

# *To what extent is it possible to create humane yet restrictive immigration policies?*



Mexico-US border wall at Tijuana, Mexico/Tomas Castelazo/Wikipedia

## **Supporting Questions**

1. To what extent is the US a “nation of immigrants?”
2. To what extent has US immigration policy been humane yet restrictive?
3. What immigration policy issues and challenges does the US face today?
4. What are some potential solutions to the problems posed by immigration?

## High School - Democracy in Danger Series

Is it possible to create humane and restrictive immigration policies?	
<b>C3 Standards</b>	D2.Civ.5.9-12. Evaluate citizens’ and institutions’ effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level.
<b>Staging the Compelling Question</b>	Students will use a SIT protocol as they listen to Democracy in Danger excerpts from “Border of Cruelty.”. Students will share their response to a small group.
<b>Supporting Question 1</b>	<b>Supporting Question 2</b>
To what extent is the United States a “nation of immigrants?”	To what extent has US immigration policy been humane and restrictive?
<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>
Use source dependent questions to analyze the extent to which the United States is a “nation of immigrants.”	Use source dependent questions to identify examples of humane and restrictive US immigration policies.
<b>Featured Sources</b>	<b>Featured Sources</b>
<p><b>Source A:</b> <a href="#">Humane Definition from Webster’s Dictionary</a></p> <p><b>Source B:</b> <a href="#">Restrictive (Restrict) Definition from Webster’s Dictionary</a></p> <p><b>Source C:</b> <a href="#">The New Colossus, Emma Lazarus, 1883</a></p> <p><b>Source D</b> <a href="#">Foreign-Born Population 1850-2010, American Panorama</a></p> <p><b>Source E:</b> <a href="#">Nation of Immigrants Narrative excerpt</a></p>	<p><b>Source F:</b> <a href="#">How US immigration laws and rules have changed over time</a> (Pew Research Center)</p> <p><b>Source G</b> <a href="#">Paradox of Welcoming/Xenophobia excerpt</a></p> <p><b>Source H</b> <a href="#">History of Exclusive Immigration</a> excerpt 1</p> <p><b>Source I</b> <a href="#">History of Exclusive Immigration</a> excerpt 2</p> <p><b>Source J</b> <a href="#">History of Exclusive Immigration</a> excerpt 3</p>
<b>Supporting Question 3</b>	<b>Supporting Question 4</b>
What immigration policy issues and challenges does the US face today?	What are some potential solutions to the issues and challenges posed by immigration and emigration?
<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>
Use source dependent questions to <b>analyze</b> the issues and challenges US policy makers face today.	Use source dependent questions to learn about UN recommendations. Then <b>compose an op-ed essay</b> that answers the question: “Is it possible to create humane and restrictive immigration policies?”
<b>Featured Sources</b>	<b>Featured Source</b>
<p><b>Source K -</b> <a href="#">Global Migration, 2020 WebGIS Map</a></p> <p><b>Source L:</b> <a href="#">5 Things to Know About Obama’s Enforcement of Immigration Laws</a></p> <p><b>Source M:</b> <a href="#">FactBox: Trump Reshaped U.S. Immigration System, Biden wants to Reverse Course</a></p> <p><b>Source N:</b> <a href="#">FactBox: What has Biden done to roll back Trump’s immigration policies</a></p> <p><b>Source O:</b> <a href="#">Congress.gov legislative database</a></p>	<p><b>Source P:</b> <a href="#">Where do we go from here? excerpt</a></p> <p><b>Source Q -</b> <a href="#">Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (United Nations)</a> (Page 5, Section 16)</p>

<p><b>Summative Performance Task</b></p>	<p><b>ARGUMENT:</b> Is it possible to have restrictive and humane immigration policy? Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that evaluates how we address this problem using specific claims and relevant evidence from sources while acknowledging competing views.</p> <p><b>EXTENSION.</b> Review the United Nation’s Global Compact for Safe Orderly, and Regular Migration. What aspects of the compact seem readily do-able? Which proposed actions seem more challenging to implement? How does this compact compare to the policies of Presidents Obama, Trump, and Biden?</p>
<p><b>Taking Informed Action</b></p>	<p><b>UNDERSTAND</b> - Research the types of policies the United States has implemented towards international migration.</p> <p><b>-ASSESS-</b> Is the United States’ migration policies humane and restrictive?</p> <p><b>ACT</b> - Choose a way one might improve United States immigration policy in a way that is humane, yet restrictive.</p>

