

## Learning About Latinx Immigration in North Carolina with "A Home on the Field"

### Overview

Throughout US history, immigration has played a vital role in American life and politics. As we see immigration issues play out in the news today, we often forget the human lives behind the headlines. Paul Cuadros's "A Home on the Field" places a spotlight on the people impacted by America's immigration policies. The book chronicles Cuadros's struggle to start up a soccer team at an increasingly Hispanic public high school in Siler City, North Carolina — and how that team grappled with acceptance on the playing field and off. Through the stories of the young Latino soccer players, Cuadros also addresses the surge of Latino immigrants into North Carolina throughout the 1990s, as well as the culture clashes experienced between the newcomers and long time residents. With its focus on youth athletes, their personal stories, and their own struggles through the process of immigration, "A Home on the Field" is a valuable resource for educators teaching about immigration in their classroom. The following three lesson plans, which use excerpts from the book to teach about immigration in North Carolina, can be taught individually or in unison. For teachers who have time to integrate the entire book into their curriculum, a reading guide is also included.

### Grades

Middle School

High School

### Contents

- Lesson 1 (pg. 3-13): Who Can Dream the American Dream? An Introduction to "A Home on the Field"
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- Lesson 3 (pg. 29-39): Exploring Immigrant Working Conditions and Immigration Reform with "A Home on the Field"
- Reading Guide (pg. 40-56)

### Essential Questions

- What stereotypes and myths exist regarding immigration?
- What is the history of immigration in the United States?
- What contributions have immigrants made to the United States throughout history?
- What is the American Dream and how does it apply to today's immigration debate?
- In what ways do immigrants have a positive and negative impact on America's economy today?
- What type of animosity and controversies exist around the issue of immigration and why?
- Why is cross cultural understanding important when discussing issues of immigration?
- What are the consequences of undocumented immigration on America?
- For what reasons do people emigrate to America?
- What are working conditions like in meat processing plants?
- What are working conditions like for North Carolina's farmworkers?
- What rights and protections should all immigrants have and why?
- What are possible reforms for immigration policy?

**Duration**

While lesson lengths will vary based on each classroom's level of discussion, lessons are designed to be completed in 60+ minutes.

**Preparation**

- Students should have an understanding of the history of immigration in North America. See the Constitutional Rights Foundation's "History of Immigration to 1850" and "History of Immigration to Present," available for free to teachers who register at <http://crfimmigrationed.org/index.php/lessons-for-teachers>.
- For a concise discussion of the terms "illegal immigrant," "undocumented worker," etc. please see, <https://www.nwirp.org/illegal-vs-undocumented-a-nwirp-board-members-perspective/>
- For teachers lacking the time to teach "A Home on the Field" in its entirety, these lessons use excerpts from "A Home on the Field" by Paul Cuadros. That said, the book makes an excellent supplemental reading when studying immigration, thus a complete reading guide is provided.
- Likely, students who are immigrants themselves will be part of your class demographics. It is important that teachers ensure these students feel respected and safe as this topic is broached in the classroom. Also, since immigration can be a controversial issue, it is important to set clear and firm expectations about respectful communication and tolerance in the classroom before discussing this topic. See the Carolina K-12's classroom management and character education activities for establishing a community where controversial topics can be safely addressed. (Available in the Database of K-12 Resources in the "Activities" section, or contact [CarolinaK12@unc.edu](mailto:CarolinaK12@unc.edu) for recommendations.)

## Who Can Dream the American Dream? An Introduction to “A Home on the Field”

### Overview

There are many common misconceptions regarding immigration and its effects on American society. These myths, coupled with the failure to acknowledge America’s history as a nation of immigrants, often result in animosity towards today’s newcomers. In this lesson, students will learn facts to dispel common myths about immigrants. Students will also explore the reasons for immigration throughout history, as well as the historical through-line regarding the quest for the “American Dream.” Using the Introduction to “A Home on the Field” and an excerpt from Chapter 11, students will gain an understanding of how these issues are at play in North Carolina’s current immigration issues.

### Materials

- Power Point accompaniment, “Learning About Immigration in North Carolina with *A Home on the Field*,” (slides 2-16) available in the Database of K-12 Resources (in PDF format) at <https://k12database.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2012/05/HomeontheFieldPPT1.pdf>
  - To view this PDF as a projectable presentation, save the file, click “View” in the top menu bar of the file, and select “Full Screen Mode”
  - To request an editable PPT version of this presentation, send a request to [CarolinaK12@unc.edu](mailto:CarolinaK12@unc.edu).
- “A Home on the Field,” by Paul Cuadros
  - Introduction chapter, p. vii-x
  - Excerpt from Chapter 11, p. 131-133
  - Visit the following website for book purchasing information: <http://www.harpercollins.com/books/Home-Field-Paul-Cuadros/?isbn=9780061120282>
- Discussion Questions for “Introduction to *A Home on the Field*,” attached
- American Dream Quotes, attached

### Procedure

#### Myths Regarding Immigrants

1. Project slide 2 of the PPT and ask students what comes to mind when they consider the word “immigration.” Note student responses on a piece of chart paper. Discuss with students what they likely already know, that immigration is a hotly debated and complicated issue, and ask them to discuss why they think this is. Reiterate to students that they have the right to have their own opinions regarding immigration, but it’s important their opinions are informed, based on facts, and expressed in respectful ways.
2. Tell students that you want to give them a chance to answer some questions regarding immigrants. Teachers can either have students respond to the statements physically by walking to the side of the room labeled with the word that represents their answer (“True” or “False”), or teachers can instruct students to remain seated and simply hold up a corresponding right or left hand noting their answer. Tell students to move or hold up their hand silently as you project each statement. Encourage students to follow their own thoughts and opinions rather than answering in accordance with their friends. Once students have responded, provide the factual information related each statement located below.

