

BECOMING US

A BROKEN SYSTEM

WHAT WOULD A FAIR IMMIGRATION SYSTEM LOOK LIKE?

Educator Guide



The Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History deliberation guides examine the complexities, choices, and tensions of a moment in history to understand how real people and communities were impacted by momentous events, often outside their control. Studying history in this way, as a topic that is dynamic and discoverable, provides a powerful venue to develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are key to understanding the past, making sense of the present, and shaping a more just and inclusive future.

This resource connects to the student deliberation guide on the lead up to the passage of the Hart-Celler Act in 1965. The Hart-Celler Act significantly changed the immigration system of the United States by altering who and how many people could immigrate to the nation. This deliberation guide asks students to assume the role of policy advisors before 1965 and grapple with different options for how the new immigration system could be designed. As students investigate the cultural, historical, economic, and political context of the time, they will wrestle with and weigh possible answers to the question: What would a fair immigration system look like?

Through this learning experience, students will develop and practice their ability to participate in a deliberation. Deliberations provide students with a structured forum for learning to identify multiple (and often underrepresented) perspectives on an issue; empathize with human experiences different from their own; recognize possible solutions and deal with inherent tradeoffs; and collaborate with others to listen, build ideas, and look for shared understandings.

This educator guide contains information and suggested strategies for facilitating the deliberation.

- **Historical context – Brief information about the development of a new immigration policy in the 1960s.**
- **Student learning objectives – Expectations of what students should accomplish by participating in the deliberation.**
- **Recommended procedures and pacing – Suggested learning tasks to prepare for, participate in, and reflect on the outcomes of the historic decisions deliberation.**
- **What happened next? – Information about historic events that took place after this deliberation.**
- **Standards – Alignment with national and state standards for historical knowledge and critical thinking.**
- **Appendix – Facilitation strategies and recommendations.**

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The setting for this deliberation is 1965, when Lyndon B. Johnson is president. It is just two decades after the end of World War II, and people in the United States are weighing what kind of country they want. The civil rights movement is underway, and people are thinking about issues of basic fairness at home, especially how to secure equality for all Americans. People are also thinking about what role the United States should play on a world stage amid the Cold War and the escalating war in Vietnam. Immigration is one aspect of these larger discussions; it is an important signal to the world of the values and ideals that the United States wants to be known for.

Immigration has had a complicated history in the United States. Since the passage of the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act, the national immigration policy has been based on a quota system that allows a percentage of people from each nation present in the United States during the 1890 census to immigrate each year. At the same time, immigration from most Asian countries is prohibited. Periodically, additional changes and loopholes have been added to the legislation, creating a patchwork of policies that is difficult for potential immigrants to understand and navigate.

The racialized nature of the national origins system has become an increasing source of embarrassment and hypocrisy for the United States, which wants to be seen as the leader of democracies around the world. The debate over immigration reflects several tensions in the United States during the 1960s about equality, access, and national values.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **Analyze multiple perspectives of people in the United States using primary and secondary resources to evaluate possible options for the development of a new immigration policy.**
- **Evaluate the benefits and tradeoffs of a particular decision or action through a facilitated deliberation with classmates on the consequences of the immigration discussion of the 1960s.**
- **Practice empathetic listening skills through participation in discussions with peers and read about the experiences of people in the past.**
- **Practice participating in respectful and productive discussions of complex issues with peers.**

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES AND PACING

The following lesson plan is divided into three sections with suggested times for each. However, each section should be taught according to your students' abilities and needs.

