

Food, Self, and National Identity

Overview

On January 2015, the *MILLENNIAL* magazine featured an article “The Growing Phenomenon of Food Trucks.” It started with this missive: *“Street food may seem like a recent phenomenon in the States but believe it or not, America has quite the history when it comes to mobile meal stations. Consumers have been getting their food from portable venues for over 200 years. Beginning with a pushcart to the Chuck Wagon to a horse-drawn freight carriage to the famous “roach coaches” to what we have today – gourmet food trucks.”* The reality is that consumers got more than just food. For the adventurous ones, a brave, new, and bigger world opened up, connecting them to faraway places, sense, and cultures. With time, the unfamiliar will hopefully become familiar, demystified, and a welcomed sight.

This creative exercise asks students to come up with the “The Next Best New Food Truck” in which the “food” has yet to enter dominant or mainstream American culture. The fun is coming up with and designing the next food truck concept. In the process, the ultimate goals are:

- 1) to unpack and understand migration and migration patterns (global and US)
- 2) to learn and understand the immigrant communities (the established and newly arrived in one’s locality) and migration pattern (in the past two decades while keeping a larger historical perspective of immigration in the US). How did they get here? Push and pull factors? Historical contexts of their arrival? Pulse of the relationship between locals and immigrant communities? Where do they live? What would be a great intersection/nexus for exchange?
- 3) to learn and understand history of diaspora, immigrant cultures, and the potential of food to educate, engage, and bring together the larger community.
- 4) To connect young Americans (Generation Z) closer to the youth immigrant communities in their city.
- 5) to learn and understand the sourcing of food and ingredients and how new environments impact execution of food.
- 6) to rethink, reconsider, reframe the idea of “diversity” “E Pluribus Unum” and the challenges of such a concept in a community/nation?

Essential/Compelling Question(s)

- How does food tie immigrants to their homeland and tie new communities together?
- How does food reveal and illuminate culture and history?

Other Questions to consider:

- What role does food play in immigration, assimilation, and acculturation?
- Role of food in democratization of America?
- What does “E Pluribus Unum” mean?
- What is the importance of diversity? How does diversity (people and culture) contribute to or complicate the development of (collective and/or individual) identity?

Grade(s)

9-11 (can be modified for grades 5-8)

Subject(s)

- Related themes in **US History** (American History I and II): migration, nativism, turn of 20th century immigration, US foreign affairs post-Cold War, borders, pluralism etc.
- Related themes in **AP Human Geography**: Causes and consequences of migration. Why do people migrate? Cost and benefits of migration?
- Related themes in **World Cultures** (Global Studies): Construction of identity. How culture (food, language etc.) reveals, informs, and shapes identity and larger community?

North Carolina Essential Standards

Based on NC K-12 Stands, Curriculum and Instruction. Social Studies: [American History I](#) and II.

- **AH1.H.1.1** Use Chronological Thinking to:
 1. Identify the structure of a historical narrative or story: (its beginning, middle and end)
 2. Interpret data presented in time lines and create time lines
- **AH1.H.1.2** Use Historical Comprehension to:
 1. Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage
 2. Differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations
 3. Analyze data in historical maps
 4. Analyze visual, literary and musical sources
- **AH1.H.1.3** Use Historical Analysis and Interpretation to:
 1. Identify issues and problems in the past
 2. Consider multiple perspectives of various peoples in the past.
 3. Analyze cause-and-effect relationships and multiple causation.
 4. Evaluate competing historical narratives and debates among historians.
 5. Evaluate the influence of the past on contemporary issues.
- **AH1.H.3.2** Explain how environmental, cultural and economic factors influenced the patterns of migration and settlement within the U.S. before the Civil War (e.g., economic diversity of regions, mercantilism, cash crops, triangular trade, ethnic diversity, American Indian beliefs about land ownership, Lewis & Clark expedition, farming, Industrial Revolution, etc.).
- **AH1.H.3.3** Explain the roles of various racial and ethnic groups in settlement and expansion through Reconstruction and the consequences for those groups (e.g., Germans, Scotch-Irish, Africans, American Indian Indians, Irish, Chinese, etc.).
- **AH2.H.4.4** Analyze the cultural conflicts that impacted the United States since Reconstruction and the compromises that resulted (e.g., nativism, Back to Africa movement, modernism, fundamentalism, black power movement, women's movement, counterculture, Wilmington Race Riots, etc.).
- **AH2.H.7.3** Explain the impact of wars on American society and culture since Reconstruction (e.g., relocation of Japanese Americans, American propaganda, first and second Red Scare movement, McCarthyism, baby boom, Civil Rights Movement, protest movements, ethnic, patriotism, etc.).
- **AH2.H.8.2** Analyze the relationship between innovation, economic development, progress and various perceptions of the "American Dream" since Reconstruction (e.g., Gilded Age, assembly line, transcontinental railroad, highway system, credit, etc.).
- **AH2.H.8.3** Evaluate the extent to which a variety of groups and individuals have had opportunity to attain their perception of the "American Dream" since Reconstruction (e.g., immigrants, Flappers, Rosie the Riveter, GIs, blue collar worker, white collar worker, etc.).

