
The Immigration Debate

Videos:

“America’s Biggest Issue: Immigration”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZHuZUQ0atA>

(4:43 minutes)

“The 5 Best Arguments Against Immigration—and Why They're WRONG”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9w1DeNrZYLE>

(4:16 minutes)

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. What are the opposing ideas in these two videos?
2. Should one of the arguments we heard carry more weight than the other? If so, which one? Why?
3. In Reason’s video, Nick Gillespie said, “Immigrants make things cheaper for all Americans....” Why is this?
4. In the Heritage Foundation’s video, Genevieve Wood said that the United States allows more immigrants per year than any other country in the world. Did this come as a surprise to you? Why/Why not?
5. Nick Gillespie said, “In the developed world, there is no correlation between unemployment and immigration rates.” Were you surprised to learn this? Why/Why not?
6. Genevieve Wood said, “Individuals who are not citizens do not have a right to American citizenship without the consent of the American people.” Do you agree with this? Do the American people need to consent in order for immigrants to enter the country? Why/Why not?
7. Nick Gillespie said one of the common arguments against immigration is that immigrants are a drain on the welfare system. Have you heard that argument before? Were you surprised by the data Nick Gillespie shared on this topic?
8. Genevieve Wood said, “A disorganized and chaotic immigration system encourages people to go around the law.” What did she mean by this?

9. Nick Gillespie said that immigrants—including undocumented immigrants—pay taxes, and that “if we want unauthorized immigrants to contribute more in taxes, the best way to accomplish that is to change their legal status.” What did he mean by this?
10. Genevieve Wood argued that “patriotic assimilation” is essential to immigration. What is patriotic assimilation?
11. Nick Gillespie argued that for many people, the legal immigration process is not a realistic option. Does this justify illegal immigration? Why/Why not?
12. Genevieve Wood said, “[W]e all must understand and embrace a common language, history, and civic culture.” What did she mean by this? Should this standard apply to natural citizens as well as immigrants? Why/Why not?
13. Genevieve Wood said, “Failure to enforce our immigration laws is unfair to those who obey the laws and follow the rules to enter our country legally.” What did she mean by this? Do you agree with her statement?
14. Nick Gillespie said one of the common arguments against immigration is that it can lead to “cultural destruction.” What is “cultural destruction”? How do we define “American culture”? How have immigrants influenced America’s culture throughout its history?
15. Genevieve Wood said U.S. immigration policy should be a “merit-based system.” Is it fair to only allow in highly skilled immigrants? Why/Why not?
16. Hear more thoughts on this topic in another entry in our Both Sides of the Issue series, “Jobs and Open Borders”: <https://stosselintheclassroom.org/both-sides-jobs-and-open-borders/>
17. Did you have an opinion on the topic of immigration before watching these videos? If so, what was it? Has your opinion changed? If so, how? What did you learn from these videos that affects your views on this topic?
18. What else would you like to learn about immigration?