## Overview

### Inquiry Description

This inquiry leads students through an investigation of historical and contemporary US immigration policy and how the policies stack up against the idea that United States is a “nation of immigrants.” It is part of a series of lessons commissioned by the Democracy Project at the University of Virginia centered around the podcast *Democracy in Danger*. *Democracy in Danger* lessons share some basic characteristics. The compelling question will always start with the stem-- “What should we do about .. because that is [an essential question](#) we must ask of all of our citizens. In this case, the issue at hand is the United States’ response to international migration, asylum seekers, refugees, and undocumented migrants living within its borders. Additionally, *Democracy in Danger lessons* will lead students through a problem analysis characterized by the 4A approach (**asses** the problem, **analyze** the causes and effects of the problem, **address** potential solutions to the problem, **act** on a potential solution. We hope to make this type of problem analysis process a routine that young people can transfer to any new challenge that we face in our democracy and that it will pave the way for healthy deliberation with their fellow students, to collaboratively act together, and to forge healthy civic relationships that will strengthen our democracy.<sup>1</sup>

Note: This inquiry is expected to take three or four 50-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (e.g., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, featured sources, writing). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiry to meet the needs and interests of their students. This inquiry lends itself to differentiation and modeling of historical thinking skills while assisting students in reading the variety of sources.

### Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question, students will use dynamic WebGIS maps, historical timelines, and various articles to consider historical and contemporary immigration rules, laws, and issues. After that students will assess whether they believe it is possible for the United States to create humane and restrictive immigration policies.

## Staging the Compelling Question

In staging the compelling question, students will draw from background knowledge to identify adjectives, synonyms, or examples for the words, humane and restrictive. They will then read Emma Lazarus’ poem, “The New Colossus” and discuss what this poem suggests about The United States historical attitudes and beliefs about immigration.

Explain to students that during the next few days they will be learning about historical and contemporary United States immigration policies.

1. Ask students to refer to question 1 on their Student Guide.

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<sup>1</sup> Levine, P. (2016). The Question Each Citizen Must Ask. *Educational leadership*, 73(6), 30-34.

- 1- What words come to mind when you hear the word humane? List at least 5.
- 2- What words come to mind when you hear the words restrict or restrictive? List at least 5.
  - 2. Have students share the words that come to mind and list them on the class whiteboard.
  - 3. Have students read Emma Lazarus' poem, *The New Colossus* (**Source C**) and respond to question 3, Part 1 on the Student Guide.
- 3- Once students complete Part 1 lead a brief classroom discussion that allows students to share their thoughts to the question, *What does the Statue of Liberty and the poem, The New Colossus suggest about the United States' historical attitude towards immigration? Is it humane or restrictive?*
- 4- Explain to the students that over the next few days they will be learning about historical and contemporary US attitudes, beliefs, and actions towards immigration while considering the question, "Is it possible to create humane and restrictive US immigration policies?"

## Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question asks students to address the question "To what extent is the United States a 'nation of immigrants'" by answering a set of guided questions while interacting with American Panorama's resource, "Foreign-Born Population: 1850-2010".

1. Introduce students to the compelling question, "To what extent is the United States a "nation of immigrants?" Explain that the answer to this question varies based on geography and time period.
2. Guide students to [Source D](#) and model how the web map works. The most important piece to focus on is showing students how to change the census year and how to search for a specific county in the United States. If student access to technology is limited you can complete the activity together using one classroom computer and discuss the questions on the [Student Guide](#).
3. At the conclusion of this activity direct students to the [Student Reflection Guide](#) and have them respond to question #1.
4. Have the students listen to [Source E](#), the excerpt from Democracy in Danger's podcast, Xenophobia.
5. Lead students on a brief discussion around the reflection question: *Why is immigration scholar Erika Lee divided or hesitant to accept the United States story that it is a "nation of immigrants."* One strategy to consider using with this question is [Philosophical Chairs](#).

This conversation will serve as a natural transition to supporting question #2, "To what extent has United States immigration been humane or restrictive."

The following sources were selected to ...

- [Featured Source D](#) is the American Panorama's "Foreign-Born Population: 1850 - 2010" WebMapping resource. Questions for students to respond to for this resource are provided on the [Student Guide](#).
- [Featured Source E](#) is a 2 minute clip from Democracy in Danger's episode, Xenophobia.

## Supporting Question 2

The second supporting question asks students to address the question “To what extent have US immigration policies been humane and restrictive?” using a timeline of selected US Immigration policies..

Students will complete Part 3 of the [Student Guide](#) to identify examples of humane and restrictive US immigration policies.