Lesson 1: Preparing for Deliberation (45 minutes)

Student Tasks:

- 1. Define deliberation, including what it is and is not.**
- 2. Collaboratively determine class norms for discussions.**
- 3. Develop knowledge and understanding of the topic by analyzing primary and secondary sources.**

THINK

1. How do we make decisions?

- Ask students to think of the decisions they made before coming to this class today. Have them list these on a piece of paper. These can be decisions of any size and significance. Explain that we make decisions all the time, some without even thinking about it, that affect the outcome of our day and possibly even more than that.
- From their list, have students select one decision that required the most time, thought, or energy. Have them turn to a partner and discuss the decision they have chosen to focus on. What was their process for making their choice? Did they weigh pros and cons? Did they ask for advice from others? How long did it take to make their choice?
- As a group, discuss what decision-making looks like. Using examples from the students' discussions, create a shared definition of decision-making and record their ideas on the board. Then, highlight or circle elements that reflect effective decision-making. Reflect on what good decision-making feels like and the type of time, effort, and consideration required to make thoughtful choices.

2. What is a deliberation?

- Explain that in this lesson, they will participate in an important kind of decision-making process called a deliberation. In a deliberation, a group of people come together around one question or topic to examine different courses of action.
- Describe the key elements of a deliberation. In a deliberation there are many voices around the table, which helps the group identify and think about different perspectives on the issue. Participants are guided to look at different possible solutions and the trade-offs that come with those decisions.
- Note that a deliberation is different from a debate or discussion.
 - A debate is competitive, generally set up with opposing sides, and ends with one winner and one or more losers. Deliberations are collaborative.
 - Discussions are more free-flowing and do not necessarily have an end goal of making a decision. These are opportunities to share ideas and learn from others. Deliberations do that, too, but they also intentionally look at the topic from multiple perspectives and examine the trade-offs of various possible actions.

COLLABORATE

1. Have students create a set of shared norms that will guide their conversation. Students should think about what actions and attitudes they think will help the class have an effective deliberation.
2. Record norms on an anchor chart somewhere visible in the room and read them out loud. Suggested norms include:
 - **Be respectful and open to new ideas.**
 - **Share the floor.**
 - **Stay on topic.**
 - **Everyone participates.**
 - **Seek first to understand, then to speak.**
3. When the students feel that their list is complete, remind them that they are responsible for both adhering to and helping others follow these norms.

ACT

1. Explain that they will be looking at a discussion of immigration policy from 1965. This discussion affected both people within and beyond the United States and was informed by domestic and international policy. The civil rights movement and Cold War provided a tense backdrop for a national discussion about who could come to the United States. Citizens, elected officials, and people wanting to come to the United States were grappling with the question: What would a fair immigration system look like?
2. Note that to understand this experience and evaluate the options, the students must prepare by learning about the people who were developing immigration policy recommendations and the options they were considering. Distribute the Coming to the United States student guides and instruct students to read the first portion, which is a short essay. They will examine the options in the next section. Afterwards, debrief with students to ensure they understand the information included in the narrative. Encourage students to annotate the text as they read.

Lesson 2: The Deliberation (45 minutes)

Classroom arrangement: As feasible, arrange students' desks and/or chairs in a circle.

Student Tasks:

- 1. Individually set expectations and goals for participating in the deliberation.**
- 2. Critically examine the question, each option, and the associated trade-offs through discussion with classmates.**

THINK

1. Explain that students will be participating in their deliberation during this class. Refer to the norms set by the students during the previous lesson and remind them of their responsibility to both follow and help others adhere to these guidelines.
2. Review the roles of both the students and the teacher. Explain that the role of the teacher is to facilitate the conversation. This means the teacher's role is to ensure the deliberation runs well, but the teacher is a neutral participant and will not add opinions to the conversation. Students will be active participants.

Facilitation note: Use the provided facilitation techniques and strategies to guide the conversation. See Appendix below.

3. Ask each student to think individually about how they want to participate in the conversation. This is an opportunity for them to work on their own discussion skills. For example, those who often dominate discussions may consider how they can do more active listening. And those who may choose to listen should think about how they can share their voices more frequently. Have each student write down their answer to the question: How will I participate?

