



Congressional Committee Simulation on Amnesty for Undocumented Immigrants

<p>Time Frame: This can go from 4 to 6 days depending on how deep the teacher wants to go.</p>	<p>Author: John Pellikan, Prarie Ridge High School, Crystal Lake, Illinois</p>
<p>Proven Practices (indicate which practices used)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use of current & controversial issues ✓ Direct Instruction of Government Institutions ✓ Simulations of Democratic Processes ✓ Service Learning 	
<p><u>IL Social Studies Standards</u></p> <p>SS.IS.4.9-12: Gather and evaluate information from multiple sources while considering the origin, credibility, point of view, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources.</p> <p>SS.IS.5.9-12: Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources to revise or strengthen claims</p> <p>SS.CV.9.9-12: Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes and related consequences.</p> <p>SS.CV.10.9-12: Explain the role of compromise and deliberation in the legislative process.</p>	<p><u>CCSS/ELA History/Social Studies Standards</u></p> <p><u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2</u> Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8 Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.</p>
<p>Essential Question: Should there be a path to legal status or citizenship for undocumented immigrants?</p>	
<p>Supporting Questions: What are the arguments for granting amnesty to undocumented immigrants? What are the arguments against granting amnesty to undocumented immigrants? What are the groups that are taking action on this issue? How do we know what "facts" should be accepted as true?</p>	
<p>Resources Required w/Citations: Students will be simulation different organizations and will need to explore what they are all about and then extract the arguments and evidence they present for their perspective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● http://www.thinkthevote.com/immigration/ ● Federation for American Immigration Reform - http://www.fairus.org/faq ● Center for Immigration Studies - http://cis.org/About ● Southern Poverty Law Center - https://www.splcenter.org/issues/immigrant-justice/guest-workers 	



- Fair Immigration Reform Movement - <http://www.fairimmigration.org/>
- 30 Days episode on immigration - <https://vimeo.com/11155073>
- The Daily Ledger discussion on immigration - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6ZIS8_fe7U

Students will also have to initiate their own research to collect evidence for their arguments. Websites like Wikipedia can be consulted but other credible sources need to be used as well.

Recommended Procedures:

Day 1:

- Introduce the topic by having students watch [this video](#)
- Using a PearDeck presentation, students are then asked their initial opinion on this question.
- Teacher will then review the results (while the students read the background reading on [this website](#)) and then place students in one of the 6 different groups. [Handout here.](#)
 1. Federation for American Immigration Reform
 2. Southern Poverty Law Center
 3. Center for Immigration Studies
 4. Fair Immigration Reform Movement
 5. Citizens (keep this group balanced with their opinions)
 6. Congressional Committee (keep this group balanced with their opinions)
- Once students are put into groups, they will begin collecting evidence for their perspective. Members of congress and the citizens need to formulate their own opinions by gathering and evaluating evidence from both sides of the argument.

Day 2:

- This period is used as time to gather and evaluate evidence.
- A possible extension is simulating a “D.C. lobbying party” in which students have to go around and chat with each other and try to lobby them to join their cause. Citizens and Congressional Members are the target audience for that. This can be a fun event and if the teacher brings in some drinks it adds a nice dimension to the experience.

Day 3 and 4

- Half of the first period is used to finalize arguments then the simulation should begin.
- Teacher begins the simulation by teaching the class what a Congressional Committee does and then shows the students a brief clip from a Congressional Committee hearing (teacher can find any clip but something [like this](#) will suffice).
- Each group is then called before the committee for questions.

Day 5 or Longer

- Committee members sequester and then render a final decision on how to proceed with the issue.
 - They will have to present to the rest of the class what the key evidence was that influenced their decision.
 - Members on the committee who didn't agree with the decision may then offer a dissenting opinion.



- At this point the students can then abandon their role playing and adopt their own perspective for a “four-corners” activity in which they go to one corner of the room (Strongly For, For, Strongly Against, Against) and the teacher then calls on students to defend why they are standing where they are.
- Teacher then explains that the class is going to be exposed to different videos to further evaluate.
- The [first one](#) is a show on what it is like to be an undocumented immigrant
- The [second one](#) is an opposite perspective (a longer video that corresponds to the first one would be ideal, but this is about the best I could find that argues the opposite point of the first video)
- Teacher then has class do the 4 corners activity again to see if anyone moved after watching the 2 videos.
- Students are to then develop a written justification for their opinion on the issue.

Possible Service Learning Informed Action:

- Once students have developed a written justification for their opinion, they will need to go find 3 people who disagree and have a CIVIL conversation with them in which they present the evidence they took from the simulation and present it to the three people to try to change their minds.
- A written reflection of the experience with the three people should be added to the opinion piece they already wrote.

Differentiation:

- Students will be placed into different groups according to their interests and abilities. Teacher should stack the committee members and citizens groups with students who are more capable to lead and initiate. There are many roles that need to be fulfilled in this simulation and the teacher should choose those roles according to students’ interests and abilities.

Possible Assessments:

There are many ways that students could be assessed during the simulation:

- How well they use their time during research time
- How well they interact with each other during lobbying time
- What they turn in regarding their research (teacher can create a template for students to document their research findings)
- How they perform in the simulation
- What they compose when they have to write-up their personal opinion and their interviews with 3 different people who disagree with them.

Other Considerations:

- A wide variety of evidence will be presented in the simulation. The teacher can write on the board “Facts presented” and keep a running list of all the “facts” presented. This will be an excellent opportunity for the class to discuss the nature of facts and how to best evaluate evidence.