- Project slide 3: Immigrants take jobs away from US citizens.
  - False.
  - Although immigrants account for 12.5 percent of the U.S. population, they make up about 15 percent of the workforce. They are overrepresented among workers largely because the rest of our population is aging: Immigrants and their children have accounted for 58 percent of U.S. population growth since 1980. This probably won't change anytime soon. Low U.S. fertility rates and the upcoming retirement of the baby boomers mean that immigration is likely to be the only source of growth in what we call the "prime age" workforce -- workers ages 25 to 55 -- in the decades ahead. As record numbers of retirees begin drawing Social Security checks, younger immigrant workers will be paying taxes, somewhat easing the financial pressures on the system.

Moreover, immigrants tend to be concentrated in high- and low-skilled occupations that complement -- rather than compete with -- jobs held by native workers. And the foreign-born workers who fill lower-paying jobs are typically first-hired/first-fired employees, allowing employers to expand and contract their workforces rapidly. As a result, immigrants experience higher employment than natives during booms -- but they suffer higher job losses during downturns, including the current one.

It's true that an influx of new workers pushes wages down, but immigration also stimulates growth by creating new consumers, entrepreneurs and investors. As a result of this growth, economists estimate that wages for the vast majority of American workers are slightly higher than they would be without immigration. U.S. workers without a high school degree experience wage declines as a result of competition from immigrants, but these losses are modest, at just over 1 percent. Economists also estimate that for each job an immigrant fills, an additional job is created. (Source: Five Myths About Immigration from the *Washington Post*).

- Discuss:
  - Why do you think this misconception exists?
  - Immigrants are often doing some of the most toiling and difficult jobs, jobs that many people refuse to do. (Let students know they will focus on this issue later.) What types of jobs are immigrants often doing for our society? If these jobs weren't filled, how might that affect our society?
  - Project the quotes on slide 4 to further discussion of this issue. Tell students the two quotes are actually from "A Home on the Field," a book about immigration in the small town of Siler City, North Carolina. Let students know they'll be reading the book (or excerpts from the book) later and ask for their interpretation of the author's message:
    - ❖ "America spoke with its stomach and it wanted its tomatoes picked, its cucumbers gathered, its organs harvested, its blueberries busheled, its hamburger ground, its pork processed, its Thanksgiving Day turnkeys slaughtered, its Christmas trees cut, and its chicken butchered, and it didn't much care how that was done as long as the people who brought its food were kept invisible and cheap." (p. 56)
    - ❖ "Americans never really understood where their food or other agricultural products like Christmas trees came from. If they fully grasped the work, the sweat, the long hours for little pay, the cold that the workers endured during the hard winter months in the mountains of North Carolina, they might begin to view their Christmas mornings differently." (p. 100)
- Project slide 5: Immigration is at an all-time high, and most new immigrants came illegally.
  - False.
 

The historic high came more than a century ago, in 1890, when immigrants made up 14.8 percent of our population. Today, about two-thirds of immigrants are here legally, either as

naturalized citizens or as lawful permanent residents, more commonly known as "green card" holders. And of the approximately 10.8 million immigrants who are in the country illegally, about 40 percent arrived legally but overstayed their visas.

It's worth noting that although the unauthorized immigrant population includes more people from Mexico than from any other country, Mexicans are also the largest group of lawful immigrants. As for the flow of illegal immigrants, apprehensions along the U.S.-Mexico border have declined by more than 50 percent over the past four years, while increases in the size of the illegal population, which had been growing by about 500,000 a year for more than a decade, have stopped. This decline is largely due to the recession, but stepped-up border enforcement is playing a part. (Source: Five Myths About Immigration from the *Washington Post*)

- Discuss:
  - Why do you think people assume that most immigrants are here illegally?
  - Those who do come into America illegally do so at great risk. Why do you think they take such risks to live and work here?
- Project slide 6: Today's immigrants are not integrating into American life like past waves did.
  - False
  - The integration of immigrants remains a hallmark of America's vitality as a society and a source of admiration abroad, as it has been throughout our history. Although some people complain that today's immigrants are not integrating into U.S. society as quickly as previous newcomers did, the same charge was leveled at virtually every past wave of immigrants, including the large numbers of Germans, Irish and Italians who arrived in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Today, as before, immigrant integration takes a generation or two. Learning English is one key driver of this process; the education and upward mobility of immigrants' children is the other. On the first count, today's immigrants consistently seek English instruction in such large numbers that adult-education programs cannot meet the demand, especially in places such as California. On the second count, the No Child Left Behind Act has played a critical role in helping educate immigrant children because it holds schools newly accountable for teaching them English.

However, the unauthorized status of millions of foreign-born immigrants can slow integration in crucial ways. For example, illegal immigrants are ineligible for in-state tuition at most public colleges and universities, putting higher education effectively out of their reach. And laws prohibiting unauthorized immigrants from getting driver's licenses or various professional credentials can leave them stuck in jobs with a high density of other immigrants and unable to advance. (Source: Five Myths About Immigration from the *Washington Post*)

- Discuss:
  - Consider the continent of North America and its history. Was English one of the first languages spoken on North America? (Discuss with students how language scholars believe that prior to the arrival of Columbus, approximately 300 languages were spoken in North America by the various native people living here. The arrival of Columbus and the Spanish in 1492 brought Spanish speakers to North America, and began the process of eradicating many of the native languages. As Europe further colonized North America through the 13 colonies, languages such as Dutch, German, Swedish, Welsh, French, and English were used. While English became the predominate language due to the domination of English speaking countries and leaders, it was certainly not the original language.)

