

Teaching Immigration Series

WELCOME TO THE NEW WORLD

By Jake Halpern
& Michael Sloan



Curriculum and Learning Guide

Foreword

By Jake Halpern



Photo by Gregory Halpern

WELCOME TO THE NEW WORLD was a collaboration. I did the reporting and the writing, while my illustrator, Michael Sloan, did the artwork. In many ways, our goal was to reach to a young audience. Kids, basically. For me, this book was meant to be an offering for my two sons. Like so many parents, I am a dad who tells or reads stories to my kids at night. Often, these are fantasy novels or sports tales, the kind of escapist yarns that kids love. Yet in the last few years, as the refugee crisis has worsened, I wanted to find a way to tell them *that* story too, but in a way that was accessible and human. Basically, I wanted my kids to care.

I got my first clue, on how to do this, when I witnessed my older son, Sebastian – who was 11 at the time – read John Lewis’ graphic novel and memoir, *March*. Sebastian devoured the book. It turned him into a passionate student of the Civil Rights Movement. I was inspired.

The real breakthrough came when Michael and I met the Aldabaans, a family of Syrian refugees, who arrived in America on Election Day 2016. We all met for the first time, in Connecticut, just hours after the family arrived. Little did I realize at the time, I would end up shadowing the Aldabaans for the next four years – first to cover their story in the *The New York Times* and later to expand that story into a book.

In writing our book, our first and most important decision was to cast Najji (the family’s teenage son) as the protagonist. We began by telling the story of Najji as a schoolkid in the U.S. Then we did a flashback, to Syria, in order to tell the story of how Najji survived the civil war. This was very deliberate. Basically, we wanted our readers to see Najji first and foremost as a kid, not all that different from so many other American kids.

In order to create this book, I did a lot of reporting. I effectively embedded myself with the Aldabaans. I went to school with the kids, job training sessions with Ibrahim (the dad) and art shows with Adeebah (the mom). I was there for happy moments, when the kids earned high marks on their report cards, and frightening occasions, like when the family received a death threat. We tried to capture all of this in our book.

But did it work? I hope so.

I'll never forget watching my son, Sebastian, reading this comic for the first time. In particular, I remember when he read the scene when the family learns that its house in Syria has been destroyed. At one point, Sebastian looked up and there were tears in his eyes. He got it. This came as a great joy and relief to me.

Whether we like to admit it or not, we are *all* just a war, or a famine, or even a paycheck away from being displaced ourselves. For this reason, it is my sincere hope that this is not a book that is only read in certain vectors, be they "red states" or "blue states." It is often said that the best way to understand refugees – and see them as people – is simply to meet them. So, we invite you to meet this family.

In the pages that follow, the educators at the Immigrant Learning Center's Public Education Institute have created a detailed, thoughtful and (in some cases) proactive guide to discussing our book, *Welcome to the New World*. It is intended to start a conversation – to get kids discussing – perhaps even arguing and disagreeing – and above all *thinking* – about hardship, family and the meaning of home.

About The Immigrant Learning Center

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC) of Malden, MA, is a not-for-profit organization that gives immigrants a voice in three ways. The English Language Program provides free, year-round English classes to immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston to help them become successful workers, parents and community members. The Public Education Institute informs Americans about the economic and social contributions of immigrants in our society, and the Institute for Immigration Research, a joint venture with George Mason University, conducts research on the economic contributions of immigrants. For more information, visit the website <http://www.ilctr.org>. The ILC can also be found on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest.

The Teaching Immigration Series by The Immigrant Learning Center's Public Education Institute equips K-12 and adult educators with the tools they need to integrate immigration into their curriculums, better educate students about historical and current immigration issues, promote the success of immigrant and refugee students, and create more welcoming, inclusive classrooms. We hope that students will be more informed about this important topic in American life, and that they will help make a more just society for all.

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ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- ▶ Why do people leave their homes? What factors affect their decisions?
- ▶ What supports and challenges do people encounter when immigrating to the United States?
- ▶ How do people respond to newcomers?
- ▶ What is the refugee crisis?
- ▶ What is our responsibility toward refugees?
- ▶ How does a graphic narrative effectively tell a story?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

History / Social Studies and Reading: Literature

Grade: 7 - 11 (adapt as necessary)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1](#)

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2](#)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3](#)

Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5](#)

Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9](#)

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1](#)

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3](#)

Analyze how complex characters (e.g. those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5](#)

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g. parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g. pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension or surprise.

Using This Curriculum

This curriculum was designed for use by educators and students in social studies, English Language Arts, world history or current events classes in upper middle and high school, to accompany *Welcome to the New World* by Jake Halpern and Michael Sloan, based on their Pulitzer-Prize winning editorial cartoon of the same name published in *The New York Times*. Each of the nine lessons is designed to be completed in a class period of 45-60 minutes, but the lessons are flexible and adaptable enough to be used in any setting and schedule.

Teachers are encouraged to integrate this unit into their existing curriculum, using or emphasizing any parts that fit best. If students have already studied immigration or the war in Syria, teachers may choose to skip or move more quickly through those parts of the unit. If this is students' first introduction to some of these topics and there is additional time in the calendar, teachers may choose to use supplemental materials to extend the learning mid-unit. Each lesson concludes with a "Going deeper" section that includes additional resources to explore on the topic or ideas for ways to continue learning from the activities of the day. Additionally, several suggestions for extending learning are listed after the last lesson, and teachers are encouraged to use one or more of these as a final learning experience.

Use of this curriculum requires student copies of the book *Welcome to the New World*. Every day or two, students will read one chapter independently. For each chapter, a short list of questions is provided. These questions are presented as a handout that may be given to students as homework or classwork, or questions may be selected and used in group discussion. Some questions focus on guiding students' comprehension, while others require more in-depth connection and reflection, and could also be used as short writing assignments. The design of the unit has students reading the chapters on their own, but teachers may also choose to give students time in class to read and/or discuss each chapter. Additionally, the "Educator notes" for each lesson following a chapter reading includes suggestions for more in-depth points of discussion (including some that overlap with homework questions) for teachers to use or incorporate as they wish.

Welcome to the New World, as a work of graphic journalism, is a true story. The author is a journalist who spent years with the Aldabaan family to document their experiences. The methodology section in the book explains more about this process.

Welcome to the New World Is Divided Into Five Chapters

- 1** In Chapter 1, we meet the Aldabaan family (parents Ibrahim and Adeebah, school-age children Naji and Amal, and three younger children) as refugees in Jordan. They receive news that they are approved to travel to Connecticut, and they make the difficult decision to leave extended family behind and take their chances in the United States.
- 2** Chapter 2 finds the family learning their new surroundings in a house in New Haven, Connecticut. Their sponsors help them through the complicated process of getting settled in the United States, while Naji and Amal adjust to school in America.
- 3** In Chapter 3, the family continues to settle in, figuring out unfamiliar aspects of American culture and finding allies in neighbors and fellow students. This chapter ends with a threatening phone call that interrupts the family's growing sense of stability.
- 4** Chapter 4 is a flashback to Syria. The family's hometown of Homs, Syria, is experiencing significant violence. Ibrahim is arrested, held and mistreated, and Adeebah manages to navigate a dysfunctional and unstable government system to get him out. This chapter ends with the painful decision to leave their house in Syria.
- 5** In Chapter 5, the family is staying in a motel in Connecticut trying to figure out where they will go next. They are contacted by an independent "fixer" who helps them find a new home and new sponsors. Everyone is able to settle in and find some measure of stability and personal growth. They also receive word from neighbors back in Homs that their house has been destroyed, and they can never go back to their old life.

Before Beginning This Curriculum

- ▶ Read this curriculum from beginning to end before starting to get a better understanding of how all the learning activities build on each other and what adjustments can be made to better fit this unit into your existing curriculum.
- ▶ Read the "Educator notes" in each lesson. These give an overview of the lesson, things to consider and strategies for adapting the lesson for your class.
- ▶ Consider the makeup and community context of your class. This unit is designed to build understanding and empathy for refugees and the refugee crisis. If you have refugee and/or Syrian students in your class, prepare or adapt any of the materials as you see fit. Consider meeting with these students outside of class time to preview lesson contents with them, especially any that may potentially bring up traumatic memories. This also may be a moment in which they want to talk about their experiences. Both possibilities should be considered carefully.
- ▶ Discuss with all students beforehand the importance of engaging respectfully and sensitively with this material. If you do have refugee and/or Syrian students in your class, assure them that they will never have to talk about anything they do not wish to.

LESSON 1: MIGRATION AS A HUMAN STORY

OBJECTIVES

- Students will reflect on personal experiences of migration and/or being a newcomer.
- Student will understand key vocabulary for the unit:
 - Asylum
 - Asylee
 - Migrant
 - Emigrate
 - Immigrant
 - Immigrate
 - Persecution
 - Refugee
 - Resettlement

EDUCATOR NOTES

The opening of this lesson encourages students to connect personally with migration, which lays a key foundation for seeing themselves in the human story of migration. Students may not have an obvious major move in their personal histories, but push them to consider events on a smaller scale (e.g. a move down the street) or generations back. They may also need support thinking about possible “newcomer” scenarios in their daily lives, but all students should have something to contribute.

The second part of the lesson, an introduction to “push” and “pull” factors of migration and key vocabulary, may vary depending on whether and how your class has already engaged with the topic of immigration. The definitions for “asylum” and “asylee” are included here as students are likely to encounter those terms, but the characters in *Welcome to the New World* do not request asylum. The resource “Explainer: Migration” can help clarify the concepts of refugee and asylum if needed.

