

Lesson 5

Immigration

Main Ideas

The United States accepts more immigrants than all other countries combined.

Most immigrants come from Mexico.

World events and the state of the American economy affect attitudes toward immigrants.

More immigrants enter the United States illegally than legally.

Immigration has positive and negative effects.

American society is changing because of immigration.

The story of America is the story of **immigration**. It has been our history from the very beginning. From the 1600s to the mid-1800s, people from England, Scotland, and northern Europe came. New lands, waterways, and resources promised a better life to them.

Between 1850 and 1920, the faces of immigrants changed. So did their religions and languages. They came from Ireland, southern and eastern Europe, China, Japan, and South America. They believed in the *American Dream*: in America, if you worked hard, you could make a better life for yourself and your family.

Immigrants worked in the factories, built railroads and canals, and helped cities grow. They settled the West and helped the United States expand to the Pacific Ocean. With immigrant help, the United States became an industrial giant by 1900.

The new immigrants weren't accepted at first. Over time, they **assimilated** into the culture of United States. Their customs and traditions became part of America's cultural mix. No other nation on earth has such a mix.

Immigration to the United States fell during the **Great Depression**. A better life in America was not possible in such hard economic times. However, after World War II, people started coming again. The 1950s saw 2.5 million new arrivals. The number has increased every **decade** since. Between 2000 and 2010, the United States accepted nearly 14 million legal immigrants. The United States accepts more legal immigrants than all other countries of the world combined.

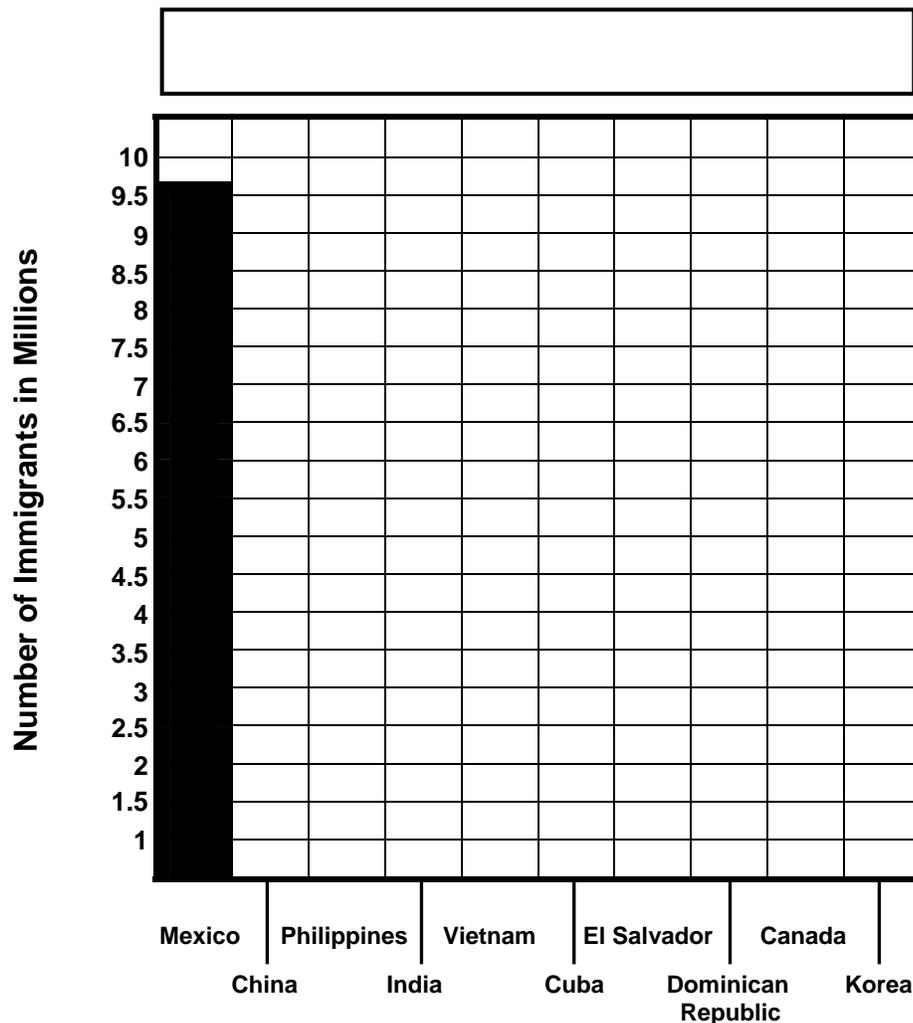
Most legal immigrants in the U.S. today have come from **Latin America** and Asia. By 2010, the top ten countries of origin were, in order

Mexico	9.6 million
China	1.9 million
The Philippines	1.7 million
India	1.61 million
Vietnam	1.2 million
Cuba	1.1 million
El Salvador	1.1 million
The Dominican Republic	.94 million
Canada	.92 million
Korea	.88 million

(Legal immigrants arrive in the United States with our government's approval. Illegal immigration will be discussed later in this lesson.)