- Why do you think there is so much debate surrounding whether or not immigrants to this country can speak English, given that English was not the native language here (and in fact, Spanish was spoken here before English)?
  - Why do you think the misconception exists that most immigrants can't speak English?
  - Do any of you speak more than one language? What is difficult about learning a new language?
  - Many immigrants are bilingual – why is this actually a skill we should all be impressed with and aspire to?
  
- Project slide 7: Immigrants come here for welfare and thus put a strain on America's economy and resources.
  - False. "Undocumented men come to the United States almost exclusively to work. In 2003, over 90 percent of undocumented men worked—a rate higher than that for U.S. citizens or legal immigrants (Passel, Capps, and Fix 2004). Undocumented men are younger, less likely to be in school, and less likely to be retired than other men (Capps et al. 2003). Moreover, undocumented immigrants are ineligible for welfare, food stamps, Medicaid, and most other public benefits (Fix, Zimmermann, and Passel 2001)." (Source: <http://www.urban.org/publications/900898.html>)
  - In fact, "most studies have found that immigrants are a net benefit to the economy because, as a 1994 Urban Institute report concludes, immigrants generate significantly more in taxes paid than they cost in services received.' The Council of Economic Advisers similarly found in 1986 that 'immigrants have a favorable effect on the overall standard of living.'" (Source: David Cole, "The New Know-Nothingism: Five Myths About Immigration," *The Nation*. October 17, 1994).
  
- Project slide 8: Immigrants don't pay taxes.
  - False. "Undocumented immigrants do pay taxes. Between one half and three quarters of undocumented immigrants pay state and federal taxes. They also contribute to Medicare and provide as much as 7 billion dollars a year to the Social Security Fund. Further still, undocumented workers pay sales taxes where applicable and property taxes—directly if they own and indirectly if they rent. (Source: <http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/myths.html>)
  
- Project slide 9: Immigrants are often recruited to come here by American companies.
  - True. Project slide 10 and read the quotes from "A Home on the Field" out loud, again asking students for their interpretation and opinion of the author's message:
    - "Big business had invited them to come and work – in many cases, it had transported them, provided them housing, and given them jobs that others...didn't want. This is something that anti-immigrant advocates refused to admit. Many workers, whether undocumented or documented, had been invited by America's most influential and best representative – Corporate America. It was business that decided that it needed a more pliable and cheaper labor force, and it went out and got it despite, or encouraged by, Washington's lack of official immigration policy." (Source: *A Home on the Field*, by Paul Cuadros, p. 44)
    - "Companies needed a compliant and pliable labor force that could endure the grueling conditions of plants and that wouldn't complain of conditions, wages, or want to unionize. They found their labor force in the Latin American worker and began recruiting Latino workers along the border and in Mexico. Some companies even provided transportation and promised housing if they came to the Midwest or Southeast to work in their plants." ((Source: *A Home on the Field*, by Paul Cuadros, p. viii)

### Introduction - "A Home on the Field"

3. Again remind students that these quotes come from a book written about our very own state, "A Home on the Field." Project [slide 11](#) and let students know that they will be reading this book (or excerpts from the book) in order to learn more about immigration in our state. Teachers may want to give students a brief overview of the book, which can be as simple as reading its back cover:
  - "For more than ten years, the small town of Siler City, NC, has been at the front lines of immigration, drawing workers from Latin America as well as from traditional Latino enclaves across the US. When reporter Paul Cuadros moved south to study the impact of the burgeoning Latino community, he encountered a volatile culture clash between longtime residents and the newcomers, one that eventually boiled over into an anti-immigrant rally featuring ex-Klansman David Duke. The bitter struggle imbued Cuadros with a new purpose: to show the growing numbers of Latino youth that their lives could be more than menial work at the local poultry plant. Soccer would be the key to helping these boys find a better place in this world."
4. Instruct students to read the Introduction chapter to "A Home on the Field," then discuss/answer the attached discussion questions in partners or groups of three. After approximately 15-20 minutes, discuss the reading as a class.

### "The American Dream"

5. Next, project [slide 12](#) and tell students to consider the history of immigration in this country and ask students to consider the reasons people have come to this country throughout history; note student thoughts on chart paper. If any students know their ancestry or heritage, ask them to share why their earlier ancestors came to America. To further student thinking, project the image of the Statue of Liberty on [slide 13](#) and ask students to discuss:
  - What do you see? What is this?
  - What is the purpose of the Statue of Liberty? When and why was it built?
    - Discuss with students that the full name of the monument is the "Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World." It was a gift of friendship from the people of France, dedicated in 1886, and is generally revered as a universal symbol of freedom and democracy. The statue is located on Liberty Island in New York City, adjacent to Ellis Island, New York City.
  - Do you think the Statue is still a symbol of freedom and democracy today? Why or why not?
  - What do you know about Ellis Island?
    - Discuss that Ellis Island opened on January 1, 1892, and became the nation's premier federal immigration station. In operation until 1954, the station processed over 12 million immigrant steamship passengers. As immigrants throughout history arrived at Ellis Island from around the world, the Statue was often one of their first glimpses of the United States, announcing that their journey to the "land of the free" has finally come to an end. Millions of America's population can now trace their ancestry through Ellis Island.
  - If you were an immigrant arriving at Ellis Island in the late 1800s, what might the Statue mean to you?
  - Why do you think the Statue is a woman?
  - Though it's hard to see in the picture, there are chains at the feet of the statue, designed as if to appear that the Statue has broken or escaped these chains. What might this symbolize?
  - What do you think the torch symbolizes? What about the tablet in her other hand?
  - What might the crown symbolize? Why do you think there are seven spikes on the crown?
    - Explain to students that The Statue of Liberty portrays a woman escaping the chains of tyranny, which lie at her feet. Held aloft in her right hand is a flaming torch, representing liberty. Her left hand grasps a tablet on which is inscribed in roman numerals, the date the United States declared its independence, "July 4, 1776." She wears flowing robes, and the seven rays of her spiked crown that jets out into the sky symbolize the seven seas and continents.
  - Why do you think the seven seas and continents are represented in the statue?