The research portion can also be completed during class time.

MATERIALS

- Handout: Newcomer Experience
- Handout: Refugees Worldwide

ACTIVITIES

Opening. Give students a few minutes to respond in writing to two prompts:

1. Describe a time when you were a newcomer (to a new school, club, summer camp, town, etc.).
2. Describe a time when you, your family or other relatives undertook a major move (i.e. to a new city, state or country).

Discussion. This can be done in pairs or small groups, or using a protocol like [Inside/Outside Circles](#) to get students moving and talking to others. For each prompt, give students 30 seconds or so to think in silence, and then about one minute each to respond.

Afterward, come together as a class to share out some answers and find common themes.

- ▶ Describe a time when you were a newcomer.
- ▶ What was challenging about being a newcomer?
- ▶ When did you no longer feel like a newcomer? Who or what helped you adjust?
- ▶ Have you ever welcomed a newcomer? What did you do to welcome or help them?
- ▶ Describe a time when you, your family or other relatives undertook a major move.
- ▶ Why did you or your family make this move?
- ▶ What was challenging about this move?

Tell students: All of these stories from your families are stories of migration. Everyone, at some point in their ancestry, has a story of migration.

If this is new content for students, this is a good opportunity to show them a video like this one: [Map Shows How Humans Have Migrated Across the Globe](#).

Continue. Migration is a human story. And every one of us individually, at some point in our lives, has known what it's like to be a newcomer. Over the next two weeks, we'll be reading the story of a family who migrates from their country to the United States, and we'll think about what it's like to migrate and be a newcomer in the United States today.

Push and pull factors. As a class, create a list (on the board or chart paper) of as many reasons as possible that people migrate. If they run out, prompt them to think of things that *push* people to move away from their homes as well as *pull* people to move somewhere else. Think about all moves, from down the street to halfway across the world. When all ideas have been listed, circle any push factors having to do with war, natural disaster or persecution. Explain to students that all people who move to other countries are known as immigrants, and people who are forced to leave their country for specifically these and related reasons (i.e. safety) are called refugees.

Introduce vocabulary (if students are not already familiar).

- ▶ Asylee: a person who is seeking or has been granted asylum
- ▶ Asylum: a protection granted to a person who meets the definition of "refugee" and is either already in the United States or at the U.S. border
- ▶ *Emigrate*: to leave one's home country to settle in another
- ▶ *Immigrate*: to come live permanently in another country
- ▶ Immigrant: a person who migrates into another country (for any reason)
- ▶ Migrant: a person who moves from one place to another
- ▶ Persecution: the act of pursuing with harassing or oppressive treatment, especially because of religious or political beliefs, ethnic or racial origin, gender identity, or sexual orientation
- ▶ Refugee: a person who is forced to flee their home due to war, natural disaster or persecution (reference the reasons circled on the list)
- ▶ Resettlement: moving people to a new place to live

Homework. For homework, or in class if time allows, students should conduct some preliminary research. Ask students to come to class tomorrow having learned about one modern or historical example of refugees anywhere in the world. They can talk to adults at home, do some online research from a reputable news source, interview someone, etc.

- ▶ Give students the chart “Refugees Worldwide” and have them fill in the first row for homework with what they learned, bringing it back to complete in class tomorrow. (Alternatively, you could choose to have students fill in as many rows as they can or wish to, with a minimum of one.) Consider telling students that Syria is off the table (because that will be the first online search result). Let them know that as a class you are looking for broad distribution of location, time period and reasons for fleeing the country.
- ▶ If students will be conducting online research, consider brainstorming with them a short list of reliable news sources. Guide students toward national newspapers (*The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*), broadcast news (BBC, NPR, PBS) or other sources students may be familiar with using in school. A number of these organizations have sites for high school students, including [PBS Newshour Extra](#), [CNN 10](#) and [NBC News Learn](#).

GOING DEEPER

For a more involved way to engage with these concepts, the [Stories of Human Migration](#) curriculum from [Out of Eden Learn](#) is a free learning experience offered via an online platform with a new activity posted every other week for eight weeks while the program runs. For students interested in African American migration, the [New York Public Library](#) has made available online lesson plans and primary source documents including maps, texts and images. Using a variety of activities and media, students explore stories of human migration and reflect on their own relationship to the topic.

Explainer: Migration

This student-friendly infographic from Facing History and Ourselves displays information on migration of forcibly displaced people around the world.

OTHER RESOURCES: [The refugees Americans have fought against over 200 years](#)

(*The Washington Post*, November 2015)

This article includes an overview, with visuals, of many of the refugee populations that have arrived amid mixed sentiment in the United States since the 19th century.

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

Refugees Worldwide

For homework, you learned about one modern or historical example of a refugee situation. Fill in the first row(s) of the chart with what you learned.

Refugees' home country	Time period	What caused them to flee?

LESSON 2: THE REFUGEE CRISIS

OBJECTIVES

- Students will understand why the global refugee situation is considered a crisis
- Students will be familiar with recent U.S. policy regarding refugee resettlement.

EDUCATOR NOTES

This lesson is intended as a brief introduction to the global refugee crisis. See “Going deeper” for suggestions on ways to expand learning here if you would like to devote more time to this important facet of global affairs and human rights. In this curriculum, lessons 4 and 5 will introduce immigration specifically to the United States, and lessons 7 and 8 will give students more background on the war in Syria.

Note: This lesson draws partially from the Facing History and Ourselves lesson [Understanding the Global Refugee Crisis](#).

MATERIALS

Video: [An Overview of the Refugee Crisis](#)

Image: [Za’atri Refugee Camp in Jordan](#)

Copies of article: [Canada now leads the world in refugee resettlement, surpassing U.S.](#)

Handout: U.S. Refugee Resettlement 3-2-1

ACTIVITIES

Opening. Have students take out the “Refugees Worldwide” chart in which they filled in the first row for homework with one modern or historical example of refugees. During a class share-out, students should continue to fill in the chart with information on other countries. If possible, display a world map and point out the various countries while students volunteer to share what they learned. For each country, ask students why the refugees were/are fleeing that country.

Give context. Tell students that in 2019, more than 70 million people (more than the population of Texas and California combined) were displaced from their homes as a result of wars, persecution or severe economic difficulties. Figuring out how to respond to this many displaced people and the problems that forced them from their homes has been a global crisis. Share the following resources with the class in order to give students a glimpse of the scale and consequences of this crisis:

- ▶ Have students watch the video clip [An Overview of the Refugee Crisis](#).
- ▶ Show students the [image of Za’atri Refugee Camp in Jordan](#), near the Syrian border. When you share this image, tell students that in November 2019, according to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), 76,000 people lived there. All of them fled across the border from Syria to escape the brutal civil war. According to the UNHCR, 5.6 million people have been displaced outside Syria since its civil war began in 2011.

Tell students: As then United Nations Ambassador Samantha Power mentioned in the video, the situation in Syria is considered by many to be the biggest modern refugee crisis, displacing the most people worldwide. The graphic narrative you'll begin reading tonight for homework is a true story following one family's journey from their home in Syria to become refugees in the United States.

Before students start reading *Welcome to the New World*, it's important that they are familiar with recent developments in U.S. policy regarding refugees. Distribute the Pew Research Center Fact Tank article [Canada now leads the world in refugee resettlement, surpassing U.S.](#) Give students time to work independently or in pairs to read the article and complete the 3-2-1:

- ▶ Three facts about U.S. refugee resettlement
- ▶ Two ways U.S. refugee resettlement compares to other countries in the world
- ▶ One question you have about U.S. refugee resettlement

Homework. Distribute copies of *Welcome to the New World*. Homework tonight is to read Chapter 1 and meet the Aldabaan family.

GOING DEEPER

The Facing History and Ourselves lesson [Understanding the Global Refugee Crisis](#), from which some materials in this lesson are borrowed, includes more video clips from Ambassador Samantha Power and invites students to consider the value of looking critically at historical moments, in particular, the case of the *St. Louis*, a ship that carried Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution across the Atlantic in 1939, and recognizing in them implications for our choices today.

The lesson plan [We Were Strangers Too: Learning about Refugees through Art](#) from the Anti-Defamation League provides an opportunity for students to view and analyze related artwork produced by artists all over the world to deepen their understanding of the refugee crisis and promote empathy for what it means to be a “stranger.”

OTHER RESOURCES

[The plight of refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs around the globe](#) (National Geographic, March 2019). This article, adapted by Newsela to include several reading levels and quiz questions, includes definitions, history and current status of these three groups.

[Key facts about refugees to the U.S.](#) (Pew Research Center, October 2019)

[Refugees and Asylees in the United States](#) (Migration Policy Institute, June 2019)

Using the most recent data available, this spotlight examines characteristics of the U.S. refugee and asylee populations including top countries of origin, top states for resettled refugees, and numbers of refugees and asylees who have become lawful permanent residents.