### Procedure

1. Guide students to the Pew Research Center’s website (**Source F**), [How U.S. immigration laws and rules have changed through history](#). Model for students how to move through the timeline by clicking the interactive line graph showing % of US Population that is Foreign Born. If computer access is limited you can refer to this Migration Policy Institute [PDF Fact Sheet](#) on US immigration policies.
2. Direct students to Part 3 of the [Student Guide](#) and have them explore the timeline to identify examples of rules and laws that they consider humane and/restrictive.
3. Once students complete Part 3 hold a classroom discussion on the question, “To what extent has US Immigration policy been humane and restrictive.” One strategy to consider using with this question is [Philosophical Chairs](#).
4. Next, play for the students **excerpts G-J** from the Democracy in Danger’s episode, Xenophobia. Feel free to reduce the number of excerpts as needed.
5. Next, transition students to Part 4 of the activity, and the next supporting question, “What contemporary migration issues and challenges does the US face?”

The following sources were selected to ...

- **Featured Source F** - [How US Immigration Policies have Changed Through History](#)
- **Featured Sources G-J** - Excerpts from the Democracy in Danger episode, Xenophobia.

## Supporting Question 3

The third supporting question asks students to address the question ““What immigration policy issues and challenges does the US face?”

The formative task is to complete two activities. First students will explore layers of Global Migration Map to explore the US immigration challenges at the global scale. Next, students will read brief articles on the policies of Presidents Obama, Trump, and Biden to consider how humane and/or restrictive US immigration policies were under their administration.

### Procedure

1. Guide students to the ArcGIS online map, [Global Migration, 2020](https://arcg.is/1Tjv8b) (https://arcg.is/1Tjv8b)
2. Direct students to Part 3 of the [Student Guide](#) and have them explore the Web Map and answer the question on the guide. If technology access is limited you can complete this as a whole-class activity.
3. Once students have completed the Global Migration, 2020 activity, lead students in a discussion which has them share aspects about global migration and US political geography they found **surprising, interesting, or troubling**.
4. Explain to students that the global migration crisis is not a new challenge facing the world and that each of the

past three US Presidents have dealt with immigration differently. Direct them back to the Student Guide and ask them to read the three articles comparing the immigration policies of Presidents Obama, Trump, and Biden.

5. Next, direct students to [www.congress.gov](http://www.congress.gov) and have them search the legislative data base using the key words, “immigration citizenship” to explore some recent bills introduced in Congress. Have them review and briefly report back about 3-4 recent house bills. Another option is for the teacher to review the collection of bills and choose 4-6 that their students review and evaluate.
6. Once students complete Part 4 hold a classroom discussion on the question, “What immigration policy issues and challenges does the United States face today?”
7. Next, transition students to Part 5 of the activity, and the next supporting question, “What are some potential solutions to the issues and challenges posed by immigration and emigration?”

### Featured Sources

- **Source K** - [Global Migration, 2020 WebGIS Map](#)
- **Source L**: [5 Things to Know About Obama’s Enforcement of Immigration Laws](#)
- **Source M**: [FactBox: Trump Reshaped U.S. Immigration System, Biden wants to Reverse Course](#)
- **Source N**: [FactBox: What has Biden done to roll back Trump’s immigration policies](#)
- **Source O**: [Congress.Gov](#) legislative database

## Supporting Question 4

The fourth supporting question asks students to address the question “What are some potential solutions to the issues and challenges posed by immigration and emigration?”

The formative task has students evaluate the United Nation’s 23 objectives to support safe, orderly, and regular migration based on humaneness, restrictiveness, and feasibility.

1. Students read **Source P** the UN’s 23 objectives to support safe, orderly, and regular migration.
2. Students evaluate and rank each objective based on humaneness, restrictiveness, and feasibility.
3. Teacher has students share their rankings for each law. One tool that could be used to help gather students responses is [Poll Everywhere](#) in which you have students share their ideas about each objective by choosing a ranking between 1 - 10. The teacher would need to create an account and the poll questions.
4. Play for the students the **Source Q excerpt** from the Xenophobia podcast that shares a few possible solutions to US immigration issues and challenges.
5. **Debrief**

After this strategy, you will want to debrief in a class discussion and/or a journal writing session. Prompts for journal writing include:

1. How might you respond to the prompt or essential question now?
2. What did you learn today? How does this information relate to the prompt or essential question?
3. What else do you want to know?

The following sources were selected to ...