6. Move on to slide 14 and explain to students that there is also a poem engraved at the Statue of Liberty by Emma Lazzurus. Ask a student volunteer to read the poem out loud and discuss as a class:
  - What message is the poet trying to convey?
  - Who is the statue welcoming according to the poem and why?
  - Is this message still valid in America today? Why or why not? If not, what changed and why, in your opinion? If yes, what evidence can you note that proves it is still a valid message here in America?
  
7. Next, project slide 15 and tell students you want them to spend 5 minutes considering the concept of the “American Dream” in small groups. As students begin to discuss the first question, give each group one of the attached quotes regarding the “American Dream” to further their discussion. After all groups have spent a few moments discussing, have them read their quote to the remainder of class and briefly summarize their conversation. Further discuss:
  - How does the concept of the “American Dream” connect to Lazzurus’s poem and the Statue of Liberty?
  - What values are implicit in the concept of an “American Dream?” (i.e. justice, liberty, fairness, democracy, equality, hard work, opportunity for all, etc.)
  - Does America still hold the same values today as those represented in the Statue of Liberty and in the concept of the American Dream? Explain.
  
8. Post a second piece of chart paper beside the first student brainstorm of reasons for immigration throughout history. Ask students to now note the various reasons immigrants, such as those Cuadros referred to as coming in a “silent migration,” venture to America today. Once students have shared all of their thoughts, compare the two lists. It is likely many answers will be similar. Discuss the commonalities between the two lists then ask:
  - Is the “American Dream” open to everyone in the world? In America? Explain.
  - What access should today’s immigrants have to participate in the “American Dream?”
  - What role do stereotypes and myths regarding immigrants, such as those we discussed at the beginning of class, play regarding immigrants access to the “American Dream?”
  
9. Again, focus students on the book, “A Home on the Field” and tell students that they are going to jump ahead in the story and read a few pages from Chapter 11, in which Cuadros addresses the concept of the “American Dream.” Explain to students that by this point in the book, Cuadros, while facing many obstacles and challenges, has been able to start a soccer team at Jordan Matthews High School in Siler City, NC. Let students know that in the excerpt they will read, they will meet “Fish,” one of the players on the team, and learn about a challenging situation he is facing.  
Students should begin reading at the second full paragraph on page 131 with “Lenin and I met at San Felipe’s Mexican restaurant in the new shopping complex where a Wal-Mart had been built.” They should stop at the end of the chapter on page 133. Discuss as a class:
  - Why does Fish have to return to Mexico? What is he risking by returning? (p. 132) What does taking this risk say about Fish’s character?
  - Why does Cuadros say that “Neither a fence nor the United States Army” can stop immigrants from coming to America? (p. 133) Do you agree or disagree and why?
  - What does Cuadros mean when he says, “What I found truly ironic about the migration of Latinos to the United States, was that it was motivated by a truly American desire...”? (p. 133)
  - How does Cuadros define being an American? Do you agree with his definition? Why or why not? What is your definition of an American? (p. 133)
  - What evidence backs up Cuadros’s claim that immigration “makes us a stronger nation, more adaptable and smarter, and fosters unique and creative talents”? (p. 133)
  
10. To further the conversation, project the political cartoon on slide 16 and ask students to examine it silently for a few moments, then discuss:



- What do you see? (Have student's first point out symbols, people, structures, text, etc.)
- What message is the artist sending about immigration?
- Who might like or agree with this cartoon and why? Who might dislike it/disagree with it and why?
- If you were to give this political cartoon a title, what would you call it and why?
- How does this political cartoon connect to the excerpt from "A Home on the Field" you just read and our discussion throughout today?

11. As a homework assignment, tell students to find an image that they feel illustrates the answer to the question, "What is the American Dream?" The image can be taken from a magazine, newspaper, website, museum, etc. It can be a photograph or a piece of art (i.e. painting, sculpture, drawing, etc.) Students should write a paragraph or more explaining why they feel their chosen image illustrates the "American Dream." Instruct students to also print the image or bring in a copy to class.

During the beginning of class the following day, ensure students have time to share their homework using one of the following two options:

- Instruct students to post their images around the room. Give each student 2 Post-It Notes and give them approximately 5 minutes to browse through all of the images. As they browse, tell students to place their Post-It Note beside the two images (other than their own) that they feel most represents their concept of the American Dream. Once all students have voted, have them return to their seats. Ask the students whose images have the most Post-It Notes by them to share their paragraph regarding what the image means to them. Afterwards, allow the students who voted on the image to share whether they had a similar interpretation when choosing that particular image or not.
- Divide students into groups of 5-6 and instruct them to spend a few moments passing their images among their group mates. Each student should then retrieve their image and share their paragraph regarding how the image answers the question "What is the American Dream?"