[What is the Refugee Program and Why Does the Trump Administration Want to Make Cuts?](#) (The New York Times, September 2019)

[Trump Slashes Refugee Cap to 18,000, Curtailing U.S. Role as Haven](#) (The New York Times, September 2019)

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

U.S. Refugee Resettlement 3-2-1

After reading the article *Canada now leads the world in refugee resettlement, surpassing U.S.* fill in the following information:

Three facts about U.S. refugee resettlement

Two ways U.S. refugee resettlement compares to other countries in the world

One question you have about U.S. refugee resettlement

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

Welcome to the New World Chapter 1

1. What is the disagreement between Naji and his father? Why does each of them feel the way he does?

2. How are Naji and his sister each envisioning life in America?

3. What conflicting thoughts and emotions is each of the family members experiencing in the airport and at takeoff?

4. Why did the artist use a full-page image on page 18?

5. How did the 2016 United States election affect the family in this chapter?

LESSON 3: GRAPHIC NARRATIVES AS LITERATURE; CLOSE READ FROM CHAPTER 1

OBJECTIVES

- Students will understand the basic elements of a graphic narrative.
- Students will be able to differentiate between scene and summary writing.
- Students will re-read closely and analyze a page from *Welcome to the New World*.

EDUCATOR NOTES

This lesson may be adapted depending on students' familiarity with graphic narratives. The close reading protocol introduced today will be used twice more during the unit. For this and the close reads that follow, be sure to give students time individually and in discussion to dig into the text and visual elements. Students' observations and perspectives (e.g. line of sight) can create valuable points of comparison. Push students to consider the choices of both the author and the artist and how they influence the scene as a whole.

Chapter 1 Discussion:

- ▶ How do age and generation affect each family member's feelings about leaving? Analyze Ibrahim and Naji's different opinions on whether or not to leave Jordan at the beginning of the chapter. Consider assigning each student one of the characters and asking them to role-play or write a short journal entry on the character's feelings about leaving Jordan for the United States.
- ▶ How does gender affect each family member's feelings about leaving? Think about Ibrahim versus Abeedah, and Naji versus his sister. What unique concerns do each of them have?

MATERIALS

- Handout: Venn Diagram: Comparing Graphic Narratives and Conventional Narratives
- Copies of page 12 and page 15 of *Welcome to the New World*
- Handout: Graphic Narrative Close Reading Protocol

ACTIVITIES

Opening. Now that students have begun to read *Welcome to the New World*, ask them to compare and contrast graphic narratives and conventional (i.e. text-only) narratives using a Venn diagram. Students should work independently for a few minutes and then discuss as a class. Let students know that although there are elements of a conventional narrative that are absent or different in graphic narratives, in this unit we'll learn to critically analyze a graphic narrative's unique approach to storytelling.

Elements of a graphic narrative. Ask students to open to page 15 in their books, and if possible, display on a projector.

- ▶ Each page in a graphic narrative is composed of one or more **panels**, or individual images, that are often rectangular but can be any shape and arrangement. A page is generally read from left to right and top to bottom, but both the artist and the reader have flexibility, unlike in a conventional text. Ask students: How many panels are on this page? What are the various shapes or arrangements of the panels?

- ▶ One important term in graphic narratives is the **gutter**, or the space between panels. This is space where we as the reader have to infer what happens in between images, as there is no action or narration. Ask students: What happens in the gutter between the first two panels on this page?
- ▶ One other element to note is the shape of the **dialogue bubble**. Each dialogue bubble has a straight, continuous line with a pointer (called a “tail”) showing who is talking. The cloud-like bubble is a **thought bubble**, usually with a version of a tail to show who is thinking. There are also occasional squared-off narration boxes, usually near the top or bottom of the panel.
- ▶ As time allows, demonstrate these elements on page 13 and ask students to think about the artist’s choices on this page: Why are two of the panels not in boxes? Why is one of the panels in the middle of the page, overlapping the others? Whose point of view is this page mostly from? How can we tell?

Tell students that the final element they’ll examine today is how the passage of time is conveyed in graphic narratives. A series of panels can take up anything from seconds to years in a story. If a series of panels zooms in a few moments, we call this **scene** writing. If it zooms out to give a sense of a lot of time passing or several things happening at once (similar to a montage in film), we call this **summary** writing.

- ▶ Give students a few minutes to re-read this page and the next (pages 15 and 16) to themselves. Which one is scene writing? Which one is summary writing? How can you tell? What purpose does each one serve?

Close reading. Let students know that a few times during this unit they will use a close reading protocol to dig into a single page of this graphic narrative using these concepts, and today they will be practicing that analysis.

- ▶ Distribute copies of page 12 (students may want to flip to this page to read context, but you’ll need one for students to write on) and the close reading protocol. Support students to complete this based on their readiness: work through it as a whole class, or read through and let students attempt on their own, etc.
- ▶ Discuss together, pointing out interesting places of comparison in different students’ experience of the page (e.g. the line of sight, inferring what happened in the gutter, etc.) and how the artist’s choices guide the reader.

GOING DEEPER

Re-imagining Migration’s webinar [Using Graphic Novels to Teach About Migration](#) can give more ideas and information on using this medium. The book *Understanding Comics* by Scott McCloud can also serve as a resource to educators or students.

The lesson [Syrian Refugees: Understanding Stories with Comics](#) from the Choices Program at Brown University also involves students reading and analyzing short comics about Syrian refugees and could be used as a preamble to their study of *Welcome to the New World* to add depth or comparison.

Name _____

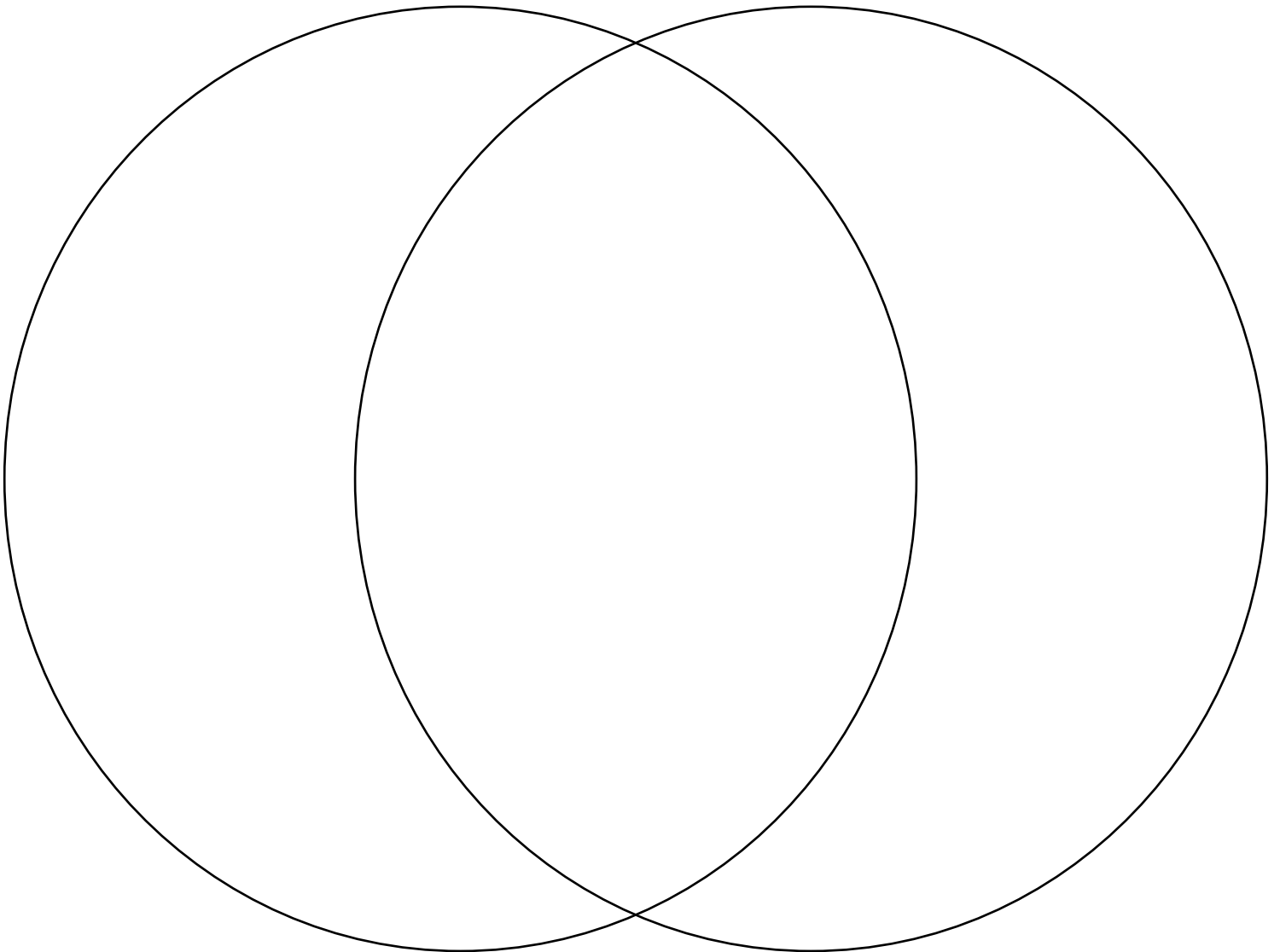
Class _____

Date _____

Venn Diagram: Comparing Graphic Narrative and Conventional Narrative

Graphic Narrative

Conventional Narrative



Welcome to the New World page 15



Welcome to the New World page 12



Graphic Narrative Close Reading Protocol

Before you read

1. Where did your eye go first? Why?
2. Take note of anything interesting about the arrangement (order, shape, size, placement, etc.) of the panels. Notice the location of the gutters.

Marking up the page

1. Read (or re-read) the page for comprehension.
2. Draw your line of sight (how your eye traveled over the page).
3. Mark each character with a number throughout the page. Circle any objects or things.
4. In each gutter, write: What do you think happened in between these panels? What are you thinking as the reader?
5. At the bottom of the page, note how much time you think passed on this page. Is this scene or summary writing?

