

## Immigration Reflection Guide

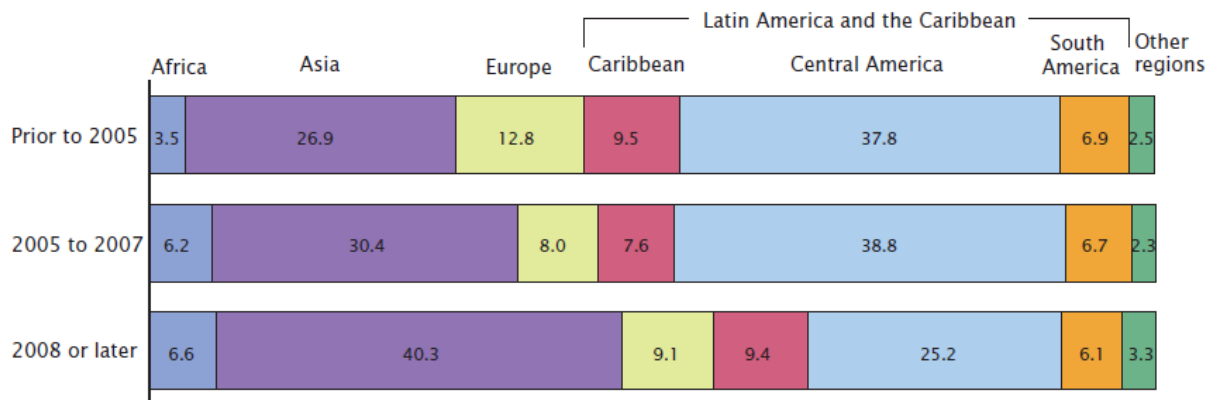
### Statistics:

- Immigrants (foreign-born) make up 5.8 percent of the population in Michigan.
- Undocumented Immigrants make up 1.4 percent of the state's total population or 1.7 percent of the labor force.
- Michigan would lose over \$3.8 billion in economic activity by removing undocumented workers from the labor force.
- The personal income of all undocumented workers in Michigan accounts for over \$1 billion in taxable income for the state.
- In 2010 there were 1,042,625 immigrants that obtained permanent resident status.
  - 95,379 from Europe
  - 410,209 from Asia
  - 43,597 from Central America
  - 85,789 from South America
  - 98,246 from Africa
- In 2010 there were 73, 293 refugees that arrived in the United States.

Figure 1.

### Foreign-Born Population by Period of Entry and World Region of Birth: 2010

(Percent distribution. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/))



Note: "Other regions" includes Northern America and Oceania.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey.

## Resources:

- What words come to mind when you see this picture?



- What do you know about the history of the United States and Mexico?
- Should Immigration Reform be handled in a different way because of this history?
- Is protesting the only way to bring about change? What else could we do to bring about change in the immigration system?
- 22% of deportees have U.S. born children—USA Today
  - <http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/story/2012-04-05/deportations-immigration-report-parents/54040378/1>
- Top Three Myths about Immigration
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtRmS7q9DIM>
- Immigration has been occurring for years
  - <http://apps.detnews.com/apps/history/index.php?id=109>
- Arizona Businesses Brace for Pain Over Immigration Ruling
  - <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-04-27/arizona-businesses-brace-for-pain-over-immigration-ruling.html>
  - Are harsh immigration laws beneficial for states? For Arizona in particular?
  - What else could be affected in the state if immigrants decided to leave because of these policies besides the economy?
- Fixing the Immigration System for America's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Economy
  - <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/fixing-immigration-system-america-s-21st-century-economy>
  - What is currently wrong with our immigration system?
  - What, in your opinion, needs to change?

- American Dream—Patty E Padgett

**Ancestors came across the waters  
Men, women, sons and daughters  
Ellis Island is where they'd debark  
Record numbers to make their mark  
Immigrants dreamed of no more strife  
Craving the chance for a better life  
Always unsure but determined to cope  
Never turning from their faith and hope  
Denouement unknown, they came ashore  
Reaching their destination, America's door  
Every day was an adventure anew  
As they adjusted to their new milieu  
Many saw their dreams come true**

- What were some of the reasons why the first immigrants traveled to the United States?
- Do you think some of those reasons stand true for immigrants today?