#### **Additional Resources**

- Office of Immigration Statistics: "Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States"
  - <https://ohss.dhs.gov/topics/immigration/unauthorized-immigrants/estimates-unauthorized-immigrant-population-residing>
  - Includes summaries and graphs of undocumented immigration trends dating back to 1980.
- Doris Meissner, "5 Myths About Immigration", *The Washington Post*
  - <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/30/AR2010043001106.html>
- "Times Topics – Immigration", *The New York Times*.
  - <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/i/immigration-and-emigration/index.html>
  - This site is constantly updated with the latest immigration news from *The New York Times* and other online sources. It also includes a short summary of current immigration policy, the historical background information about immigration in the United States, and interactive graphs and charts.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Discussion Questions – Introduction to “A Home on the Field”**

1. What myths that we discussed does the introduction address?
2. Why does Cuadros characterize the Mexican and Latin American migration to America as a previously “silent migration?” (vi) What caused America to recently “become aware of this migration and its impact on our society?” (vii)
3. What does Cuadros identify as the origin of America’s immigration debate? What caused the initial influx of immigrants to this country? (vi)
4. Describe the “free trade” policies (such as the North American Free Trade Agreement) of the United States and their effect on Mexico. How did the agreement affect immigration to America? (vii)
5. What transformation took place in the food processing industry and why did this transformation result in an increase in migrant workers? (viii)
6. Why did companies actively recruit Latino workers? (viii)
7. Many Americans express anger towards immigrant workers, even though such workers are being actively recruited, hired, and exploited by American business owners. Why do you think the immigrants themselves take the brunt of the anger, rather than the business owners who strategically profit off of the situation?
8. What led the migration of Latinos to become a permanent situation? (viii) If you were recruited to work in another country for several years, would you want to bring your husband or wife, children, and other close family members for a better life? Explain.
9. What does Cuadros mean when he says that “Small rural communities like Siler City, North Carolina were at a crossroads when the Latino migration began?” (ix)
10. What positive effects has the migration of Latino works had on Siler City? Why do you think native North Carolinians often focus on the negative aspects of immigration (i.e., legality) rather than the positive impacts? (ix)

## American Dream Quotes

There are those who will say that the liberation of humanity, the freedom of man and mind is nothing but a dream. They are right. It is the American Dream.

~Archibald MacLeish

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I look forward confidently to the day when all who work for a living will be one with no thought to their separateness as Negroes, Jews, Italians or any other distinctions. This will be the day when we bring into full realization the American dream -- a dream yet unfulfilled. A dream of equality of opportunity, of privilege and property widely distributed; a dream of a land where men will not take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few; a dream of a land where men will not argue that the color of a man's skin determines

~Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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We believe that what matters most is not narrow appeals masquerading as values, but the shared values that show the true face of America; not narrow values that divide us, but the shared values that unite us: family, faith, hard work, opportunity and responsibility for all, so that every child, every adult, every parent, every worker in America has an equal shot at living up to their God-given potential. That is the American dream and the American value.

~Senator John Kerry

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America is the sum of our dreams. And what binds us together, what makes us one American family, is that we stand up and fight for each other's dreams, that we reaffirm that fundamental belief - I am my brother's keeper, I am my sister's keeper - through our politics, our policies, and in our daily lives.

~President Barack Obama

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Being an American is so much more than just having citizenship. It's that beat in your heart to be free, to be your own man, to have control over your own destiny. America has always been an idea. It has nothing to do with papers, documents, or immigration laws. It has a lot to do with ideals and dreams.

~Paul Cuadros

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The American Dream is "that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position."

~James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America*, 1931.

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Let America be America again.  
Let it be the dream it used to be.  
Let it be the pioneer on the plain  
Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed--  
Let it be that great strong land of love  
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme  
That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty  
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,  
But opportunity is real, and life is free,  
Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There's never been equality for me,  
Nor freedom in this "homeland of the free.")

~ Langston Hughes, Excerpt from *Let America be America Again*

## Exploring the Need for Cross Cultural Understanding with “A Home on the Field”

### Overview

When studying controversial issues such as immigration, students may experience disagreements or feel discomfort with the topic. In this lesson, students will explore the concept of diversity and why having diversity, be it of cultures, races, opinions, etc., is actually an advantage to any group. With this foundation, students will then explore why immigration is such a controversial topic and read excerpts from “A Home on the Field” that illustrate some of the anger surrounding issues of immigration. Through reading and discussion, students will gain an understanding of the importance of cross-cultural understanding when discussing controversial issues such as immigration.

### Materials

- “A Home on the Field,” by Paul Cuadros
  - Excerpt from Chapter 4, pg. 35-42
  - Chapter 5
- Reading Group Roles, attached
- Discussion questions for Chapters 4 & 5, attached

### Procedure

#### Warm Up: Where Do You Stand?

1. As a warm-up, ask students to discuss:
  - What would life be like if we were all the same?
2. Next, write the word **diversity** on the board and ask students to share what they think the word means. Create a definition inclusive of the feedback provided from students. Discuss with students how a diverse classroom is a classroom full of people who have differing opinions, values, backgrounds, cultures, races, etc. Explain to students that such diversity makes a classroom community more interesting and rich, and that it is something to be celebrated. To illustrate the differences students inhabit in a safe way, tell students they will participate in an activity called “Where Do You Stand.”
3. Draw the class’s attention to the numbered line. Tell students that you will say a word or phrase and that they are to move along the line according to their opinion of the subject, 1 being strongly disagree or dislike, 10 being strongly agree or love. Remind students of class expectations and to move safely about the room. Also, encourage students to be brave enough to take their own stand on issues and not to simply follow their friends’ movements. Tell students that they must not talk during the exercise. Begin to read off subjects that you want the class to explore (take around 8 minutes to do so); it is recommended that you start off with simple items, like foods, and then move to more substantive subjects. After each subject or phrase is called and students move, give students a moment to notice where everyone else in the class stands. Examples of subjects to call out include:
 

Pizza	Brussel sprouts
Chocolate	Playing sports
Country music	Hip-hop
Videogames	Cartoons

Shopping	Math
Police officers	Teachers
Democrats	Republicans

Example statements:

The best type of music is country music.