LESSON 4: IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

OBJECTIVES

- Students will gain a basic understanding of historical migration to the United States, placing their own families and modern trends in context.
- Students will understand basic information about systems of immigration to the United States especially as it applies to the family in *Welcome to the New World*.
- Students will reflect on the potential needs of a family newly arrived in the United States.

EDUCATOR NOTES

This lesson is designed to give students some basic information about U.S. immigration and clarify misconceptions. The article may be challenging for some, and it will be a valuable chance to grapple with a real-life, complex text. Activating prior knowledge (even though some of it may be false) and reading with focus questions will support students to find the information they need.

This discussion should be focused on legal systems of immigration, as in the narrative. If students seem eager to address unauthorized immigration, a subject that often comes with misinformation and high emotions, redirect the conversation and make a plan for how to address this another day. See the Resources section for information and ideas for approaching this subject in the classroom.

MATERIALS

- Handout: Immigration to the United States
- Video: [Animated Map Shows History of Immigration to the US \(3:45\)](#)
- Copies of article: [How the United States Immigration System Works](#)

ACTIVITIES

Opening. Give students a few minutes to write down their thoughts on two questions:

1. Think about your own family's history of immigration.
 - If you have ancestors who are not Native Americans, where did they come from and when did they arrive in the United States?
 - What hardships or challenges do you think they faced as immigrants?
2. What do you know about how people immigrate to the United States today?
3. What do you think a family would need after arriving in the United States for the first time?

Historical Immigration. Show students the video [Animated Map Shows History of Immigration to the US](#). (Consider showing this short video twice to give students a chance to absorb the information.) Allow students to share, if they wish, where their family's immigration history fits into the various time periods shown in the video.

Emphasize for students the extensive history of immigration from all over the world to the United States. People have been coming to the U.S. hoping for a better life since before it was a country, though today the systems regulating immigration are much more complex and constantly changing. Let students know that today they'll read about the legal systems navigated by the Aldabaans and refugees like them to gain entry to the United States.

Discussion. Discuss students' answers to the second question, perhaps making a list on the board of what they know as a class. Let students know that they'll be reading through an article by a prominent legal organization, the [American Immigration Council](#), designed to inform us about these systems. They will be looking to fact-check their own knowledge as well as answer two questions:

- ▶ With what legal status do we think the family in our narrative arrived in the United States?
- ▶ What is the possibility of their extended family joining them from Syria and under what system?

Work time. Give students time to work through the article independently or with partners, highlighting or underlining information that might answer the two questions.

Discussion. Come back together to determine answers to the two questions:

- ▶ With what legal status do we think the family in our narrative arrived in the United States? They likely arrived as refugees, and they will be eligible for legal permanent resident (LPR) status after one year of living in the United States.
- ▶ What is the possibility of their extended family joining them from Syria, and under what system? The other family members may also be granted admission as refugees. Otherwise, Ibrahim would need to become a citizen after some years as an LPR and then sponsor his mother and potentially (but less likely) his brothers.

Use the article to clarify misconceptions and extend understanding about how the U.S. immigration system works. Refer to the collective knowledge from earlier, adjusting and adding to the list. Encourage students to ask questions and reference the article for answers.

Return to the second opening question. At the end of Chapter 1, the family had just arrived for the first time in the United States, where they know no one except their relatives who arrived at the same time as they did. There are some supports in place for refugees, usually a combination of government and non-profit services: there were people waiting for the family to take them to a house where they can live. Besides housing, what else is the family going to need for life in the United States?

- ▶ Using student suggestions, create a list on the board or on chart paper, ideally something that can be referenced over the next few days. Encourage students to reflect on how overwhelming this might feel to a newly arrived family. Ask students to keep this list in mind as they read Chapter 2 tonight for homework.

Homework. Chapter 2

GOING DEEPER

[Infographic: The Screening Process for Refugee Entry into the United States](#)

A visual step-by-step guide, published by the White House, to the rigorous process for refugee entry into the U.S. (November 2015)

[The Great Immigration Debate](#)

This lesson plan from the Bill of Rights Institute will assist students in understanding the challenges faced by elected officials when forming immigration policy. Through research, students will better understand some of these proposed policy solutions and some of the concerns surrounding them. Students will analyze the effectiveness of these proposals and apply their analysis through participation in class discussion and creation of their own plan for an effective immigration policy.

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

Welcome to the New World Chapter 2

1. What elements of the house do the family members find surprising or confusing?
2. Why does Naji stand in the doorway between his parents and siblings? How is this symbolic?
3. What are the concerns of the co-sponsors?
4. How does the family spend their first few weeks in New Haven?
5. What might Mr. G be thinking about Naji's dream house?
6. How do Naji and Amal's expectations of American high school match up with the reality they find?
7. What do Naji and Amal worry about when being taken home by the school resource officer?
8. How does Ibrahim feel about the new volunteer, Ezra?

LESSON 5: ARRIVAL IN THE UNITED STATES; CLOSE READ FROM CHAPTER 2

OBJECTIVES

- Students will reflect on why people choose to help newcomers and learn what supports and services are offered to refugees.
- Students will re-read closely and analyze a page from *Welcome to the New World*.
- Students will consider the concept of integration and the possible responsibilities of various actors to ensure successful integration.

EDUCATOR NOTES

This lesson gives students a chance to think through the perspectives and responsibilities of receiving communities, both in terms of direct support and overall community acceptance of immigrants and refugees. The opening asks students to browse the documents of the actual organization that welcomed the Aldabaan family in Connecticut; if students do not have access to online devices, consider printing some of the materials for a gallery walk and/or printing some copies of the [Co-Sponsorship Manual](#) for students to look through.

It is important for the integration discussion to remain open to all ideas (after all, there are as many criteria for integration as there are countries accepting immigrants) but continue to push student thinking with questions. If students say immigrants must learn the host language, consider asking: In what time frame? Should the government provide classes or do immigrants have to pay for them? What if they can't access or afford classes? Try to keep students from "otherizing" immigrants by flipping their perspective: if they were to move to another country, is that what they would hope to be expected of or provided to them as well?

Chapter 2 Discussion:

- ▶ What is the source of the tension between Naji and Vivian? What is each of their perspectives on Naji's place in the family?
- ▶ Where do you think teenagers outside the United States get ideas about what American schools are like? (The media?) What do you think a foreign-born student might expect out of an American school? How does this match up with the reality of your school, or schools in general?

MATERIALS

- IRIS website and/or materials: <https://www.irisct.org/information-for-co-sponsors/>
- Copies of page 56 of *Welcome to the New World*
- Handout: Graphic Narrative Close Reading Protocol
- Handout: Quite Write: Integration

ACTIVITIES

Opening. Give students a few minutes to browse through the documents on the Integrated Refugee & Immigration Resources website, Information for Co-Sponsors: <https://www.irisct.org/information-for-co-sponsors/>.

Discuss.

- ▶ What did you find? What surprised you? What supports and services does this organization offer refugees?
- ▶ Who are the people helping the family in our narrative? (*The co-sponsors, Lara and Sofia; the drivers; the school staff; the adult English teachers; Ezra.*) Why do all these people choose to help settle refugees, in many cases, on a volunteer basis? What are the concerns expressed by some of these people in private?

Close read. Distribute copies of page 56 (students may want to flip to this page to read context, but you'll need one for students to write on) and the close reading protocol. Students should work on this independently.

- ▶ Discuss together. How do the author and the artist convey the stress that the various characters are under on this page?

Quick Write. Tell students that what is beginning to happen here, for this family and this community, is the process of integration. Display for students this definition (excerpted from [this Migration Policy Institute article](#)):

- ▶ **Integration** is the process by which immigrants become accepted into society, both as individuals and as groups. This definition of integration is deliberately left open, because the particular requirements for acceptance by a receiving society vary greatly. The openness of this definition also reflects the fact that the responsibility for integration rests not with one particular group, but rather with many actors, immigrants themselves, the host government, institutions and receiving communities, to name a few.
- ▶ Ask students to reflect independently in writing for 5-10 minutes. This quick write is part of an ongoing process of developing an understanding of immigration; students should not be concerned about being “right” or “wrong.”
- ▶ What does it mean for immigrants to integrate into a society? What does successful integration look like? What are the responsibilities of the immigrants, the government and the receiving community to ensure successful integration?
- ▶ As time allows, discuss in pairs or as a whole group. Remind students that every country and community that receives immigrants grapples with these questions on every level. We will return to and continue to develop these concepts as we learn more about the family's experience in *Welcome to the New World*.

Homework. Chapter 3

GOING DEEPER

[Refugees Thrive in America](#) (Center for American Progress, November 2018)

Welcome to the New World page 62



Graphic Narrative Close Reading Protocol

Before you read

1. Where did your eye go first? Why?

2. Take note of anything interesting about the arrangement (order, shape, size, placement, etc.) of the panels. Notice the location of the gutters.

Marking up the page

1. Read (or re-read) the page for comprehension.

2. Draw your line of sight (how your eye traveled over the page).

3. Mark each character with a number throughout the page. Circle any objects or things.

4. In each gutter, write: What do you think happened in between these panels? What are you thinking as the reader?

5. At the bottom of the page, note how much time you think passed on this page. Is this scene or summary writing?

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

Welcome to the New World Chapter 3

1. What part of their housing arrangement do the children not understand?
2. Why are Naji and Amal so nervous about praying in school? Do you think this fear is warranted?
3. How would the experience with the hoodie leave Naji feeling?
4. Why is Naji so surprised to see Elanor's emergency bracelet?
5. To what elements of American culture is Amal having trouble adjusting?
6. With which students does Naji end up becoming friendly?
7. What is the purpose of the series of wordless panels on page 83? Is this scene or summary writing?
8. What incident interrupts the family's growing sense of stability? How might this incident trigger memories from the past?