- Illegal Immigrant (satire poetry)

**He crossed the border, wife in hand  
To a place believed the Promised Land  
His home before of dismal hope  
No jobs, no money; he could not cope**

**Across the sand in this new land  
Where life abounds and all is grand  
free Medicine for his family  
made for the cause humanity**

**Men gave their lives unselfishly  
So this new country would be free  
A place where paying jobs abound  
If willingly he'll but work the ground.**

**The residents choose not to toil  
And place their fingers in the soil  
So if he takes a lesser pay,  
American jobs he'll take away**

**A Refugee from stress and strife  
He comes here with hopes of better life**

**This country's people don't complain  
They let his ancestors remain.**

**Documents made for a fee  
pass immigration's scrutiny  
A false ID and license too;  
For a while would see them through**

**Find a job and work the land  
Hot sun would not impede his hand  
A land of opportunity,  
Requiring no responsibility!**

**Without a birth certificate  
No legal passport can he get  
But if a new baby comes to be  
He'll get social security**

**The constitution he has not read  
To their flag he did not pledge  
They'll offer food and work; a brand new life;  
for him, his baby, and his wife.**

**A language he need not learn  
Income tax is no concern  
How great these Americans must be  
To give so much to him for free**

**He'll have a job, a car, a house  
that he can offer to his spouse  
Things he'd never hoped to see  
How great this thing called Liberty**

- Where do these ideas about the United States come from?
- Are any of these “grand” benefits truly a reality for most immigrants?

### **What Now: Resources for Further Engagement**

- Places in Grand Rapids where you could get involved/learn more about immigrant/refugee populations
  - Michigan Organizing Project: <http://miorganizingproject.org/>
  - Cesar Chavez Elementary—Homework House
  - Roosevelt Park Community Christian Reformed Church – ESL program

- Roosevelt Park Ministries
- Woodlawn CRC – ESL program
- Bethany Christian Service – Refugee Services
- Detailed immigration report from 2010 with statistics about immigrants and refugees  
[http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/yearbook/2010/ois\\_yb\\_2010.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/yearbook/2010/ois_yb_2010.pdf)
- Enrique’s Journey
  - Wonderful story written about why people from Central America come to the United States and the journey some endure to get here.
- Movies to watch (Please read ratings and summaries of movies before showing them to large groups. I am not advocating for any of these movies as wholesome/feel-good movies, but they do all deal with themes of immigration in some way.)
  - A Better Life
 

The story of an illegal immigrant from Mexico who comes to the United States with the hope of creating a better life for him and his son. Looks at the many trials they face in their search for “a better life”.
  - Crossing Arizona
 

This is a documentary examining both sides of the Immigration issues in Arizona, including insight into the decisions and events leading up to the present state of conflict and debate. The film gives voice (and face) to those most affected by the immigrant influx on the Arizona/Mexico border including the boarder patrollers themselves (citizens), the farmers who depend on illegal immigrant workers and those that clean up after the masses have passed political activists and humanitarian volunteers. A very human, dirty, raw, moving perspective on this current event.
  - Crossing Over
 

Crossing Over is a multi-character canvas about immigrants of different nationalities struggling to achieve legal status in Los Angeles. The film deals with the border, document fraud, the asylum and green card process, work-site enforcement, naturalization, the office of counter terrorism and the clash of cultures.
  - Dirty Pretty Things
 

A raw drama set in London, narrating the pressures of Nigerian immigrant doctor, Okwe, and his newly-founded friendship with a Turkish maid, Senay, caught up in the mess of black market organ trade in return for U.S. passports. A romantic drama in West End London, a modern urban glimpse of an ugly world of immigrant abuse and oppression.
  - El Norte

Mayan Indian peasants, tired of being thought of as nothing more than "brazos fuertes" ("strong arms", i.e., manual laborers) and organizing in an effort to improve their lot in life, are discovered by the Guatemalan army. After the army destroys their village and family, a brother and sister, teenagers who just barely escaped the massacre, decide they must flee to "El Norte" ("the North", i.e., the USA). After receiving clandestine help from friends and humorous advice from a veteran immigrant on strategies for traveling through Mexico, they make their way by truck, bus and other means to Los Angeles, where they try to make a new life as young, uneducated, and illegal immigrants.

- Spanglish

A woman and her daughter emigrate from Mexico for a better life in America, where they start working for a family where the patriarch is a newly celebrated chef with an insecure wife.

- The Visitor

A slow and quiet romantic drama about a lonely Connecticut University professor named Walter (in the midst of his own life-reflection) who finds a couple of illegal immigrants living in his New York apartment. His life becomes intertwined with that of the troubles and challenges of Tarek, a Syrian musician, and his girlfriend Zainab, a Senegalese street jewelry vendor. The group becomes a strange, gentle and inspiring trio, each gaining trust and strength from the other.

If you have any suggestions or comments on what we can improve, please contact us at [slc@calvin.edu](mailto:slc@calvin.edu) or 616-526-6455.



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