
Does Immigration Hurt the Economy?

Segment Length: 2:18 minutes; 2:20 minutes

Videos:

“The High Cost of Illegal Immigration”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8ILU7XjcWc>

“Immigration Myths Debunked”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtRmS7q9DIM>

Guide:

The questions below will help students achieve a better understanding of the arguments made on either side of a contentious topic. Because these questions often touch upon statements made briefly in the videos, we recommend reading the questions before watching each video.

Students are encouraged to take notes during the videos, and it may be helpful for students to break into groups, each taking responsibility for only a few questions, before coming together for discussion.

Analysis Questions:

1. The first video claims that immigrants limit the job opportunities and incomes of native-born Americans. What’s the argument that immigrant labor could cause these effects?
2. Ben Powell argues that the net effect of immigration on the American economy is positive. Use his other remarks in the video to construct an argument as to how immigrants could improve the economy.
3. What is the fallacy of the seen and the unseen? How does it relate to whether immigrants steal jobs? How exactly does immigration cause the unseen effect Ben Powell mentions?
4. Ben Powell tells us that immigrants have a different set of skills than most Americans. How so? How might legal and illegal immigration play into the point Powell makes?
5. The first video says businesses that do not employ illegal (or undocumented) immigrants are at a disadvantage when competing with businesses that do employ illegal (or undocumented) immigrants. Why would this be true?
6. Ben Powell says immigrants make native-born Americans more productive. Why would this be the case?
7. Immigrants who entered the country illegally cost the federal government billions of dollars more than they paid in taxes, according to the first video. How might Ben Powell respond?

8. The first video claims that immigrants who come illegally are often paid less than American citizens and make working conditions worse for everyone. Why might these immigrants be paid less? How could their lower wages affect working conditions?
9. Ben Powell admits that Americans without a high school diploma may see their wages depressed by immigrant labor – albeit to a small degree. How would someone who favors more restrictive immigration policy respond to this? Using Powell’s other comments, discuss why, despite this concession, he still favors a more open immigration policy.