Materials

- Two visuals for students: Immigrants Since 1970 and Waves of Immigration
- Homework readings:
 - Grades 5-8: [Immigration for Kids](#): Teachers can purchase this reading or download for \$5

- Grades 9-11: Grade level readings from [Gilder Lehrman](#): *Why Immigration Matters* by Thomas Kessner, *Immigration and Migration* by Hasia Diner, [What Americans Can Learn From Other Food Cultures](#) (TED), Blog on [Food and Identity: a Global Approach](#)
- [U.S. Immigration Timeline](#) Activity
- [The Census Flows Mapper](#) website
- Rubric for Food Truck Design Project
- Materials for Food Truck Design Project: For grades 9-11, use poster boards or allow students to use PowerPoint to do the presentation. For grades 5-8, use poster boards for group/collaborative work on Food Truck design.

Duration

45-50 minute classes for 2-3 days

NOTE. This 2-3 days lesson plan is design to get students to connect immigration and migration to cultures an identity. Teachers can turn this into a more longer term polished project once student finish work on the preliminary brainstorming stage.

Procedure

Student Preparation: Homework before this Lesson

Homework/Prep work for 9-11 graders for first day:

- Give students the two visuals to look at and have students write down 3 observations (their “takeaways”)
- Assign students the *Why Immigration Matters by Thomas Kessner AND Immigration and Migration by by Hasia Diner*. Have students write down (to be shared in class): 1) the main premise of Kessner and Diner’s work and 2) their perspectives on immigration and migration.

Homework/Prep work for 5-8 graders for first day:

- Give students the two visuals to look at and have students write down 3 observations (their “takeaways”)
- First section of the reading from [Immigration for Kids](#).

Day 1: Immigration and Migration in the United States and Globally

1. Go over the visuals that students studied for homework as a class. Allow students to share their observations aloud. Prompt students to consider:
 - i. When were the biggest waves of immigration to the United States?
 - ii. Where are immigrants coming from?
 - iii. What do we know about historical context/events/life in various countries around the world that might be “push factors” for the waves of immigration?
2. The teacher will provide a brief lecture with context about immigration and migration from a global perspective, then shift to US perspectives, especially using the visuals and previous night’s readings. The teacher may wish to use statistics and executive summaries provided by the UN Refugee Agency, the [UNHCR](#). Share that we are now witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record; an unprecedented 68.5 million people around the world have been forced from home. Among them are nearly 25.4 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18. The teacher should address both push factors of migration (lack of jobs, poverty, war, violence, religious persecution, environmental issues, crop failures, family separation), as well as pull factors (safety and stability, freedom, higher wages and job prospects, food availability, better environment, family reunification) for people who come to the United States.
3. Transition to how immigration and immigrants have transformed the United States throughout American history. Share that the United States began keeping immigration records in 1830. Before 1880, most

immigrants to the U.S. were northern Europeans (English, Scandinavians, Germans, and Irish). Between 1880 and 1920, when the greatest numbers of immigrants arrived, the majority were from southern and eastern Europe (Italians and Slavs). In the latter half of the 20th century, people from Latin America and Asians have made up the largest groups of immigrants. Individually or in small groups, have students complete the immigration timeline activity. Students should match dates with the descriptions of important dates in the history of immigration to the United States. Review answers and important events with students. Discuss push and pull factors for various immigrant groups over time.

