

What are some of the issues immigrant workers face in the United States?

In this stand-alone lesson, students will explore the issues faced by immigrant workers in the United States, the strategies they are using to address problems, and the role organizations, government agencies, and communities can play in ensuring just working conditions.

This lesson is appropriate for the secondary level (grades 7-12) and covers one 90-minute lesson block or two 45-minute class periods.

[Note: Not all stories on the website may be suitable for younger ages, both in content and in vocabulary. As a result, please review the website prior to assigning it to students. For students at younger grade levels and/or as differentiation, provide downloaded article excerpts from the website and provide access to the accompanying videos separately. An option to easily adjust an article's Lexile level is [Rewordify](#).]

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to explain how people, communities, and organizations work together to find a strategy to address a problem affecting immigrant workers and explain the outcome of that strategy.

This resource incorporates activities aligned to the following Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2;8.2;9-10.2;11-12.2: *Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.*

Since the Gold Rush, California has starred in many of the nation's most successful endeavors: our shiniest movies, bounteous crops, and cutting-edge technologies.

The Golden State has a progressive tax system and environmental policy, the second-highest minimum wage in the nation, and politicians who openly celebrate diversity and immigration. If the state were a country, its economy would rank fifth largest in the world.

But California's towering growth has cast a long shadow.

The state's growing population has put a strain on infrastructure and public services. Protections for workers are slipping, worker safety organizations are chronically understaffed, and wage theft is rampant. In a state where income inequality has risen sharply over the past two decades, faster than in the nation as a whole, those left at the bottom have fallen further behind.

"You don't see the farm worker bending over in the fields when you pass by, and you don't see the janitor alone up in the building, and you don't see the construction worker that's hammering in the ditch," says State Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez.

"We either choose to not see them, or they do the work when we can't see them. Those are the workers who are the most vulnerable."

California's unseen workers do jobs that help keep the state's economy and services humming, but rarely come into public consciousness. They build houses, clean offices, sort through recycling, and harvest crops. These workers are hidden in plain sight; they work under cover of darkness, even beyond the physical boundary of our shores.

This project sheds light on the experience of those who labor in the shadows - and the limitations, even failure, of our legal promises to protect them on the job.

- From Unseen, a multimedia reporting project by students at the UC Berkeley School of Journalism

Name(s): _____

Students will be able to explain how people, communities, and organizations work together to find a strategy to address a problem affecting immigrant workers and explain the outcome of that strategy.

Write down the names of your group members here:

Circle which story has been assigned to your group: Stolen, Second Class or On The Line

Review your story as presented on the Unseen website (or as provided to you by your teacher) and answer the following question:

What are some of the issues immigrant workers face in the United States?

Students will be able to explain how people, communities, and organizations work together to find a strategy to address a problem affecting immigrant workers and explain the outcome of that strategy.

Write down the names of your group members here:

Circle which story has been assigned to your group: [Stolen](#), [Second Class](#) or [On The Line](#)

Review your story as presented on the [Unseen website](#) (or as provided to you by your teacher) and answer the following question:

What are some of the issues immigrant workers face in the United States?

Your teacher will place you with your group and ask you to collaboratively outline your group's response to the prompt below using the burger method and evidence from an assigned story from Unseen.

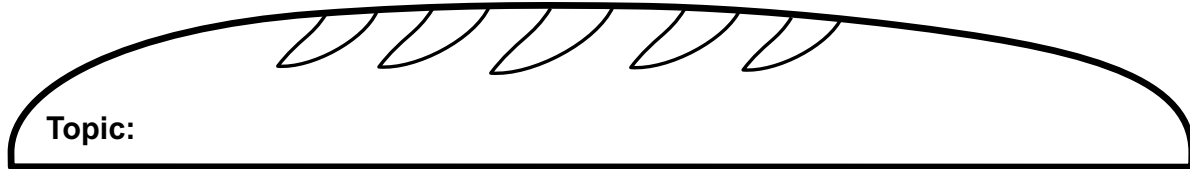
Prompt: *How do people, communities, and organizations work together to find a strategy to address a problem affecting immigrant workers? What is the outcome of that strategy? Support your answer using written or visual evidence from your assigned story.*

Make sure you write down your group's outline on the next page!

