moore becomes the first immigrant to enter Ellis Island in 1892](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/calendar-activities/annie-moore-becomes-first-20384.html) (ReadWriteThink) (W.6.8)

Note: Students explore online resources about Ellis Island, interview an immigrant in the area, and publish their stories.

[Faith Ringgold was born on October 8, 1930](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/calendar-activities/faith-ringgold-born-october-20680.html) (ReadWriteThink) (W.6.9a,b)

Note: Students use Ringgold's books as a springboard for a discussion of race, gender, and civil rights and then write and illustrate original picture books on these topics.

*Song and Poetry Analysis Tools (Library of Congress) (RI.6.7)*

Find out what it means to come to the United States as an immigrant from the early 20th century through the early 21st century.

[Thinking About Songs as Historical Artifacts](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/lyrical/tools/docs/songs.pdf) (Library of Congress) (RI.6.8)

[Thinking About Poems as Historical Artifacts](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/lyrical/tools/docs/poems.pdf) (Library of Congress) (RI.6.8)

Note: These two analysis tools can help your students learn to think like historians. By examining songs and poems as historical artifacts, students can explore the unique artistic characteristics of these creative works, as well as discover what they can tell us about life in America’s past.

“[Gateway to Dreams: An Ellis Island/Immigration WebQuest for Upper Elementary Grades](http://www.todaysteacher.com/EllisIslandWebQuest/GatewayToDreams.htm)” (Today’s Teacher)

Note: This is a WebQuest for upper elementary grades on Immigration, but would provide a good starting place for students with no background knowledge on this topic.

Phillip Lopate, “[Immigrant Fiction: Exploring an American Identity](http://www.gilderlehrman.org/historynow/03_2005/historian2.php)” (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)

[Pearl S. Buck: “On Discovering America” Reading Questions](http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson_images/lesson736/discovering736.pdf) (National Endowment for the Humanities)

“[The Peopling of America](http://www.ellisisland.org/immexp/wseix_4_3.asp)” (Timeline of American immigration) (The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc.)

“Angel Island: Immigrant Journeys of Chinese-Americans” (Angel-Island.Com, An Oral History of Chinese Immigrant Detainees, Lydia Lum)

[Immigration History Research Center](http://www.ihrc.umn.edu/) (University of Minnesota)

[Photographs from Ellis Island](http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/070_immi.html) (Library of Congress)

[*New Americans Series, Cultural Riches*](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans/culturalriches.html)  (PBS)

Note: When immigrants and refugees leave their homelands, they take with them a way of life, and rich customs and traditions sometimes become part of the cultural fabric in their new countries. Over time, America has soaked up the cultures of its immigrant populations and has spun them into a uniquely American tapestry.

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**Terminology**

* + - epilogue
    - legacy
    - lore
    - realism
    - traditional literature

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