- **Featured Source P:** Excerpt from Xenophobia Podcast
- **Featured Source Q -** [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration \(United Nations\)](#)  
(Page 5, Section 16)

## Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry, students have studied and assessed historic and contemporary immigration policy issues facing the United States. To demonstrate the breadth of their understandings and their abilities to use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims, students will respond to the prompt **“To what Extent is it Possible to create humane yet restrictive immigration policies ”**

Student responses may extend their arguments by taking time to write legislative resolutions, Flipgrids, speeches as if they were delegates, or OpEds for an imaginary newspaper.

Students have the opportunity to Take Informed Action by raising awareness of this activity in their community.



## Appendix A: Sources

**Source A:** : [Humane Definition from Webster’s Dictionary](#)

Definition of *humane*

1 : marked by compassion, sympathy, or consideration for [humans](#) or animals humane prison guards

**Source B:** [Restrictive \(Restrict\)](#) Definition from Webster’s Dictionary

**Source C:** [The New Colossus, Emma Lazarus, 1883](#)

U.S. Department of the Interior. (n.d.). *The New Colossus*. National Parks Service.

<https://www.nps.gov/stli/learn/historyculture/colossus.htm>.

**Source D:** [Foreign-Born Population 1850-2010, American Panorama](#)

Digital Scholarship Lab, University of Richmond(2015–)

American Panorama. \*Dsl.richmond.edu/panorama

American Panorama. (n.d.) Panorama - Github repository:

<https://github.com/americanpanorama/panorama>

**Source E:** [Excerpt from Xenophobia Podcast clip 1](#)

**Source F:** [How US immigration laws and rules have changed over time](#) (Pew Research Center)

Cohn, D’Vera. “How U.S. Immigration Laws and Rules Have Changed through History.” *Pew Research Center*, Pew Research Center, 30 May 2020,

[www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/09/30/how-u-s-immigration-laws-and-rules-have-changed-through-history/](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/09/30/how-u-s-immigration-laws-and-rules-have-changed-through-history/).

**Source G:** [Excerpt from Xenophobia Podcast clip 2](#)

**Source H:** [Excerpt from Xenophobia Podcast clip 3](#)

**Source I:** [Excerpt from Xenophobia Podcast clip 4](#)

**Source J:** [Excerpt from Xenophobia Podcast clip 5](#)

**Source K - [Global Migration, 2020 WebGIS Map](#)**

Modified Web Map based Esri's Human Geography GeoInquiry, "[Migration: On the Move.](#)"

**Source L: [5 Things to Know About Obama's Enforcement of Immigration Laws](#)**

Horsley, Scott. "5 Things To Know About Obama's Enforcement Of Immigration Laws." *NPR*, NPR, 31 Aug. 2016, [www.npr.org/2016/08/31/491965912/5-things-to-know-about-obamas-enforcement-of-immigration-laws](http://www.npr.org/2016/08/31/491965912/5-things-to-know-about-obamas-enforcement-of-immigration-laws).

**Source M: [FactBox: Trump Reshaped U.S. Immigration System, Biden wants to Reverse Course](#)**

"Factbox: Trump Reshaped U.S. Immigration System, Biden Wants to Reverse Course." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 3 Dec. 2020, [www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-trump-changes-factbox/factbox-trump-reshaped-u-s-immigration-system-biden-wants-to-reverse-course-idUSKBN28D1GK](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-trump-changes-factbox/factbox-trump-reshaped-u-s-immigration-system-biden-wants-to-reverse-course-idUSKBN28D1GK).

**Source N: [FactBox: What has Biden done to roll back Trump's immigration policies](#)**

"Factbox: What Has Biden Done so Far to Roll Back Trump's Immigration Policies?" *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 2 Feb. 2021, [www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-biden-immigration-factbox/factbox-what-has-biden-done-so-far-to-roll-back-trumps-immigration-policies-idUSKBN2A231M](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-biden-immigration-factbox/factbox-what-has-biden-done-so-far-to-roll-back-trumps-immigration-policies-idUSKBN2A231M).

**Source O: [Congress.gov legislative database](#)**

Congress.gov is the official website for U.S. federal legislative information. The site provides access to accurate, timely, and complete legislative information for Members of Congress, legislative agencies, and the public. It is presented by the Library of Congress (LOC) using data from the Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Office of the Secretary of the Senate, the Government Publishing Office, Congressional Budget Office, and the LOC's Congressional Research Service

**Source P: [Excerpt from Xenophobia Podcast clip 6](#)**

**Source Q - [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration \(United Nations\)](#)**

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United Nations. GLOBAL COMPACT FOR SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR  
MIGRATION, INTERGOVERNMENTALLY NEGOTIATED AND AGREED OUTCOME  
13 July 2018