COLLABORATE

1. Reviewing the main deliberative question: What would a fair immigration system look like?
Ask students to think about what connections they have to the topic and question at hand.
Ask for volunteers to describe their connection to the topic. Doing this helps set the tone for the deliberation as one that involves real people and experiences.
2. Remind students that their goal is to work collaboratively to evaluate a set of options. They may or may not agree on the best option to select. Before they do this, however, they must think carefully about each proposed option and solutions. Have students read the three options, keeping the following questions in mind:
 - a. What does this option propose or recommend?**
 - b. What steps would we have to take to make this option work?**
 - c. What would be positive outcomes of moving forward with this option? Why would people want to choose this approach?**
 - d. What are trade-offs or downsides that we would have to accept if we chose this option? Are these trade-offs worth it?**
3. Open up a conversation by examining the options as a class. Have students carefully think through and discuss each option, its associated actions, and its trade-offs. Encourage students to listen closely, to respectfully respond to their classmates, to bring up insights they feel must be considered, and to share their response to each option.

Facilitation note: Pay attention to how students are engaging throughout the deliberation. This information will be useful in the next lesson to help students reflect not only on the decisions they make but also how they contributed to the discussion. One way to keep track of their participation is to use a Harkness diagram, which captures the flow of conversation.

ACT

1. Conclude the deliberation by asking students if they can create a common-ground decision. They may be creative in their solution building by combining preferred elements of different options, as long as they stay within the bounds of reality and incorporate the many perspectives and people affected by the issue. They may also decide that no one option can be agreed upon.
2. If the group comes to a shared conclusion, post the decision somewhere visible and review it as a class. Ask:
 - a. What actions are they proposing? Why are these important or necessary?**
 - b. What trade-offs must they make with this approach? Are those acceptable trade-offs?**
 - c. Who will be impacted, positively or negatively, by this solution?**
 - d. Why is this the right solution for our group?**

If the class is unable to come to a shared decision, post the approaches with the most support somewhere visible. Help students think through each option, identifying what they like, what they could do without, and how it would affect different groups of people.

Lesson 3: Reflecting on the Deliberation (45 minutes)

Student Tasks:

- 1. Assess their own participation in the deliberation.**
- 2. Reflect as a class on the actions they preferred and compare this with actual historical outcomes.**
- 3. Identify connections between this historical topic and current issues.**

THINK

1. Instruct students to individually reflect on their experiences during the deliberation. Ask them to write or draw their responses to the prompts below:
 - a. Think critically about your own participation in the deliberation. Did you reach your participation goals?**
 - b. What actions did you take that you are proud of? What would you like to improve for future discussions?**
 - c. How has your thinking about listening to the ideas of others changed?**
2. Have students share feedback about their decision-making process. They should identify areas where they felt the group excelled and where there are opportunities for growth. Help students maintain a supportive atmosphere by reminding them of their class norms before going into this discussion.
3. Encourage students to share and discuss their responses with others. This can be done by talking with a partner, contributing to a larger class conversation, or posting their responses on the board using sticky notes.

COLLABORATE

1. Distribute information from the “What Happened Next?” section of the teacher guide. Remind students that the goal of this deliberation was not to “get it right,” but rather to experience how groups come together to determine what they will do in the face of complex and challenging questions.
2. Have students work in small groups to assess the information using the prompts below:
 - a. What decision or decisions were made?**
 - b. What external factors affected the decision-making process?**
 - c. Who may have agreed or disagreed with these decisions?**

ACT

1. Ask students to reflect on and share their responses to the questions:
 - a. How has your thinking about this topic changed?**
 - b. Does this topic connect to any modern issues or events? Which ones?**
 - c. Can this history help us better understand those events and issues? How?**
2. Have students reflect on and share their ideas about how deliberation could be used to better understand multiple perspectives on these modern-day issues.
3. Individually or in pairs, have students set at least one goal for how they will continue to use what they have learned from this deliberation as they examine other historic topics and current events.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

In 1965, the United States government passed the Immigration and Nationality Act, also known as the Hart-Celler Act. This legislation replaced the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924, which had established the national origins system that barred most immigration from Asia and allowed in quotas of immigrants from certain European countries based on a percentage of their recorded historical population in the United States.