Use the information from the table on the previous page to make a bar graph. A bar graph shows information using pictures rather than words. Use the grid below.

Give your bar graph a title. The names of the countries of origin are written along the bottom axis. To make a bar, find the country's number of immigrants along the left side of the graph. If the number falls between two numbers, estimate where it will be on the graph. Draw a small line — on the graph at that number and above that country's name. Draw a bar down to the bottom axis and color it in. Do this for each country. Mexico has been done for you as an example.



Before the 1930s, most immigrants were male. Men came to the United States to find work or land and set up a new life. When they had enough money, they sent for their families in the home country. That practice has changed since World War II. Since the 1990s, a little more than half of all legal immigrants are women.

New immigrants tend to settle where there are connections to family or people from their home country. Seven states attract the most immigrants. They are California, New York, Florida, Texas, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Illinois. Refer to the map at right or one from an atlas.

Before 1945, most immigrants arrived in the United States at the points of entry in New York and California. Ships traveled from Europe to New York and from Asia to California. Modern immigrants arriving by air follow that pattern.



1. a. Where do you think most immigrants who settle in California and Texas

come from? _____ Why? _____

b. Where do you think most immigrants who settle in Florida come from, and why?

c. What may be a reason Illinois attracts so many immigrants? _____

Attitudes toward Immigrants

It is natural for people to fear or mistrust the arrival of large numbers of strangers. Accepting the differences of people from other cultures has always taken time. American attitudes toward newcomers have **varied** in the past. However, there are patterns.

If the economy is good, immigrants are generally accepted. Businesses and industry especially welcome them. If the economy is not good, immigrants have a harder time being accepted. Labor unions especially do not welcome them.

2. Explain why the above paragraph is true. _____

The more quickly immigrants learn English, the more they are accepted.

Hispanic immigrants tend to settle in Hispanic communities in the United States. That often means they live in the culture of their **country of origin**. That keeps them apart from mainstream American culture. It makes learning English more difficult. A 2007 study found that the English skills of Hispanic immigrants were less than those of other immigrants. The English skills of Mexican immigrants were even less than that. The language gap affects their success in education. Lack of English skills makes them less accepted by Americans.

World and national events often influence attitudes toward immigrants. A recent example is September 11, 2001. After that date, many Americans suspected anyone of the Islamic faith. **Hate crimes** against men who wore turbans increased.

3. Explain why men in turbans were targets of hate crimes. _____

Sometimes, there is conflict between immigrants and **minorities** in the United States. Violence between African Americans and Mexican immigrants has occurred in California.

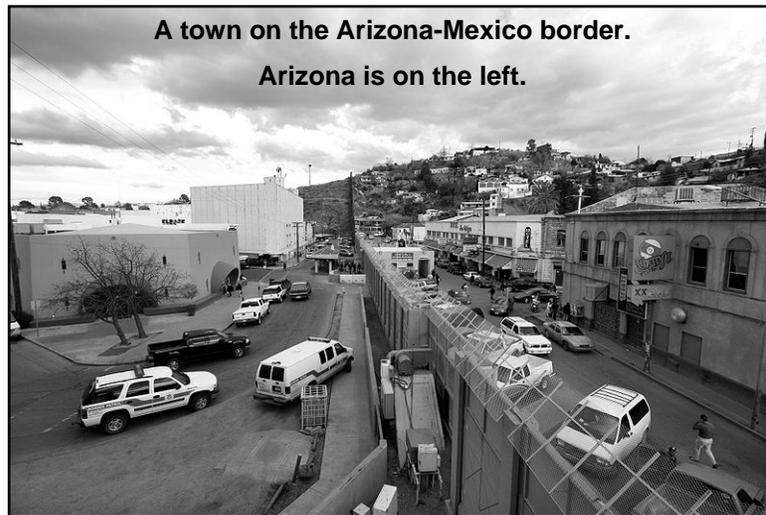
Illegal Immigration

A legal immigrant to the United States has permission from the government to move here. Getting permission is difficult for many people. They must fill out many forms. There are high costs and long delays. As of 2007, the usual waiting time to get permission to move to the U.S. was three years. Illegal immigration is sometimes the only option. Immigrants are illegal if they enter the United States without permission or stay beyond the time allowed for their visit.