4. If there is time, introduce students to [The Census Flows Mapper](#), a web mapping application intended to provide users with a simple interface to view and save county-to-county migration flows maps of the United States. The data are from American Community Surveys. Allow students to look at migration data on their own. Lead a class discussion on student findings. This article on [Young Adult Migration: 2007–2009 to 2010–2012](#) also provides data and content for migration within the United States. Young adults in the United States have the highest rate of migration compared with other age groups. The most common reasons for moving among all ages are job, housing, or family related.
5. With 5-10 minutes left in the class, provide an explanation of the FOOD TRUCK DESIGN project and discuss why it is a creative and effective measure of understanding of this particular content. Students will come up with the “The Next Best New Food Truck” in which the food is from another culture or immigrant group and has yet to enter dominant or mainstream American culture. Through this project, students will learn and understand history of diaspora, immigrant cultures, and the potential of food to educate, engage, and bring together the larger community. Invite students to begin brainstorming potential ideas for their food truck.
6. Assign Homework/Prep work for 9-11 graders for Day 2: Students should read [What Americans Can Learn From Other Food Cultures](#) and explore this blog on [Food and Identity: a Global Approach](#).

Day 2: Developing the Next Best Food Truck

7. Lead a 15-minute collaborative discussion of takeaways from the previous lesson and homework readings. Ask students to discuss what they imagine life is like for newly arrived immigrants to the US. What do they think are possible relationships between locals and immigrant communities? Ask students to consider the role food plays in immigrant communities:
 - i. How does food tie immigrants to their homeland and tie new communities together?
 - ii. How does food reveal and illuminate culture and history?
8. Either allow students to self-select into groups of 3-5 (depending on class size), or assign students groups for the Next Best Food Truck Activity. Allow students to get into their groups and brainstorm/research the concept for their food truck based on context of discussions on first day. Go over the rubric with students so that they understand all required components:
 - i. An explanation of the design including the food truck **Name** and **Logo** (symbolism). Address relevant **Context** for the food truck.
 - ii. Two signature items including a **Maine Entrée** and signature **drink or sweets**, explain WHY for each item.
 - iii. A brief **history/context** of the origins of the food and why the food may be a hit. Students should explain this from the perspective of the immigrant community, as well as from someone who just been introduced to the food.
 - iv. Students should discuss how this The Next Best New Food Truck will **engage and bring communities together**.

9. Assign Homework/Prep work for 9-11 graders for Day 3: Students should continue work on their projects and develop a presentation (can either be PowerPoint or poster board) on their food truck to share in class.

Day 3: Group Presentations

10. Give Students the first 10-15 minutes of class to do final coordination and collaboration for their class presentations.
11. Like “Shark Tank” environment or maybe not, give each group 3-4 minutes to present/share the rough idea to the class. At the end, give quick feedback about efficacy of the idea/proposal.

Optional Extension Activities

- Students can further their research and creativity by imagining a Grand Opening for the food truck. Students could determine:
 - Where will students place the truck and why to attract customers. (Requires an understanding their local community/city and its demographics)
 - Brief imagined bio (400-500 words) of the family starting this business with focus on immigration/migration journey (push and pull factors), an imagined picture or two of the family and its journey to US, hopes and dreams for the future.
 - What music would they play and why?
- Once the collaborative work is done, students could individually compose a 2-3 minutes **This I Believe Speech**—a takeaway editorial—on one of the elements of the Essential Questions. Give them 3-5 days to execute this.
 - What role does food play in immigration, assimilation, and acculturation?
 - Role of food in democratization of America?
 - What does “E Pluribus Unum” mean?
 - What is the importance of diversity? How does diversity (people and culture) contribute to or complicate the development of (collective and/or individual) identity?

OUR IMMIGRANT ORIGINS

Region	Population (1990)
NORTH AMERICA	11,179,693
ASIA	9,695,423
PHILIPPINES	1,740,475
CHINA	1,650,755
INDIA	1,270,823
Vietnam	1,214,537
Korea	921,978
Others	2,897,835
Mexico	5,765,034
Dominican Republic	921,980
Cuba	800,390
El Salvador	642,151
Jamaica	946,431
Haiti	515,444
Others	1,967,473

OUR IMMIGRANT ORIGINS (Continued)

Region	Population (1990)
NORTHERN & WESTERN EUROPE	1,324,377
AFRICA	1,342,275
SOUTH AMERICA	1,846,339
SOUTHERN & EASTERN EUROPE	2,645,596
Former Soviet Union	1,670,851
Poland	402,383
Others	512,240

OUR IMMIGRANT ORIGINS (Continued)

Region	Population (1990)
Germany	228,763
Others	324,893
Spain	45,627
Italy	57,127
France	56,127
United Kingdom	55,117
Others	343,231

OUR IMMIGRANT ORIGINS (Continued)

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Spain	45,627
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OUR IMMIGRANT ORIGINS (Continued)



Immigration Timeline Activity

Match the dates from the date bank with the events in United States history.