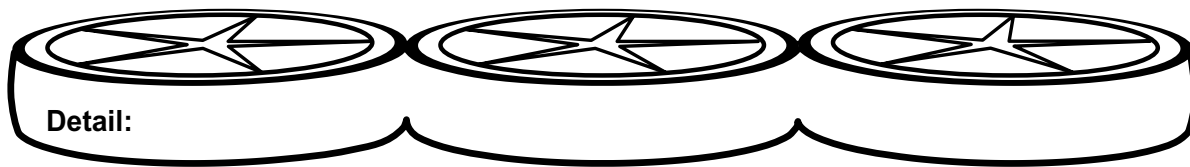
Name _____ Date _____

Sandwich Chart

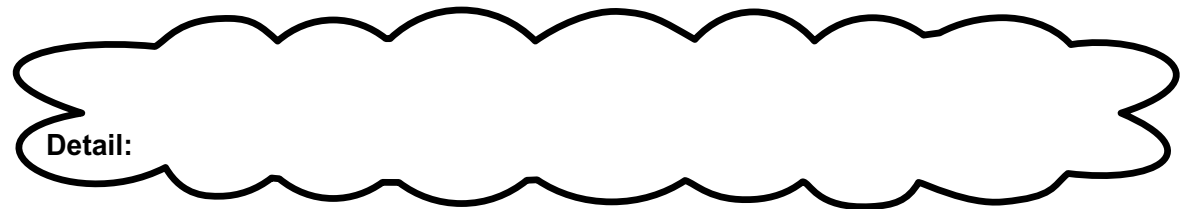
Write your topic at the top. Add details to the middle layers. Add a concluding sentence at the bottom.



Topic:



Detail:



Detail:



Detail:



Concluding Sentence:

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Now, using your group's outline, answer the prompt in a paragraph using your own words.

How do people, communities, and organizations work together to find a strategy to address a problem affecting immigrant workers? What is the outcome of that strategy? Support your answer using written or visual evidence from your assigned story.

Need a more in-depth lesson plan? We've got you covered!

Lesson Title [Topic]:

What are some of the issues immigrant workers face in the United States?

Grade Levels:

Secondary (7-12); following the plan below, lessons can be adapted with other grade-level appropriate content as needed

Time Needed:

One 90-minute lesson block or two 45-minute class periods

Lesson Context/Summary [What is this lesson about?]:

In this stand-alone lesson, students will explore the issues faced by immigrant workers in the United States, the strategies they are using to address problems, and the role organizations, government agencies, and communities can play in ensuring just working conditions

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2;8.2;9-10.2;11-12.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

Essential Question (EQ) [What question will all students be able to answer at the end of the lesson?]:

What are some of the issues immigrant workers face in the United States?

Learning Objectives (LOs) [What will most students be able to do at the end of the lesson?; list 1-3 beginning with "Students will be able to..."]:

Students will be able to explain how people, communities, and organizations work together to find a strategy to address a problem affecting immigrant workers and explain the outcome of that strategy.

Key Vocabulary Terms [What vocabulary terms will students need to know to complete this lesson?]:

- Immigration
- Workers' rights
- Labor rights
- Protections for workers
- Undocumented workers

Learning Activities [What will happen during this class period?]

Before the lesson

Students into three differentiated (based on strengths and formative assessment data and/or interest) groups and assign each group a story.

Story options:

[Stolen](#)

[Second Class](#)

[On The Line](#)

Students will then review their story on the Unseen website and come prepared to class to answer the following question: *What are some of the issues immigrant workers face in the United States?*

[Note: Not all stories on the website may be suitable for younger ages, both in content and in vocabulary. As a result, please review the website prior to assigning it to students. For students at younger grade levels and/or as differentiation, provide downloaded article excerpts from the website separately. An option to easily adjust an article's Lexile level is [Rewordify](#).]

Opening - 10 minutes

When students enter the classroom, ask them to answer the lesson's "Do Now" question: *What are some of the issues immigrant workers face in the United States?*

After thinking time, students will be prompted to answer the question verbally or in writing (on paper or in the video call chat box).

Teacher will ask two students to share their answers with the class (one volunteer, one cold call).

Provide students with the learning objectives and road map for the lesson ("*What are we doing today and why is it important?*"): *Students will be able to explain how people, communities, and organizations work together to find a strategy to address a problem affecting immigrant workers and explain the outcome of that strategy*

Pause for questions.

Direct Instruction (I Do) - 15 minutes

Direct instruction on the intersection between immigrant and workers' rights. What are the issues? Who is affected? How can working together make solving a problem more achievable?