LESSON 6: MIND MIRROR

OBJECTIVES

Students will use the text to create a visual character portrait of one of the main family members in *Welcome to the New World*.

EDUCATOR NOTES

This activity, adapted from Quality Teaching for English Learners, gives students the opportunity to dig into the text while working in a group. This is also a great chance for students who are more visually or artistically inclined to shine. Encourage students to think and discuss deeply about their characters and their motivations, hopes and conflicts (and remember that these are real people!). Before beginning this lesson, give consideration to materials (markers and possibly poster or chart paper), group assignment and character selection.

Chapter 3 Discussion:

- ▶ Dig into Naji's astonishment that Elanor simply has to press a button on her bracelet and help will come. Consider the sense of safety that this affords to many in the United States and how different it must have felt for Naji back in Syria.
 - ▷ Was there a time that you called for help and no one answered? How did it make you feel?
 - ▷ Were you ever let down by an authority figure who was supposed to help you? What did that feel like?
- ▶ Think back to the newcomer experiences you talked about at the beginning of the unit. Can you connect with any of the confusion and anxiety felt by Naji and Amal as they try to navigate this new setting?

MATERIALS

- Handout: Character Traits
- Mind Mirror template (one for each group; either handout or on chart/poster paper)
- Markers
- Handout: Mind Mirror Rubric

ACTIVITIES

Opening. Give students a few minutes to brainstorm character traits of Ibrahim, Naji and Amal.

Give students a chance to share their ideas for each character, being sure to back them up with evidence and examples from the book.

Mind Mirror. Share with students: In groups, you are now going to collaboratively create a “mind mirror” for one character from *Welcome to the New World* that communicates the character’s situation, thoughts, concerns or dilemmas. Your mind mirror should contain:

- ▶ Three quotations from Chapters 1-3
- ▶ Two original phrases
- ▶ One symbols or pictures

The mind mirror should be completed using either the included template or, if you wish, a similar outline drawn on poster paper. Students have flexibility to determine placement of each element inside or around the head shape, and add visual details as they see fit.

Group work. Arrange students into small groups, and either assign them a character or give them the opportunity to discuss and choose a character to explore in more depth.

Support students as they work in groups on their mind mirrors. Guide students to continually self-assess using the project requirements and the rubric.

Debrief/role play. As time allows, students may present their mind mirrors to the class. Alternatively, and in preparation for the homework, you may choose to set students up for a brief role play. In small groups or in one group in front of the class, students should take on the role of each of the main characters and hold a conversation about the threatening phone call received by the family.

Homework. Students will write a short journal entry from their character’s perspective, the evening or day after the family receives the death threat.

GOING DEEPER

You may choose to extend this activity into a short writing assessment in which students make a claim about the character they studied and support it with evidence from the text.

Character Traits

Use the spaces below to brainstorm character traits of each of the following three characters in *Welcome to the New World*.



Ibrahim

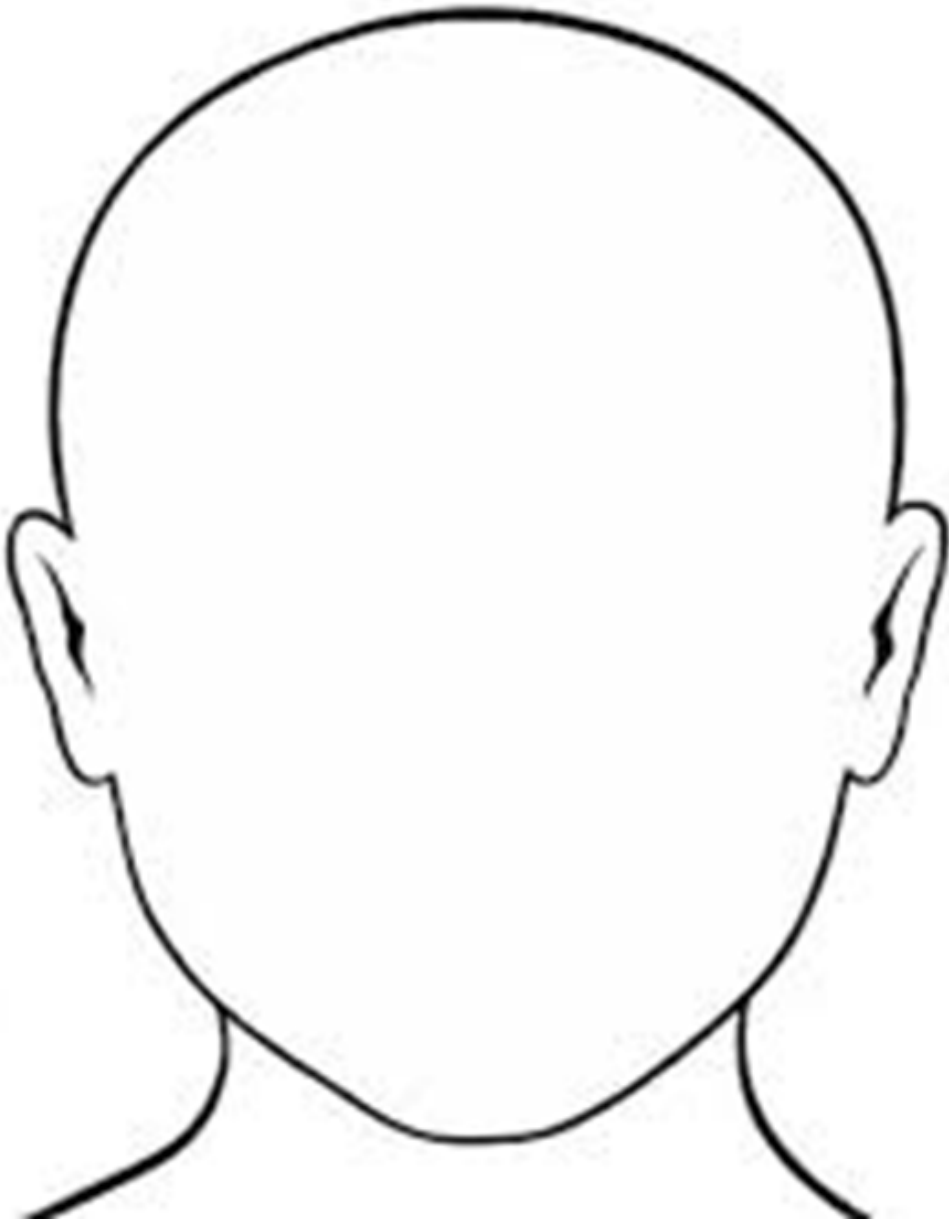


Naji



Amal

Mind Mirror Template



Mind Mirror Rubric

	OUTSTANDING	PASSING	NEEDS REVISION
CONTENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes three or more relevant quotations from the graphic narrative • Includes two or more phrases that synthesize important ideas from the graphic narrative • Includes two or more symbols or drawings that communicate relevant ideas • As a whole, the mind mirror successfully communicates relevant ideas about the character's situation and state of mind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes three quotations from the graphic narrative • Includes two phrases based on the narrative • Includes two symbols or drawings • As a whole, the mind mirror successfully communicates relevant ideas about the character's situation and state of mind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks two or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - quotations - phrases - symbols or drawings • The words and pictures are unrelated to the project idea • The mind mirror does not communicate the character's situation and state of mind
PRESENTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind mirror uses a creative design and creative wording to persuade the viewer of the character's situation and state of mind • Each member of the group contributes to the mind mirror and any verbal presentation • Mind mirror effectively uses color, design, or shading • Product is neat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each member of the group contributes to the mind mirror and any verbal presentation • Mind mirror uses color, design, and shading • Product is neat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or more members of the group has not contributed to the mind mirror or any verbal presentation • Mind mirror does not use color, design or shading • Product is sloppy

LESSON 7: WAR IN SYRIA

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to create a graphic timeline of the war in Syria based on information from an article.

EDUCATOR NOTES

This lesson and the next are designed to give students a basic background about the war in Syria in preparation for reading Chapter 4. Depending on your time and curriculum, this can certainly be expanded. See “Going deeper” for other resources on this topic.

The level of the Newsela article can be adjusted to suit the reading level of your students. You may also choose to give different students different versions of the article. In this case, all students will be able to participate in the activity and any discussion, but it may change whether students are able to read the article in pairs and/or as a whole class.

MATERIALS

- Graphic Timeline: *Welcome to the New World* Chapters 1-3
- Image: Homs, Syria in 2011 and 2014
- Prezi: [Syria: The Basics](#)
- Copies of article: [Why Is There a War in Syria?](#)
- Blank paper

ACTIVITIES

Opening. Distribute copies of the graphic organizer, and give students a few minutes to create a timeline of what has happened in the story so far. Let students know that they should add boxes as necessary, and they may use as many as they need. Debrief, being clear that there is not necessarily a “right” answer as long as all major events are included. Additional information related to each event may be added in or around each box.

Tell students that the fourth chapter in *Welcome to the New World* is actually a **flashback** to the end of the Aldabaan family’s time in Syria and their decision to flee. Before they read this chapter for homework, you will spend time in class today learning some of the background of the war in Syria.