In past years, I have struggled with math.

I am generally a happy, positive person.

My family means a lot to me.

I worry about the people I care about.

I believe you should stand up to your friends if they are teasing someone.

- Once you have called all of the topics or statements you choose to use, ask students to guess what they think the point of the exercise was. Ideally, students will point out that at times there were perhaps similarities among them, but that there was also never complete agreement among them. Students may also note that some reactions surprised them or that people who are seemingly “alike” (guys, girls, white students, black students, etc.) didn’t necessarily respond alike.
- Draw students’ attention back to the word **diversity** and ask them to connect it to the experience they just had. Tell students that you want them to keep this exercise in their minds, particularly as the class delves into more controversial material and discussions throughout the year. Point out that they are a diverse group of people, with different experiences, backgrounds, cultures, opinions, and attitudes, and that this is something to be celebrated. Ask them to imagine how boring class would be if every single one of them was exactly the same. Also, point out to students that since they don’t necessarily agree on music or food, when even more serious topics are discussed, they should expect to again have a diversity of opinions once more. Facilitate the understanding that such diversity should be welcomed and respected.

**Teacher Note:** When studying controversial issues such as immigration, students at some point may experience a disagreement or feel discomfort with the topic. At any such point, remind them of this activity and that it is acceptable and expected that differences will be present. This activity can even be used for developing a “catch word” to diffuse a conversation that gets too heated. (For example: “Broccoli! Remember, we don’t even agree on broccoli, so it’s OK to disagree about this. Let’s just take a breath and listen to each other.”)

### Immigration and Controversy

- Next, tell students to focus again on issues of immigration and ask them to share why they think it is such a controversial topic. Probe students to share the various aspects of immigration that are debated and note these on the board. Once students have expended their thoughts, remind them of the importance of remembering that throughout the debates (dealt with in newspapers, on TV, in the government, in schools, etc.) it’s important to remember that there are individual human being’s futures being decided. Regardless of one’s opinion on immigration, we should always remember that we are ultimately talking about what rights, privileges, and resources human beings should have (and not have.)
  - Have you seen or heard people get angry when discussing/debating immigration? Who? (i.e. local, state, and federal government representatives, family members, friends, etc.)
  - Why do you think people get so angry when discussing controversial issues such as this?
  - Does becoming mad help solve the problem or reform immigration? Why is it important to remain calm and professional when discussing such issues?
- Tell students they are going to read an excerpt from Chapter 4 or Chapter 5 of “A Home on the Field,” which illustrates some of the anger surrounding issues of immigration. Divide students into small groups and assign half of the groups in the class to read the excerpt from Chapter 4; the other half of the groups

in class should be assigned to read Chapter 5. (Optionally, teachers can give each group member a Reading Group Role; five suggested roles are attached. These roles can be used anytime teachers want to have students discuss an aspect of the book in small groups.)

- Tell students reading the excerpt from Chapter 4 to begin on page 35 at the bottom of the page with “That summer, on a hot July day, Rick Givens was handing out at the Siler City Police Station...” and to stop at the end of the chapter. Let students know that in this chapter, the town begins to struggle with some of the issues it is experiencing based on the influx of new immigrants. The struggles illustrated in this chapter specifically relate to education.
- Students reading Chapter 5 should complete the entire chapter (p. 43-57). Let students know that this chapter also involves the town struggling with issues of immigration but things go a step further when the KKK is called in.

Handouts containing discussion questions for each chapter are attached. Since each chapter has numerous discussion questions, teachers may want to assign particular questions to the various groups reading the same chapter; that way, each group will have different conversations that they can summarize for the remainder of class after the activity is complete.

8. Once students have read and discussed their questions in their groups, have two volunteers summarize each of the chapters read. Then, have each group report back regarding their discussion of and answers to the questions assigned to their group. Once finished, further discuss:
  - In what ways did these chapters illustrate how Siler City was struggling with diversity?
  - What mistakes do you feel certain people made in how they handled their discomfort or anger with diversity? What alternative choices could they have made?
  - If you could say something to anyone from either of these two chapters, what would you want to say and why? (i.e., imagine you could stand up and speak at the meeting, what would you say? Or, imagine you could grab David Duke’s microphone and say something to the rally participants. What would you say?) Teachers can optionally assign this as a written activity.
  - Regardless of your opinion regarding immigration, why is cross cultural understanding important to discussing the issue?
9. As a culminating activity, give students the following two options to complete:
  - Tell students to think of everything that was read in and discussed about chapter’s 4 and 5. Ask them to ponder what they feel was the most surprising, interesting, newsworthy, or intriguing moment or situation discussed. Instruct students to create a newspaper headline, drawn picture, and caption depicting something introduced in these two chapters. (Encourage students to work on something from the chapter that they did not read.)

Teachers should circulate as students brainstorm the aspect(s) of the chapter they want to work with, and may also want to encourage students to choose different topics to ensure variety in final products. Once students have completed their headline, image, and caption (assign for homework if needed) post student work around the room and allow the class to circulate and view all of the headlines. Then, choose a few to use as a catalyst for review by discussing what each represents.