Many more people move to the U.S. illegally than legally. More than half of them come from Mexico. The Center for Immigration estimated that there were 11 million illegal immigrants in the U.S. in 2007. An exact number cannot be known. Like other immigrants, illegals settle with relatives or near people from their home country.

Illegal immigrants come to the United States to find work. They are paid less than Americans. However, wages here are higher than the pay in their home country. Many times, immigrants send part of every paycheck back to family in the home country. American employers who hire illegal immigrants can be fined as much as \$10,000. They also might face time in jail. Despite the risks, the practice continues.

Various federal and state laws have tried to stop the flow of illegal immigrants. President George W. Bush proposed a guest worker program. He argued that illegal immigrants took only the jobs that Americans did not want. The program would have allowed them to become legal for work purposes. His plan was defeated in Congress. At one point, Congress debated whether to build a concrete wall along parts of the U.S.-Mexican border. The idea never became law.



If illegal immigrants are found out, they are **deported**, or forced to return to their native country immediately. Border patrol agents work with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (**ICE**) agents. Together, they try to stop or limit illegal immigration.



Sanctuary Cities

Some U.S. cities believe that illegal immigrants benefit them rather than hurt them. They have forbidden their police force to ask immigrants whether they are legal or not. They do not notify federal agents of illegals in their area.

These cities are called sanctuary cities. (A sanctuary is a place safe from harm.) They include many large cities across the nation. A partial list: Washington, D.C.; New York, NY; Los Angeles, CA; Chicago, IL; Austin and Houston, TX; Denver, CO; Baltimore, MD; Portland, OR; and Portland, ME. Critics say these cities violate federal law. Only Congress has the **authority** to set immigration policies.

4. What is one reason immigrants choose to enter America illegally? (pg. 36)

5. Why do most of them come from Mexico? _____

Effects of Immigration

Whether legal or illegal, immigration has an economic impact on the United States. Immigrants

- may drive down wages for the poor of American society. That can widen the gap between the rich and the poor in the United States.
- help local economies by buying goods and services
- increase consumer **demand**, which means more jobs
- pay about \$7 billion into the Social Security system each year
- who are poor put a strain on local public services, like school and health care

- who are illegal pay taxes, but, if poor, often cost state and local governments more money than the taxes they pay
- take jobs that either did not exist before or that Americans do not want

6. List two positive and two negative economic effects of immigration.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

Large numbers of immigrants impact the **demographics** of a society. The sizes of **ethnic** and racial groups change. That changes the relationships between them. Predictions from research groups and the U.S. Census Bureau point to the year, 2050. By that year,

- 1) 47% of Americans will be white
- 2) 29% of Americans will be Hispanic
- 3) the Asian population in America will be more than three times what it is now (**Asian can be people from China, Japan, Korea, India, the Philippines, etc...**)
- 4) in 35 of the nation's 50 largest cities, white Americans will be in the **minority**

7. Which prediction above do you consider the biggest change to American society?

Explain your answer. _____

The changes predicted by 2050 have already started to happen. Evidence can be seen on television and in movies. **Audiences** must be able to relate to characters

in shows and films, or they won't watch them. **Advertisers** know this. They make commercials that will appeal to the most people.

8. Consider the television shows you normally watch.
- a. How many of them have at least one Hispanic character? _____
 - b. How many have at least one African-American character? _____
 - c. How many have at least one Asian character? _____
9. Pay attention to television commercials that show groups of children or adults. (**For example, McDonald's, Applebee's, Kellogg's cereals.**)
- a. Which ethnic and racial groups are represented in the restaurant commercials?

 - b. In the 1950s, red-headed children with freckles were the favorite choice of advertisers. Consider cereal commercials today. Describe the ethnic and racial groups of the children you see.

Hispanics are the fastest-growing **minority** in the United States. Some people fear that the United States will become a divided culture in the next twenty years. One Harvard professor and author sees this future U.S. society: white Protestants in the north, east, and central areas, and Hispanic Catholics in the southwest.

10. Do you think the professor's idea could happen? Explain your answer. _____



End of Lesson 5