The Hart-Celler Act of 1965 replaced the national origins system with a new quota system that gave preference to supporting family reunification and attracting skilled labor and professionals to the United States. It set the quota at an equal number for every country, regardless of that country's population or proximity to the United States. The act also expanded this quota system to countries in the Western Hemisphere, to which no limit had previously been applied. In this way, the Hart-Celler Act represented a radical break from previous immigration policy and has had a major impact on the nation since that time.



*President Lyndon Johnson signing Hart-Celler Act, 1965.
[Courtesy of the LBJ Presidential Library](#)*

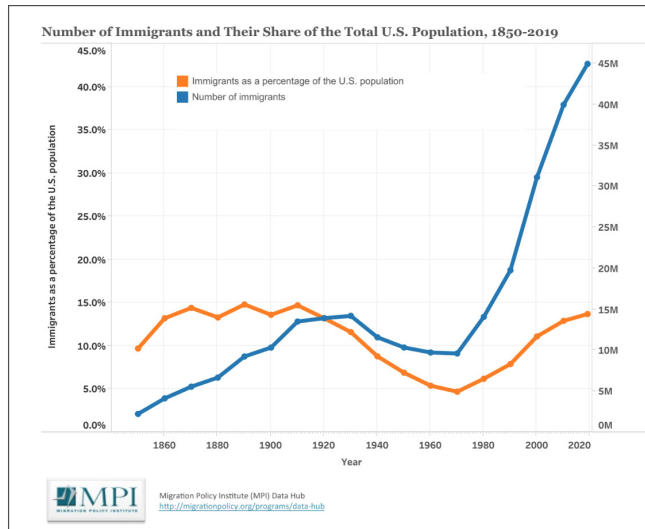


Chart courtesy of the Migration Policy Institute, www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/us-immigration-trends#history

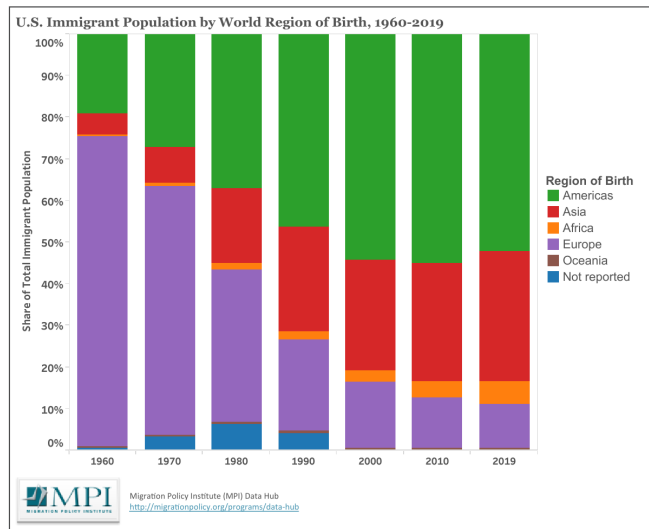


Chart courtesy of the Migration Policy Institute, www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/us-immigration-trends#history

Additional information and learning materials about the Hart-Celler Act and its impact on the United States can be found here: americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/policy/new-america.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This educators’ guide and the companion student deliberation guide are part of the National Museum of American History’s Becoming US curricula, a comprehensive teaching toolkit on immigration and migration history in the United States. americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/.

STANDARDS

National Council for the Social Studies: College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards

Grades 6–8

- **D2.His.4.6–8.** Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- **D2.His.16.6–8.** Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.
- **D4.6.6–8.** Draw on multiple disciplinary lenses to analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.

Grades 9–12

- **D2.His.4.9–12.** Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- **D2.His.16.9–12.** Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.
- **D4.6.9–12.** Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.