1790	1815	1880	1882	1892	1924	1948	1965	1986	2017
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1. _____ The Immigration Act of ---- limits the number of immigrants allowed into the United States yearly through nationality quotas. The law favors immigration from Northern and Western European countries. Just three countries, Great Britain, Ireland and Germany account for 70 percent of all available visas. Immigration from Southern, Central and Eastern Europe was limited. The Act completely excludes immigrants from Asia, aside from the Philippines, then an American colony.
2. _____ Immigration from Western Europe turns from a trickle into a gush, which causes a shift in the demographics of the United States. During this first wave of immigration, the Irish—many of them Catholic—account for an estimated one-third of all immigrants to the United States. Some 5 million German immigrants also come to the U.S.
3. _____ The United States passes the nation's first refugee and resettlement law to deal with the influx of Europeans seeking permanent residence in the United States after World War II.
4. _____ President Ronald Reagan signs into law the Simpson-Mazzoli Act, which grants amnesty to more than 3 million immigrants living illegally in the United States.
5. _____ Ellis Island, the United States' first immigration station, opens in New York Harbor. The first immigrant processed is Annie Moore, a teenager from County Cork in Ireland.
6. _____ The Chinese Exclusion Act passes, which bars Chinese immigrants from entering the U.S. Beginning in the 1850s, a steady flow of Chinese workers had immigrated to America. They worked in the gold mines, and garment factories, built railroads, and took agricultural jobs. Anti-Chinese sentiment grew as Chinese laborers became successful in America. This Act is the first in American history to place broad restrictions on certain immigrant groups.
7. _____ Congress passes the first law about who should be granted U.S. citizenship. The Naturalization Act of ---- allows any free white person of "good character," who has been living in the United States for two years or longer to apply for citizenship. Without citizenship, nonwhite residents are denied basic constitutional protections, including the right to vote, own property, or testify in court.
8. _____ President Donald Trump issues two executive orders—both titled "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States"—aimed at curtailing travel and immigration from six majority Muslim countries (Chad, Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia) as well as North Korea and Venezuela. Both of these travel bans are challenged in state and federal courts.
9. _____ The Immigration and Nationality Act overhauls the American immigration system. The Act ends the national origin quotas enacted in the 1920s which favored some racial and ethnic groups over others. The quota system is replaced with a seven-category preference system emphasizing family reunification and skilled immigrants. Over the next five years, immigration from war-torn regions of Asia, including Vietnam and Cambodia, would more than quadruple. Family reunification became a driving force in U.S. immigration.
10. _____ As America begins a rapid period of industrialization and urbanization, a second immigration boom begins. Between 1880 and 1920, more than 20 million immigrants arrive. The majority are from Southern, Eastern and Central Europe, including 4 million Italians and 2 million Jews. Many of them settle in major U.S. cities and work in factories.

Immigration Timeline Activity –Teacher Answer Key

Match the dates from the date bank with the events in United States history.

