

From Immigrant to Citizen

A 2-Day Unit on Immigration and Naturalization

The material for this unit consists of photographs and biographies based on interviews with 30 “New Texans,” U.S. citizens who took their Oath of Citizenship at the Institute of Texan Cultures between 1995 and 1998. Their reminiscences inspire good citizenship and reveal a broad range of reasons, hardships, and experiences related to immigration and living in the United States. The primary activity of this unit is giving a speech; other activities include listening, using a map, creating a map legend, taking notes, and transferring information from written to oral form by reading a story and preparing a speech about what was read. Students give a speech about one New Texan and hear about 29 other very different New Texans who will, collectively, enrich their understanding of who our new citizens are and combat stereotypes they may have heard about immigrants. The students will learn the steps an immigrant must take to become a naturalized citizen and recite together the Oath of Citizenship. In discussion activities, students summarize, generalize, and articulate questions.

PREPARATION:

1. Print a classroom set of the 30 **photographs and biographies** and mount each pair by placing them back to back in a transparent sheet protector or laminating them together, picture on one side, biography on the other.
2. Print one copy for each student of the handout **Where Are We From**.
3. Print a name and face guide, **The New Texans**, for yourself.
4. Print the poster **Make a Speech** and mount the two 8½ x 11” sheets of it together onto one poster board (11x17 or larger) for placement where it can be seen by the speaker.
5. Print the **Oath of Citizenship** to display with an overhead projector or print a classroom set.

Optional:

6. If grading the speeches and map legend activity, print the gradeslips **Make a Speech Criteria**. These are printed three to a page; cut apart.
7. Have some index cards on hand (any size), enough for each student to have one for speech notes.
8. Acquire a stopwatch, which may be used by a student timekeeper.

DAY 1: THE NEW TEXANS

Give each student a photograph and the map. Also use a wall map and/or have the students open their textbooks to a world map.

Who are these people in your photographs?

What do they have in common?

Look at the photograph of your person. Turn the photograph over and read the person's story.

While the students are reading, write New Texan questions on the board. Display a world map so each student can locate the country that his or her person comes from when giving his or her mini-speech. Identify the "Legend" on the wall and textbook maps. Tell students they will also be creating a legend.

New Texan Questions

1. What is the name of your person?
2. What country did he or she come from?
3. Does the person have any family in Texas?
4. Why did this person come to this country or to Texas?
5. How long has this person been in this country?
6. Does the person miss anything about his or her home?
7. How is this person earning a living in Texas?
8. How has the person's life changed as a result of being in America?
9. Are there any customs that the person wants to be sure to continue in his/her new homeland?

Say:

After you have finished reading, find your person's home country on the world map and on the map I've given you, and then take out a sheet of paper (or pass out note cards). Each of you will give a two-minute speech telling us about your person. Write down the information from your reading to answer the questions on the board as preparation for your mini-speech.

After you have made your speech notes, reread your person's story and be sure you know the location of his or her home country. Then, one at a time, each of you will come to the front of the room, show us the picture of your person, point out his or her home country on the map, and tell us about the person, using your notes.

SKILL: Making a Speech

If possible, have a lectern in the front of the room for the students to stand behind. This creates a more formal environment and reduces the “sillies.”

As soon as the students have finished reading and writing their speech notes, have them begin making their speeches. Give directions as to where they will stand and tell them to hold their photographs so all can see and to speak slowly and clearly. Display the **Making a Speech** poster and go through the criteria aloud.

Making a Speech

- Write your New Texan’s number and name on the board.
- Pronounce the name of your New Texan.
- Hold the photograph in front of you to show the class.
- Find the home country on the wall map.
- Stand still.
- Speak slowly.
- Speak clearly.
- Present facts about your person.

A speech should not be just a list of answers to the questions that you rattle off in a monotone. Think about how you want to present your New Texan.

Begin your speech with the person’s name and country of origin and tell us something interesting or some special fact about your New Texan. Remember to speak clearly and slowly so you can be understood.