Image. Display the before/after photo of Homs, Syria (the Aldabaan family’s home city). Give students a few moments to absorb and reflect, then ask:

- ▶ What emotions do these photos bring up for you?
- ▶ What do you know about the conflict in Syria?
- ▶ What questions do you have about the conflict in Syria?

Background on Syria. Play for students the Prezi [Syria: The Basics](#) (you may need to create a free Prezi account).

Creating a timeline. Distribute copies of the article [Why Is There a War in Syria?](#) from Newsela. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to read the article, highlighting or underlining major events, and then use the article to create a timeline graphic organizer similar to the one they created for the narrative earlier. (This can be done on blank paper.) Give students the remainder of the period to finish, and let them know that you'll begin the next class by debriefing these timelines.

Homework. Read Chapter 4.

GOING DEEPER

[The Fog of War: Helping Students Make Sense of Syria](#)

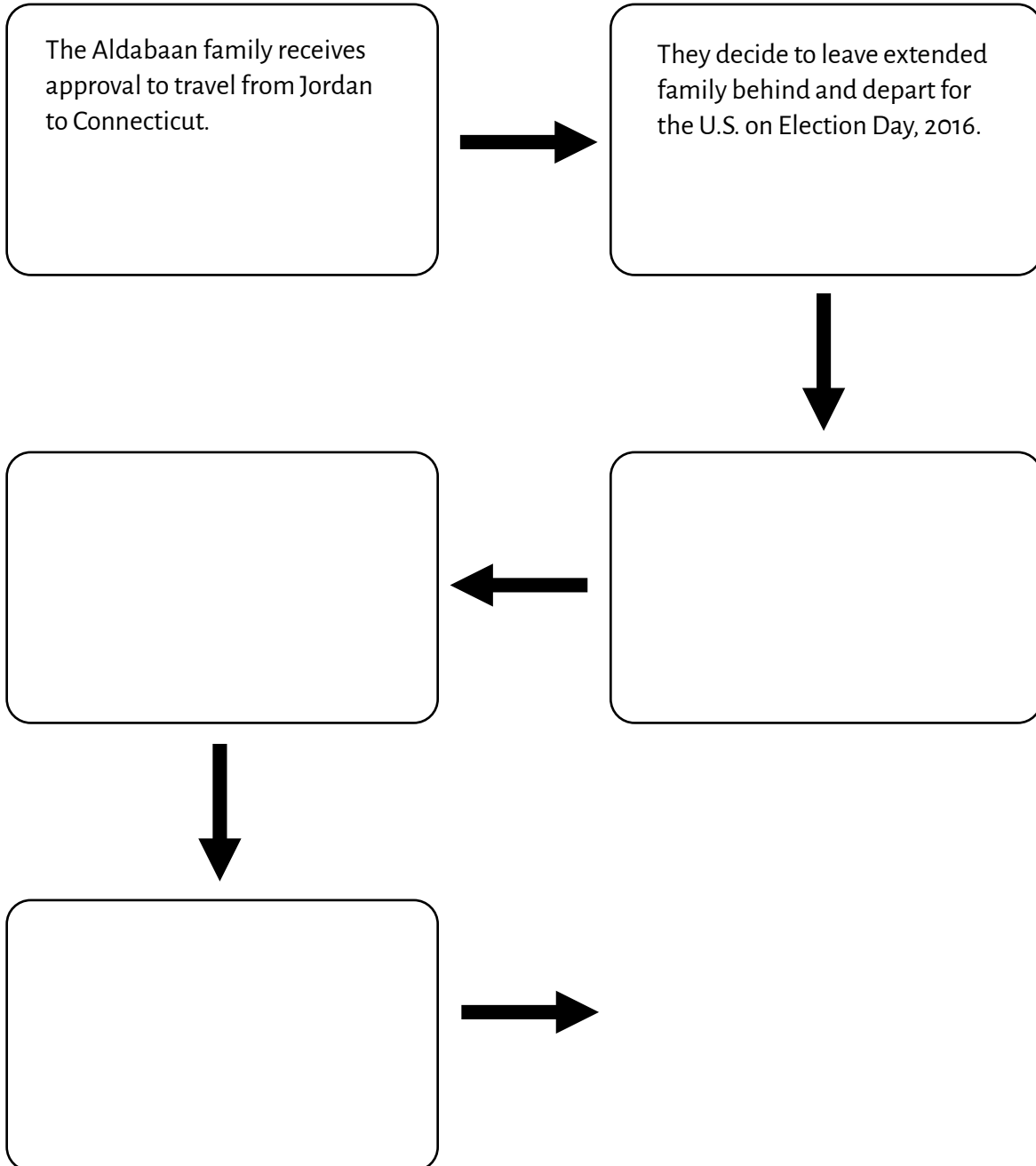
In this *New York Times* lesson, students evaluate firsthand accounts of the war in Syria and make judgments about the role President Bashar al-Assad's government may have played in stoking long-buried sectarian divisions. Extension activities allow students to probe more deeply into the causes of the war; understand efforts by outside governments to resolve it; and learn how individuals are trying to make a positive difference.

[Your Cheat Sheet to the Syrian Conflict](#) (PBS, September 2013)

OTHER RESOURCES

[Country Profile: Syria](#) (International Rescue Committee)

Graphic Timeline: Welcome to the New World Chapters 1-3





Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

Welcome to the New World Chapter 4

1. What happened to Ibrahim's business? What is he doing for work now?
2. What precautions are the rest of the family taking at home while waiting for Ibrahim to return?
3. In what ways does Naji suddenly have to "grow up?" How does this background explain his behavior later, in the United States?
4. Did this flashback to Syria help you better understand the family's situation, emotions, experiences or reactions to their immigration to the United States? How?
5. Why do you think the author chose to present this part of the family's story as a flashback in Chapter 4, instead of chronologically at the beginning of the book?

LESSON 8: WAR IN SYRIA DEBRIEF; CLOSE READ FROM CHAPTER 4

OBJECTIVES

- Students will clarify their understanding of the war in Syria.
- Students will reflect on how the war affects citizens of Syria and their decisions to leave their homes.
- Students will re-read closely and analyze a page from *Welcome to the New World*.

EDUCATOR NOTES

This lesson is the follow-up to Lesson 7, so it may change if you are approaching this content differently to meet the needs of your curriculum.

Chapter 4 Discussion:

- In what ways does Naji suddenly have to “grow up?” What did you think when the grandmother told Naji and his cousin that they had to venture out into the streets to get food? How does learning about his experiences in Syria help us understand his behavior in the United States?
- Why do you think the author chose to present this part of the family’s story as a flashback in Chapter 4, instead of chronologically at the beginning of the book?

Note: Given the school closures due to COVID-19, you could consider bringing up that experience as a window into imagining what it must have felt like to be stuck inside during the war in Syria. Consider asking:

- What did it feel like to be mostly stuck in the house? To not be able to go to school or see your friends?
- Were you or your family worried about not being able to get necessities, like fresh produce or toilet paper?
- How was this experience similar to what Naji and his siblings were feeling? How was Naji’s experience different?

MATERIALS

- Handout: Debrief: War in Syria
- Image: Homs, Syria in 2011 and 2014
- Photo slideshow: [“Syrian Refugees Pour Into Jordan”](#)
- Copy of page 115 of *Welcome to the New World*
- Handout: Graphic Narrative Close Reading Protocol

ACTIVITIES

Opening. Give students a few minutes to respond to the two prompts using the article, their graphic timeline and any other resources.

What do you know about the conflict in Syria?

What do you still want to know or need clarification about?

Timelines. Spend some time debriefing the timelines students created using the article, either by creating a class timeline or displaying a few student examples to discuss. Work to answer student questions and clear up any confusion about the situation in Syria. If possible, display the article to refer to the text and graphics.

Guiding points:

- ▶ What caused the initial uprising? (*Many Syrians were unhappy with the autocratic government of President Bashar al-Assad. Government corruption and a severe drought led to shortages and economic hardship, and people began to protest. The government responded by killing or imprisoning protesters.*)
- ▶ How are the different sects of Islam split in the civil war? (*Sunni Muslims, which make up most of Syria's population, tend to be part of the opposition, while minority Muslim groups support the government. This is true both inside Syria and among neighboring countries.*)
- ▶ What major foreign countries are playing a role in the conflict? (*The United States and its allies are supporting moderate rebel groups against the government. Russia is supporting the government. Both are fighting radical groups such as the Islamic State.*)

Displacement. Display the before/after photo of Homs once more. Ask students to reflect on how these years of conflict might have affected the lives of average citizens. Share with students that, since the war began, **12 million Syrians** have been displaced or been forced to leave their homes, either within or outside Syria. That's more than the population of most U.S. states. This comes to about half the population of pre-war Syria.

You may choose to show students *The New York Times* photo slideshow [Syrian Refugees Pour Into Jordan](#) to put a human face on this refugee crisis.

Ask students: Why would this many people leave their homes? How would a family arrive at this decision?

Remind students that the story of the Aldabaan family is a true story. How did the war affect them? Why did they ultimately decide to leave their homes?

Close read. Distribute copies of page 105 (students may want to flip to this page to read context, but you'll need one for students to write on) and the close reading protocol. Students should work on this independently.

Discuss together: Push students to think about what emotions are present in this page (and chapter) and how the graphic narrative medium attempts to convey these emotions. (For example: How can a static, silent, visual art form convey a scene that is fast and loud? How can it show emotions like panic and overwhelm?)

Homework. Read Chapter 5.