	1790	1815	1880	1882	1892	1924	1948	1965	1986	2017
1. <u>1924</u>	The Immigration Act of ---- limits the number of immigrants allowed into the United States yearly through nationality quotas. The law favors immigration from Northern and Western European countries. Just three countries, Great Britain, Ireland and Germany account for 70 percent of all available visas. Immigration from Southern, Central and Eastern Europe was limited. The Act completely excludes immigrants from Asia, aside from the Philippines, then an American colony.									
2. <u>1815</u>	Immigration from Western Europe turns from a trickle into a gush, which causes a shift in the demographics of the United States. During this first wave of immigration, the Irish—many of them Catholic—account for an estimated one-third of all immigrants to the United States. Some 5 million German immigrants also come to the U.S.									
3. <u>1948</u>	The United States passes the nation’s first refugee and resettlement law to deal with the influx of Europeans seeking permanent residence in the United States after World War II.									
4. <u>1986</u>	President Ronald Reagan signs into law the Simpson-Mazzoli Act, which grants amnesty to more than 3 million immigrants living illegally in the United States.									
5. <u>1892</u>	Ellis Island, the United States’ first immigration station, opens in New York Harbor. The first immigrant processed is Annie Moore, a teenager from County Cork in Ireland.									
6. <u>1882</u>	The Chinese Exclusion Act passes, which bars Chinese immigrants from entering the U.S. Beginning in the 1850s, a steady flow of Chinese workers had immigrated to America. They worked in the gold mines, and garment factories, built railroads, and took agricultural jobs. Anti-Chinese sentiment grew as Chinese laborers became successful in America. This Act is the first in American history to place broad restrictions on certain immigrant groups.									
7. <u>1790</u>	Congress passes the first law about who should be granted U.S. citizenship. The Naturalization Act of ---- allows any free white person of “good character,” who has been living in the United States for two years or longer to apply for citizenship. Without citizenship, nonwhite residents are denied basic constitutional protections, including the right to vote, own property, or testify in court.									
8. <u>2017</u>	President Donald Trump issues two executive orders—both titled “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States”—aimed at curtailing travel and immigration from six majority Muslim countries (Chad, Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia) as well as North Korea and Venezuela. Both of these travel bans are challenged in state and federal courts.									
9. <u>1965</u>	The Immigration and Nationality Act overhauls the American immigration system. The Act ends the national origin quotas enacted in the 1920s which favored some racial and ethnic groups over others. The quota system is replaced with a seven-category preference system emphasizing family reunification and skilled immigrants. Over the next five years, immigration from war-torn regions of Asia, including Vietnam and Cambodia, would more than quadruple. Family reunification became a driving force in U.S. immigration.									
10. <u>1880</u>	As America begins a rapid period of industrialization and urbanization, a second immigration boom begins. Between 1880 and 1920, more than 20 million immigrants arrive. The majority are from Southern, Eastern and Central Europe, including 4 million Italians and 2 million Jews. Many of them settle in major U.S. cities and work in factories.									

Rubric for Food Truck Design Project

Students will come up with the “The Next Best New Food Truck” in which the food is from another culture or immigrant group and has yet to enter dominant or mainstream American culture. Through this project, students will learn and understand history of diaspora, immigrant cultures, and the potential of food to educate, engage, and bring together the larger community.

For 5-8 Graders		For 9-11 Graders	
The basics. Visualization of the End product?	Scoring	The basics. Visualization of the End product?	Scoring
Students will deliver a presentation that must include:		Students will deliver a presentation that must include:	
1) An explanation of the design including the food truck <u>Name</u> and <u>Logo</u> (symbolism). Addresses relevant <u>Context</u> for the food truck.	30 pts _____	1) An explanation of the design including the food truck <u>Name</u> and <u>Logo</u> (symbolism). Addresses relevant <u>Context</u> for the food truck.	25 pts _____
2) Two signature items including a <u>Maine Entrée</u> and signature <u>drink or sweets</u> , explain <u>WHY</u> for each item.	40 pts _____	2) Two signature items including a <u>Maine Entrée</u> and signature <u>drink or sweets</u> , explain <u>WHY</u> for each item.	25 pts _____
3) A brief history/context of the <u>origins of the food</u> and why the food may be a hit. Students should explain this <u>from the perspective</u> of the immigrant community, as well as <u>from someone who just been introduced to the food</u> .	30 pts _____	3) A brief history/context of the <u>origins of the food</u> and why the food may be a hit. Students should explain this <u>from the perspective</u> of the immigrant community, as well as <u>from someone who just been introduced to the food</u> .	25 pts _____
		4) Students should discuss how this The Next Best New Food Truck will engage and bring communities together.	25 pts _____
	TOTAL out of 100: _____		TOTAL out of 100: _____

Additional resources for teachers from Gilder Lehrman.org

- Coming to America: Ellis Island and New York City by *Vincent J. Cannato*
- The 1965 Immigration Act: Opening the Nation to Immigrants of Color by *Tom Gjelten*
- Immigration Policy, Mexican Americans, and Undocumented Immigrants, 1954 to the Present by *Eladio Bobadilla*

Effective visuals and graphs to illuminate current global migration

<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>

Terrific interactive maps to see immigration and migration patterns in the US

<https://flowsmapper.geo.census.gov/map.html>

Stories about Food and Identity

<https://www.npr.org/tags/176170774/food-and-identity>

<https://foodandidentity.wordpress.com>

Other executive summaries, statistics, and charts of Immigration and Migration

- <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/us-immigration-trends>
- <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/03/10/us/20090310-immigration-explorer.html?hp>
- https://www.census.gov/newsroom/pdf/cspan_fb_slides.pdf
- <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/acs/acs-31.pdf>
- <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/09/28/chapter-5-u-s-foreign-born-population-trends/>
- https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/07_immigration_geography_singer.pdf