Use the gradeslips to check each student’s speech. Designate a student timer to stop the speaker after 2 minutes.

Have the listening students locate each person’s country of origin on the handout map.

On the back of the handout map, number 6-30. As you listen to each speech, copy the name and country of each New Texan from the board. List the first five names on the front, then continue on the back of the sheet. When you finish, you will have created a Map Legend.

Collect the photographs after the students have finished their speeches; have the students who did not give their speeches save their notes for tomorrow’s class.

DAY 2: THE NEW TEXANS, *continued*; BECOMING A CITIZEN

REVIEW

Yesterday we were learning about citizens new to Texas. In the speeches we learned about Mr. Awuku, Ms. Barreyro-Falbo..., etc.

Hold up some of the photographs of the New Texans who were presented yesterday as you return them to the same people who reported on them as well as *their* New Texans' photos to those who have not yet given their speeches. Have the remaining students give their speeches and have all students finish their maps as the speeches are given.

SKILLS: Making Generalizations and Summary Statements

What do all these people have in common?

[They are immigrants. They came to the U.S. from another country.]

We now know 30 New Texans. Let's list the reasons they came here.

Take responses from the students and make a list on the board. Tally repeated responses such as marriage, work, etc.

Why did your New Texan come to this country?

[He/She married a Texan or U.S. citizen; to find work; to be with family; to continue his/her education; for fear of being imprisoned or killed; for adventure, etc.]

What summary statement can we make about why people come here?

[Example: People come to America for many different reasons.]

Did your person miss his/her home? If yes, please raise your hand. If no, raise your hand. What did he or she miss about home?

[They missed certain foods, their families, etc.]

What summary statement can we make about our New Texans and their homelands?

[Everyone misses something about his or her home. You give up some things when you move to a new country.]

Did your New Texan have family here before he or she came? If yes, please raise your hand. If no, raise your hand.

Count hands.

Did your New Texan have family follow him or her here after he or she came? If yes, please raise your hand. If no, raise your hand.

Count hands.

What generalization can we make about our New Texans' families?

[Most of them had family in this country or were married to U.S. citizens.]

What does "to be naturalized" mean?

[To go through the legal process of becoming a citizen of another country]

CONTENT and SKILL—Taking Notes

Have students take notes as you list the steps to becoming a U.S. citizen.

To become a naturalized United States citizen, a person must:

- 1. Become a lawful resident (obtain a “Green Card”).***
- 2. Live in the U.S. legally for five years and be at least 18 years old.***
- 3. File an application at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and pay a fee.***
- 4. Pass a basic reading, writing, and history test.***
- 5. Have an interview with a DHS officer in English.***
- 6. Take an oath of allegiance to the U.S. in a formal ceremony.***

All immigrants who wish to be naturalized must have a Green Card. What is a Green Card?

[A card, which is actually pink (2005), issued by the USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services), Department of Homeland Security, to immigrants, allowing them to reside and work legally in this country as a Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR).]

Note: The USCIS, Department of Homeland Security, has the same charge as the former INS, Department of Justice; the change was made in March 2003.

What is the Literacy Test?

[A test of knowledge of U.S. history and government which must be taken in English. Questions are about the flag, famous Americans, the Bill of Rights, U.S. geography, etc.]

What is an oath?

[An oath is a promise to do what you say.]

CONTENT: The Oath of Citizenship

Using an overhead projector, display the Oath of Citizenship.

This is the Oath of Citizenship which all naturalized citizens must take. Let’s read it together. Stand and say it with me.

SKILL: Question Asking

(If you have a large number of students and the speeches take most of the period, this individual activity could be handled in group oral discussion.)

If you could now talk to your New Texan, what more would you want to know about his/her life? Make a list of five questions you would like to ask your New Texan.

Collect the questions (skim over them to be sure all are questions). The students’ speech notes and/or maps could also be collected for grading. Collect the photographs.