Brief explanation of the concepts and vocab words. After explanation, check for understanding verbally or by using [another method](#).

Use the story [New Path](#) as an example of people, communities, and organizations working together to find a solution to an issue.

For more context and information on immigrant and workers' rights, please see the "Further Resources" section below.

Teacher gives instructions for the group work portion (see below) and pauses for questions.

Group Work (We Do) - 35 minutes

Place students into their three differentiated (based on strengths and formative assessment data and/or interest) groups to collaboratively outline their response to the prompt in an online document or on paper using the burger method and evidence from their assigned story from Unseen- *“How do people, communities, and organizations work together to find a strategy to address a problem affecting immigrant workers? What is the outcome of that strategy? Support your answer using written or visual evidence from your assigned story.”*

Story options:

[Stolen](#)

[Second Class](#)

[On The Line](#)

Each group is then placed in their groups physically or in breakout room. Groups may work together and ask each other for help with questions.

While the students work, the teacher circulates to answer questions and check for understanding.

Bring class back together, ask students to turn in their group outlines (so teacher can check for understanding) and explain the independent assessment portion of the lesson (see below).

Independent Assessment (You Do) - 20 minutes

Students will answer the following prompt individually on paper or an online document after collaboratively outlining a response to the prompt - *“How do people, communities, and organizations work together to find a strategy to address a problem affecting immigrant workers? What is the outcome of that strategy? Support your answer using written or visual evidence from your assigned story”*. These prompts will be completed on in written paragraph or PowerPoint presentation form. Depending on your teaching style, you may open to other suggestions of “demonstration of knowledge” types as dictated by student interest. Suggestions include: podcast, video, poster, skit, etc.

As students work, teacher will circulate to answer questions and check for understanding, as well as provide extension resources (see section below) 1:1 and small group support as needed.

Assessment [How will the educator determine students have achieved the EQ and LOs?]

Teacher will determine student mastery by assessing their responses to the individual assessment assignment above.

Closure - 10 minutes

At the end of class, the teacher brings the students back to submit their work.

To close, the teacher restates the learning objectives, provides extension resources if students wish to learn more, and answers any last questions.

Lesson Materials [*What is needed to teach this lesson?; include worksheets, links, etc.*]

See worksheet provided above.

Differentiation and Modification Options [*How can this lesson be modified to reach all students?*]:

Content: see resources below for different forms of content (videos, podcasts, etc.)

Process: students can work individually on the outlining assignment if they prefer.

Product: students may provide their assessment work in a format that best suits them (PowerPoint, podcast, poster, etc.).

Learning Environment: lesson can be provided in an in-person, virtual, or hybrid format.

Extension resources: students may explore the resources provided below for extra content and evidence for their assessment work.

English Language Learners (ELLs): Vocab words defined in detail during direct instruction; can use notes in assessments; extended time.

IEPs and 504s; lesson can be modified in content, process, and product to reflect learning accommodations.

Further Resources [*What other resources on this topic and allied topics are available?*]:

Students

- [NPR's "Where We Come From"](#) (multimedia stories relating to the American immigrant experience)
- [Center for Artistic Activism](#) (aids artists and activists in affecting social change)
- [This American Life "The Out Crowd"](#) (Pulitzer Prize-winning radio episode on immigration; original contains curse words, a "beeped" version is available at the link above)
- [The New York Times "In Florida Tomato Fields, a Penny Buys Progress"](#) (article on the enforcement of labor rights)

Educators

- Author Alejandra Domezain has put together [a fact sheet of resources](#) and [lesson plans](#) for teaching immigrant worker's rights in the classroom
- [Learning for Justice - Immigration](#) (lesson plans and allied resources)
- [Learning for Justice - Labor Matters](#) (lesson plan on worker's rights)
- [Colorin Colorado - Immigration](#) (lesson plans and allied resources)

- North American Association for Environmental Activism (general suggestions for incorporating student-led activism in the classroom)
- We Speak NYC - “Rolando’s Rights” and “Sonam’s Mom” (lesson plans on immigrant worker’s rights and other topics)
- Immigration History Resource Center (curriculum and lesson plans on immigration history)
- Latino History Project – Workers’ Movements and Civil Rights (lesson plan covering art, activism, and immigrant workers’ rights)

Acknowledgments

This guide incorporates resources provided by Unseen and Reading Rockets.

This guide was inspired by Alejandra Domenzain’s book “For All”/Para Todos. Thank you very much, Alejandra!