- Tell students to imagine that they are a television reporter attending either the meeting at Siler City Elementary detailed in Chapter 4, or the immigration rally detailed in Chapter 5. Tell students to prepare a 2-minute newscast live from the scene, recapping what is happening/has happened. The newscast must include at least six facts from the discussion and must be realistic to the actual circumstances. Students should write out their script and should also be prepared to deliver their news report to classmates at the start of the next class.

## Reading Group Roles

### Facilitator

Your job is to lead the discussion on the reading assigned to your group. Make sure each of the discussion questions for your reading is discussed and ensure that every voice is heard (including your own.) Make sure the group stays focused on the task assigned.

While ensuring everyone else participates in the discussion, you should also provide your thoughts. Make sure you listen to your other group members and add on to their ideas whenever possible. Pose any of your own questions that come to mind as well.

### Recorder

Your job is to take notes during the discussion your group has regarding the reading assigned to you. Make sure you write down a final answer to each discussion question. You will assist the Presenter in preparing his/her notes for the summary he/she provides to the other groups as well.

You should also participate in the discussion by providing your thoughts to the questions posed regarding the reading assigned to your group. Make sure you listen to your other group members and add on to their ideas whenever possible. Pose any of your own questions that come to mind as well.

### Task Manager

Your job is to monitor the time as your group works and to provide time warnings (i.e. "10 minutes left," "5 minutes left," etc.) to your group. Make sure that your group equally divides its time among the questions and tasks, while ensuring all aspects of the assignment are completed before time is up. If any supplies are needed, you are responsible for getting them and ensuring they are returned. Also, assist the Facilitator in ensuring everyone in the group participates and stays on track.

You should also participate in the discussion by providing your thoughts to the questions posed regarding the reading assigned to your group. Make sure you listen to your other group members and add on to their ideas whenever possible. Pose any of your own questions that come to mind as well.

### Presenter

Your job is to summarize your group's discussion for the remainder of class once time is up. Make sure you do this in a way that teaches the other groups about the reading assigned to your group. Be prepared to speak in a clear, concise manner. The Recorder can help you in preparing and writing the summary to be presented.

You should also participate in the discussion by providing your thoughts to the questions posed regarding the reading assigned to your group. Make sure you listen to your other group members and add on to their ideas whenever possible. Pose any of your own questions that come to mind as well.



**Q & A-er**

Your job is to keep track of any questions that your group members pose throughout the discussion. Whenever possible, assist in finding the answers to these questions. (For example, you may need to look up a word in the dictionary, or consult your text book for further information on a topic.) If the group needs the teacher's assistance, you are responsible for communicating the group's questions or needs to the teacher. Also, after the Presenter summarizes your group's reading and discussion with the remainder of class, you are responsible for answering any clarifying questions other groups may have of your group.

You should also participate in the discussion by providing your thoughts to the questions posed regarding the reading assigned to your group. Make sure you listen to your other group members and add on to their ideas whenever possible. Pose any of your own questions that come to mind as well.

## A Home on the Field, Chapter 4 (p. 35-42)

1. According to Rick Givens, what are some problems that Siler City was experiencing with immigration? What action does Givens take to try and correct the issues? Do you feel his decision was a good one? Why or why not? (36)
2. Cuadros explains that Siler City "... was expending resources to deal with the labor force the poultry industry was actively recruiting. It was subsidizing the poultry industry, making up for inadequate and costly health plans that workers didn't choose..." Yet, when placing blame, it is seldom directed towards the industries profiting from immigration. Rather, blame is placed on the immigrant himself. Why do you think this is the case? (p. 36)
3. What does Cuadros mean when he says that Givens saw the problems with immigration "as a matter of black and white?" (p. 36) Is viewing things in this way effective? Why or why not?
4. What types of discriminatory acts towards Latinos occurred after Givens' letter? (p. 37)
5. What change in Siler City's schools occurred in 1995? (p. 37)
6. By 1998, what percentage of Siler City's schools were "Limited English Proficient"(ESL)? At that time, what support did the state offer the schools and teachers dealing with this surge of ESL students?
7. Why did "white flight" start to occur in Siler City's schools? (p. 38)
8. Why do you think language is always a major aspect of contention with immigration? (p. 39) Even though we are officially an English speaking country today, English was not the first language originally spoken in North America. How should this fact shape the language debate in your opinion?
9. Describe the September, 1999 school board meeting on Siler City Elementary transfer policy. Did some of the parents have valid concerns? Explain. On the other hand, were some of the views expressed unfair? Explain.
10. What does Cuadros allude to as being "the South's solution to all problems when it comes to race?" (p. 40) Why is this an unrealistic and unjust solution in practice?
11. What messages do Heidi Green, Doris Marsh, and Sam Gregor send in their statements to the crowd? (40-41) Do you agree or disagree with their statements and why?
12. How do you imagine the Latino parents felt throughout this meeting?
13. Do you agree with David Gonzalez, who said the true issues at play were "segregation" and "discrimination?" Explain. (p. 41)
14. Why do you think it is a misconception that Latinos do not pay taxes? (p. 41)
15. Cuadros notes of the white parents: "They were abandoning their institutions in favor of places like the new charter school where their children would not be in the minority. They felt they had no choice. Their own prejudice and fear were pushing them out of their own town and they were mad. The white power structure in town was being challenged by the fast migration. Its members didn't know how to handle it. They needed the Latino workers to man the chicken plants and keep their economy going, but they didn't

necessarily want the people or their children to live with them and share resources.” What does he mean by a “white power structure?” Based on looking at the situation from this perspective, how would you characterize the parents and the Siler City community in general? (p. 41)