GOING DEEPER

[Examining How the Syrian Crisis Has Shaped the Lives of Young Refugees](#)

In this *New York Times* guest lesson plan by the Global Nomads Group, students will examine the effect of the Syrian crisis on the lives of young people from that country, especially those who are refugees.

[Most Shocking Second a Day Video](#)

This short (1:33) video features a young girl from the U.K. whose life gets turned upside down when she becomes a refugee. This can be an accessible starting point for a valuable discussion on “othering” versus empathizing with refugees. The video is emotional and can be upsetting, so be sure to preview it and be mindful of your students’ backgrounds and experiences.

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

Debrief: War in Syria



1. What do you now know about the conflict in Syria?

2. What do you still want to know or need clarification about?

Welcome to the New World page 115



Graphic Narrative Close Reading Protocol

Before you read

1. Where did your eye go first? Why?
2. Take note of anything interesting about the arrangement (order, shape, size, placement, etc.) of the panels. Notice the location of the gutters.

Marking up the page

1. Read (or re-read) the page for comprehension.
2. Draw your line of sight (how your eye traveled over the page).
3. Mark each character with a number throughout the page. Circle any objects or things.
4. In each gutter, write: What do you think happened in between these panels? What are you thinking as the reader?
5. At the bottom of the page, note how much time you think passed on this page. Is this scene or summary writing?

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

Welcome to the New World Chapter 5

1. Who is Nancy Latif? What does she mean when she says she's "a fixer?"
2. Why do you think the author included the landlord's childhood memories?
3. What social and personal changes are happening for Naji?
4. What message does the family get from their neighbors back in Homs? What emotions does this realization bring up?
5. What happens to de-escalate the fight with the bullies? Did this surprise you?
6. Why do you think the author ended the story the way he did? What do you think of the ending?

LESSON 9: STORIES OF MIGRATION AND REFUGEES

OBJECTIVES

- Students will reflect on our responsibility toward refugees.
- Students will identify sources of anti-refugee sentiment, including false stereotypes about refugees.
- Students will read and reflect on facts about refugee resettlement in the United States.
- Students will synthesize what they have learned in this unit by comparing misconceptions with realities about refugee resettlement.

EDUCATOR NOTES

This final lesson brings together what students have learned about the Aldabaan family's journey, the global refugee crisis and refugee resettlement in the United States. When discussing stereotypes and myths, it's very important to not give too much attention to the myth itself so as not to reinforce it and instead focus on the reality (facts) or source of the myth (e.g. xenophobia). You may choose to share the resource [Predominant Stereotypes About Immigrants Today](#) with students or simply familiarize yourself with it in preparation for guiding the discussion. The lesson ends with a written reflection, which can also be approached as a discussion.

Chapter 5 Discussion:

- ▶ How is working at Dunkin' Donuts a different (and possibly more important) experience for Najji than it might be for an American-born teenager?
- ▶ What might Najji, in particular, be feeling about seeing the video of his home in Syria destroyed? He wanted to come to the United States; how might he feel now that he knows he can never go back?
- ▶ How do the parents' expectations of Najji and Amal supporting each other at school change over time? Who ends up protecting whom? How might this affect their relationship?
- ▶ Why does the author end with the scene at the end, with just Najji and Amal? How is immigration a different experience for adults and kids?

MATERIALS

- Handout: Reflecting on Refugees
- Copies of article: [Ten Facts About U.S. Refugee Resettlement](#)
- Handout: Stories of Migration

ACTIVITIES

Opening. Give students time to write, and then discuss in pairs, small groups or as a class:

- ▶ What is our responsibility as a global community toward refugees?
- ▶ What is our responsibility as local communities toward refugees?
- ▶ How has reading *Welcome to the New World* changed or informed your perspective on refugees in the United States?

Anti-refugee sentiment. Remind students that although many refugees have been successfully settled in the United States and elsewhere, many countries are experiencing anti-refugee sentiments and policymaking, and the U.S. itself has recently drastically cut back numbers of refugees admitted each year. Have students brainstorm: Why would this be happening? What are some reasons people and governments might have for not wanting to welcome refugees?

Students may bring up:

- ▶ Concerns about crime and terrorism (Let students know that refugees are extremely heavily vetted, and evidence shows that immigrants overall are less likely to commit crimes than non-immigrants.)
- ▶ Economic concerns: taking jobs away from Americans, becoming a taxpayer burden, etc. (Let students know that the evidence shows that immigrants overall help the economy, and historically with any economic downturn has come anti-immigrant sentiment.)
- ▶ Concerns about integration: religious or language differences, weakening social bonds and moral values, etc. (These tend to be misplaced and largely xenophobic concerns.)
- ▶ Resource: [Predominant Stereotypes About Immigrants Today](#)

Reading the facts. Distribute to students copies of the Migration Policy Institute fact sheet [Ten Facts About U.S. Refugee Resettlement](#). Give students time to read through, with these directions:

- ▶ Choose one fact that surprised you.
- ▶ Choose one fact that you think people in your community need to hear.

Discuss as a class, and end with a quick write or journal entry: How are the stories of migration people hear from each other, the media and political or community leaders often different from what you've learned from the Aldabaan family's experience and the fact sheet? What would you say to people who have concerns about allowing refugees into the United States?

GOING DEEPER

Classroom Resource: [Television News and Opinions on Immigration](#)

Short article with reflection questions from Re-imagining Migration, based on an NPR podcast (5:12): "Poll: Where You Watch TV News Predicts Your Feelings on Immigration."

If there is time, consider extending the learning from this unit, in the direction that makes the most sense for your class, using one or more of the suggestions in the "Extending Learning" section.

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

Reflecting on Refugees

1. What is our responsibility as a global community toward refugees?

2. What is our responsibility as local communities toward refugees?

3. How has reading *Welcome to the New World* changed or informed your perspective on refugees in the United States?

EXTENDING LEARNING

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Literary analysis: Choose a page, panel or series of panels from *Welcome to the New World* that stuck out to you. Write an analysis of the sequence, including context, tone or emotion, and how the author and artist’s choices convey meaning.

Argument: Do you think *Welcome to the New World* is an effective tool for learning about the Syrian refugee experience? Why or why not?

Character study: Choose one of the individuals in the Aldabaan family and trace their development over the course of the story. Include how their personal attributes and experiences (including age and gender) affect their perspective, any internal conflicts and turning points along the way.

NEWCOMER GRAPHIC STORIES

Returning to the brainstorming and discussion from the first lesson (or taking students through a version of that lesson, if you used a different entry point to the unit), have students choose one newcomer experience from their own lives that they will retell as a comic or “graphic story.”

Give students a simple eight-box blank grid (recommended as a starting point), or let students choose their own flexible layout. They should work independently or with a thought partner to identify the scope of their newcomer scene or story and divide it up into about eight still “moments.” They may want to refer to *Welcome to the New World*, the close reads and the resources from Lesson 3 for ideas.

While they are laying out their story, students should:

- ▶ Consider whether their story will zoom in on a scene or zoom out on a summary
- ▶ Divide up the “action” and remember to plan for thought bubbles as well as dialogue
- ▶ Think about what captions and other elements are needed to support the story

Once they have planned out each panel, students should sketch in pencil first and then go over in ink once they are satisfied. Consider planning a small showcase or otherwise displaying or presenting the finished newcomer graphic stories.

MOVING STORIES: FROM VOICE TO ACTION

This app with its accompanying learning guide from [Re-imagining Migration](#) encourages students to reflect on the power of storytelling and then interview each other about their family’s migration history in a structured experience. This can be a powerful way to build connections among students through sharing and listening, as well as foster a deeper and more personal understanding of human migration.

INTERNATIONAL POLICY AND DECISION-MAKING

Now that students have experienced the effects of the war in Syria through the story of one family immigrating to the United States, give them a chance to dig deeper into the refugee crisis through the lens of current events and international policy. These are two possible extensions:

- [The Conflict in Syria](#), a lesson plan from the Choices Program at Brown University, has students researching and evaluating the international community's perspectives and actions on the war in Syria.
- [Syrian Refugee Crisis Project](#), a lesson plan from the Pulitzer Center, is designed as a two-week capstone project in which students research and present an argument for the number of Syrian refugees they believe the United States should accept.

ACTIVISM

Invite students to brainstorm ways in which they could positively engage with the refugee crisis: by making newcomers feel welcome in their school or community, by supporting local refugee resettlement efforts, by educating others in their immediate or social media communities, or in other ways students come up with. See this article from the Anti-Defamation League for more ideas, [10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism](#). As a class or in smaller groups, support students to make and execute a plan that resonates with them.