Common Core State Standards

Anchor Standards (K–12) for Literacy

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1**
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

[Grades K–12] Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1**
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.3**
Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4**
Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

[Grades 6–12] Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects

- **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.11–12.1**
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

APPENDIX

Facilitation Strategies for Educators

This deliberative issue guide gives students the chance to lead and engage in their own conversation in which they can examine concepts and issues, learn through discussion, encounter new perspectives, and find common ground with others. As the facilitator, your role is to guide, rather than lead, this discussion.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A FACILITATOR?

Your job is to support the students as they think critically and engage in thoughtful discussions about complex concepts of democracy. Being a facilitator can be challenging during a lively and engaging discussion because it requires you to be a neutral guide rather than a participant with an opinion.

However, this does not mean that the facilitator is passive! You are impartial about the topic, but not about the process. The facilitator must pay close attention to both the spoken and unspoken dynamics of the conversation to ensure that students feel welcomed and engaged, that the discussion remains civil and thoughtful, and that the activity achieves its intended goals.

This to-do list can help you get started:

Be Prepared!

- Understand the activity thoroughly. Brainstorm what ideas and views might be brought up and what might not be said. Be prepared to carefully present unvoiced perspectives to help the class dig deeper into a question or prompt.
- Prepare prompting questions in advance, like “What do you think?” “Can you explain your thoughts?” “What example or evidence could you share to help us better understand what you are describing?”

Set the Scene

- Go over the objectives so students understand their expectations and the goals of the activity.
- Review any procedures or rules.

Manage the Discussion

- Keep track of who is talking.
- Take notes to capture points, thoughts, and tensions. Use your notes to develop questions and illuminate connections.
- Interject only as needed to clarify statements, move the conversation forward or deeper, diffuse tension, and ensure all voices are heard.
- Keep an eye on time and know when to start winding down the conversation so there is sufficient time to reflect individually and as a group.

Coach Your Students

- This can require the most energy during the discussion. The next page has tips on managing a few specific instances that might come up in your classroom.

Tips You Can Use When Students

Don't stick to the class norms

- Keep the class norms posted where all participants can see them and read them out loud. Students will often moderate each other by reminding everyone of the rules.
- Take a five-minute break. During this time, invite a rule-breaking student to be a co-facilitator and talk with them about what it means to moderate the conversation. Putting a student in a new role may help them see the conversation differently.

Dominate the conversation

- Ask the student to pause and invite others to react to what has been said.
- Give a general reminder that the goal is to hear all voices and a range of discussion, meaning the floor must be shared.

Choose to not participate

- Be proactive! Start by going around the room or table and having each student say something. Simply saying a few words out loud in front of a group can release a bit of the pressure a student might be feeling and make it easier for them to speak later on.
- During the discussion, let the student know that you are going to ask for their thoughts after the next few people talk. This lets them know that they will have to speak and gives them time to either check back into the conversation or prepare what they want to say.
- Explain that part of the learning experience of this activity is to understand that even if someone opts out, they are still making a conscious choice to participate or not—which is a key concept of democracy. If a student chooses to not participate, ask them to explain their choice to “sit this one out.” Or invite a student to join the teacher as a co-facilitator.

Struggle to explain their thoughts

- Encourage students to think of an example that could illustrate what they are thinking. For example, a student might not be able to say which constitutional amendment gave women the right to vote, but they may be able to describe the woman suffrage movement.
- Pause the activity for a ten-minute research break. During this time, students can grab a textbook or access the internet to pull together evidence that might help them make their case.

Are ready to find common ground or reflect

- As the conversation or available time begins to wind down, encourage your students to reflect on what they learned about themselves as members of their community and democracy, and the role discussion plays in making wise decisions about public issues.
- Ask students to share their thoughts on why discussion is an important part of a thriving democracy. Identify where students' ideas overlap. In other words, where do they share common ground?