RESOURCES

LESSON PLANS

- ▶ [We Were Strangers Too: Learning about Refugees through Art](#)
This lesson plan from the Anti-Defamation League provides an opportunity for students to learn more about the current refugee crisis, view and analyze related artwork produced by artists all over the world, and reflect on the crisis through reading, writing, art, social media and other activities to deepen their understanding of the crisis and promote empathy for what it means to be a “stranger.”
- ▶ [The Fog of War: Helping Students Make Sense of Syria](#)
In this *New York Times* lesson, students evaluate firsthand accounts of the war in Syria and make judgments about the role President Bashar al-Assad’s government may have played in stoking long-standing sectarian divisions. Extension activities allow students to probe more deeply into the causes of the war, understand efforts by outside governments to resolve it and learn how individuals are trying to make a positive difference.
- ▶ [Understanding the Global Refugee Crisis](#)
This lesson from Facing History and Ourselves draws on readings and short videos featuring Samantha Power, United States Ambassador to the United Nations (2013-2017), in conversation with dozens of New York City immigrant students to explain and humanize a crisis that often feels too overwhelming to confront. After surveying the scope and impact of the global refugee crisis, students will come to understand what makes someone a “refugee.” They will then learn how even small ways of seeing the “other” in ourselves can make a difference in our approach to large and complicated problems involving the needs and well-being of people distant from us. The lesson also considers the value of looking critically at historical moments, in particular, the case of the *St. Louis*, a ship that carried Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution across the Atlantic in 1939, and recognizing in them implications for our choices today.
- ▶ [Examining How the Syrian Crisis Has Shaped the Lives of Young Refugees](#)
In this *New York Times* guest lesson plan by the Global Nomads Group, students will examine the effect of the Syrian crisis on the lives of young people from that country, especially those who are refugees.
- ▶ [Community Support for Syrian Refugees](#)
This lesson from the Pulitzer Center focuses on how a journalist reports the story of one community that is working together to support Syrian refugees as they travel to Canada.
· (Explore other [Migration and Refugees lesson plans](#) from the Pulitzer Center.)

▶ **[Syrian Refugee Crisis Project](#)**

In this lesson plan from the Pulitzer Center, students research and make a recommendation for the number of refugees that the United States should accept. They will support their argument with evidence and defend it in a final discussion.

▶ **[Syrian Refugees: Understanding Stories with Comics](#)**

In this lesson from the Choices Program at Brown University, students will read stories of Syrian refugees to learn more about the ongoing civil war and refugee crisis in Syria, analyze how comics reveal the experiences of individuals, and consider how the stories of individuals can inform understanding of a larger political context.

▶ **[The Conflict in Syria](#)**

In this lesson from the Choices Program at Brown University, students will work in groups to research the perspectives of a variety of domestic and international actors on the conflict in Syria, understand the effects of the conflict and the possible risks of escalation, and consider the challenges facing the international community as it weighs its response to the conflict.

▶ **[What is the Danger in a Single Story?](#)**

In this lesson from Teach Immigration, students watch and respond to novelist [Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche's Ted Talk "The Danger of a Single Story."](#) In this 18:39 minute video, she tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice, and she relays the potential risks for misunderstanding a group of people when only a single story is shared as representative of that culture. This film and the corresponding discussion guide can enhance the reading of diverse literature in the classroom and lends itself to a discussion on the benefits of diversity.

▶ **[Stories of Human Migration](#)**

In this curriculum from Project Zero's Out of Eden Learn, students explore stories of human migration and reflect on their own relationship to the topic. Out of Eden Learn's curricula take place in the classroom and online, and are offered for free periodically throughout the year.

· [Learn more about how the Out of Eden Learn program works.](#)

▶ **[ING Lesson Plans on Muslims in America](#)**

These lessons (including "Getting to Know American Muslims and Their Faith," "A History of Muslims in America" and "Muslim Contributions to Civilization") can stand alone or supplement content in social studies and world history.

INFORMATION ABOUT REFUGEES

▶ **[Explainer: Migration](#)**

This student-friendly infographic from Facing History and Ourselves displays information on migration of forcibly displaced people around the world.

▶ **[Teens talk about the hardest part of being a refugee](#)** (video, 3:17)

A group of young adults from The Fugees Academy, a school for low-income refugee children just outside of Atlanta, Georgia, speak about what they imagined the United States would be like before they moved, what their lives are like now and some of the struggles of life as a refugee.

Most Shocking Second a Day (video, 1:33)

This short video features a young girl from the U.K. whose life gets turned upside down when she becomes a refugee. This can be an accessible starting point for a valuable discussion on “othering” versus empathizing with refugees. The video is emotional and can be upsetting, so be sure to preview it and be mindful of your students’ backgrounds and experiences.

- ▶ [Infographic: The Screening Process for Refugee Entry into the United States](#)
This is a visual step-by-step guide, published by the White House, to the rigorous process for refugee entry into the U.S. (November 2015)
- ▶ [The refugees Americans have fought against over 200 years](#) (*The Washington Post*, November 2015)
This article includes an overview, with visuals, of many of the refugee populations that have arrived amid mixed sentiment in the United States since the 19th century.
- ▶ [Refugees and Asylees in the United States](#) (Migration Policy Institute, June 2019)
Using the most recent data available, this spotlight examines characteristics of the U.S. refugee and asylee populations, including top countries of origin, top states for resettled refugees, and numbers of refugees and asylees who have become lawful permanent residents.
- ▶ [The plight of refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs around the globe](#) (National Geographic, March 2019)
This article, adapted by Newsela to include several reading levels and quiz questions, includes definitions, history and current status of these three groups.
- ▶ [What is the Refugee Program and Why Does the Trump Administration Want to Make Cuts?](#) (*The New York Times*, September 2019)
- ▶ [Trump Slashes Refugee Cap to 18,000, Curtailing U.S. Role as Haven](#) (*The New York Times*, September 2019)
- ▶ [Refugees Thrive in America](#) (Center for American Progress, November 2018)
- ▶ [Key facts about refugees to the U.S.](#) (Pew Research Center, October 2019)
- ▶ [Learning from Our Past: The Refugee Experience in the United States](#) (American Immigration Council, November 2015)

INFORMATION ABOUT SYRIA

- ▶ [Your Cheat Sheet to the Syrian Conflict](#) (PBS, September 2013)
- ▶ [Syrian Refugees in the United States](#) (Migration Policy Institute, January 2017)
- ▶ [Country Profile: Syria](#) (International Rescue Committee)

- ▶ [Photo Slideshow: Syrian Refugees Pour Into Jordan](#) (*The New York Times*, September 2012)
- ▶ [Alien World to Help Out Syria Since This One Refuses To](#) (*The Onion*, March 2012)

RESOURCES REGARDING UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

- ▶ [A History of the Undocumented Immigrant](#) (Tenement Museum, November 2013)
- ▶ [The Language of Immigration and Politics](#) (Re-imagining Migration)
- ▶ [With uncertainty surrounding DACA, and anti-immigrant rhetoric on the rise, what should educators do?](#) (Re-imagining Migration)
- ▶ [Why Don't Immigrants Apply for Citizenship?: There Is No Line for Many Unauthorized Immigrants](#) (American Immigration Council)
- ▶ [Did My Family Really Come “Legally?”: Today’s Immigration Laws Created a New Reality](#) (American Immigration Council)
- ▶ [The Great Immigration Debate](#)
This lesson plan from the Bill of Rights Institute will assist students in understanding the challenges faced by elected officials when forming immigration policy. Through research, students will better understand some of these proposed policy solutions and some of the concerns surrounding them. Students will analyze the effectiveness of these proposals and apply their analysis through participation in class discussion and creation of their own plan for an effective immigration policy.

FOR TEACHERS

- ▶ [Webinar: Using Graphic Novels to Teach About Migration](#) (Re-imagining Migration)
- ▶ [Blog Post: How Can Teachers Address the Plight of Refugees in the Classroom?](#) (Teach Immigration)
- ▶ [A Culturally Responsive Guide to Fostering the Inclusion of Immigrant Origin Students](#) (Re-imagining Migration)
- ▶ [Building Welcoming Schools: A Guide for K-12 Educators and After School Providers](#) (WelcomingAmerica)

ORGANIZATIONS AND WEBSITES

- ▶ [The Immigrant Learning Center](#)
The Immigrant Learning Center’s Public Education Institute brings together the most relevant experts and latest research to address the most pressing issues related to U.S. immigration in free, highly engaging, online learning opportunities. Through the year, they offer webinars addressing current issues in immigrant integration, research and education. In the summer, they offer a multi-day online workshop for educators.

- ▶ **[Re-imagining Migration](#)**
Re-imagining Migration’s mission is to ensure that all young people grow up understanding migration as a fundamental characteristic of the human condition in order to develop the knowledge, empathy and mindsets that sustain inclusive and welcoming communities. They provide resources and support for both educational institutions and individual teachers.
- ▶ **[Immigration Resource Library](#)**
Immigration Research and Information is a vital source for research and statistics on immigrants and immigration in the United States. This unique database pools together in one place the spectrum of contemporary information on U.S. immigration. It is drawn from respected universities and research institutions from across the country.
- ▶ **[Out of Eden Learn](#)**
An initiative of Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Out of Eden Learn is a free online program for students aged 3-19. On Out of Eden Learn’s custom built, social media platform, students of similar ages from diverse geographical and socioeconomic settings come together for collective learning experiences.
- ▶ **[Facing History and Ourselves](#)**
Facing History and Ourselves uses lessons of history to challenge teachers and their students to stand up to bigotry and hate. Their resources address racism, antisemitism, and prejudice at pivotal moments in history.
- ▶ **[Teaching Tolerance](#)**
A project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, Teaching Tolerance’s mission is to help teachers and schools educate children and youth to be active participants in a diverse democracy. Their resources center on social justice and an anti-bias approach.
- ▶ **[Anti-Defamation League](#)**
The Anti-Defamation League provides trainings and webinars, anti-bias tools and strategies, lesson plans, discussion guides and more to combat hate and promote respectful schools and communities.
- ▶ **[Art and Remembrance](#)**
Drawing from the fabric art and story of Holocaust survivor Esther Nisenthal Krinitz, Art and Remembrance uses art and personal narrative to connect World War II and the Holocaust to contemporary human migration and human rights issues.
- ▶ **[In Motion: The African American Migration Experience](#)**
In Motion offers primary source documents from the New York Public Library and lesson plans organized around 13 defining African America migrations.