16. How do you imagine the immigrant children felt when attending Siler City Elementary? Did any of these children have any choice in being brought to or born in America? Why then do you think they are being blamed and purposefully made to feel unwelcome?
17. What are the positive aspects of having a multicultural classroom? Why do you think the majority of teachers and parents were not addressing such positive possibilities?
18. Explain the comparison Cuadros makes in terms of how towns deal with migration. (p. 42)
19. In your opinion, why do communities often refute change so passionately? (p. 42)

#### **A Home on the Field - Chapter 5, p. 43-57**

1. Why was Givens receiving so much “flak”? Do you think he was rightfully portrayed as a “bigot?” Why or why not? (p. 43)
2. Why do you think many Southerners dismiss the idea of race being a factor in decision making? What does Cuadros mean when he says that “White Southerners had decided that the end of Jim Crow had also been the end of racism”? Why do many people, particularly people who are white, carry this misconception that racism is no longer an issue? (p. 43)
3. What message is Cuadros trying to convey when he says that “race in America is an extremely complicated issue, intertwined with class and history, and it runs across the surface of many different issues like topsoil...”? (p. 43)
4. Why are many people so uncomfortable talking about issues of race? Cuadros notes that many white people resent being labeled as racist and don’t want to confront “the economic and social structure of their communities [that] favored them, to the disadvantage of others.” What point is Cuadros making? (p. 44)
5. Cuadros notes that Latinos were confused as to why they were being met with such hostility. What double-standard does Cuadros explain as the impetus of their confusion? (p. 44)
6. What realization does Givens have when he travels to Mexico? (p. 44-45) How does his acquired cultural awareness better prepare him to deal with immigration issues? How could such understanding aid us all?
7. While visiting Mexico, Givens meets a teenager who, though deformed, limps for miles on his crutches to attend school. How does the value this student places on education compare to the value students at our school place on education? (p. 45)

8. How would you characterize Givens based on his statement after his visit to Mexico: "I still say illegal is illegal but I found out it wasn't just a simple black-and-white issue...I was wrong and I am man enough to admit it," (p. 45)
9. In what ways did Givens live up to his pledge to "help the community assimilate and become more a part of the greater Siler City community?" (p. 45)
10. Describe Richard Vanderford. (p. 46)
11. Why did many in the African American community support the Latinos and denounce the KKK rally on February 19<sup>th</sup>? (p. 47)
12. Cuadros notes that Latino children "went to school in fear and trepidation" and that "they couldn't understand why people were so against them. Their families worked hard and supported themselves, they went to school, why did people hate them so much? What had they done?" (p. 48) Imagine being faced by a small child asking these questions of you. How would you respond?
13. Why do you think the "schools ignored what was happening?" Do you think the schools should have taken a different approach? Why or why not? (p. 48)
14. What message is Margaret Pollard conveying when she says: "So long as there is no talking there is no chance of resolution. When the conversations begin, even though they may begin in conflict, it is out of conflict that we get a sense of those things that unite us and see our common issues, our humanity, our common needs." (p. 49)
15. Why do you think Cuadros said that "color film seemed inappropriate" for the day of the rally? (p. 50)
16. Summarize the message in David Duke's speech.
17. Why does David Duke call on African-Americans? (p. 52) How do you imagine the African American community responded to this call?
18. Cuadros says that the rhetoric of Duke's speech was similar to what professionals within the community had been saying, yet when spoken by the Klan member, "The hate within the words was laid bare by the identity of the speaker." What point is Cuadros making? (p. 53)

19. What validity can be found in both Dwight Jordan's and Julio Perez's perspectives? How could their differing perspective be reconciled? (p. 53-54)
  
20. Why was David Duke's action of filling his plate with fried chicken significant to Cuadros?
  
21. What does Cuadros say that people sincere in their interests in reducing illegal immigrants would do? (p. 56)
  
22. Why do you think many Latinos feel "unrequited love" for America? (p. 56)
  
23. How would you describe the tone/mood at the end of this chapter? If you had an opportunity to speak to the author in this moment, what would you say to attempt to lift his spirits? (p. 56-57)

## Understanding Human Stories: A Look at Immigration with “30 Days”

### Overview

What better way to give people a crash course in empathy than to have them inhabit somebody else's life for 30 days? That's exactly what the FX Network show *30 Days* attempts to do. Supplementary to reading “A Home on the Field,” students will view and discuss season two's opening episode, “Immigration,” in which “a border-patrolling minuteman” moves in with an undocumented Mexican family.

### Materials

- *30 Days* Season 2, Episode 1 – “Immigration”
  - This episode can be found on Netflix (available for on demand viewing) or at <http://vimeo.com/11155073>

### Procedure

1. Explain to students that they are going to watch an episode of a television show called *30 Days*. The premise of the show is to give people a “crash course in empathy” by having them move in with someone different than them in some way. The experiment is to see whether people can come to understand those on the other side of an issue. Let students know that they are going to watch an episode called “Immigration,” in which “a border-patrolling minuteman” moves in with an undocumented Mexican family for a month.
2. Play the first 2 minutes of the episode, which sets up the premise of the episode, then discuss:
  - What are the two sides to the immigration debate?
  - We are told that a “patriotic minute man vigilante” is going to move in with a family of “illegal immigrants/illegal aliens.” What do these terms mean?
    - Explain that the “Minuteman Project is an activist organization started in 2005 by a group of private individuals in the United States to monitor the United States–Mexico border's flow of illegal immigrants. The name derives from the Minutemen, militiamen who fought in the American Revolution. The Minuteman Project describes itself as “a citizens' Neighborhood Watch on our border.” (Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minuteman\\_Project](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minuteman_Project))
    - The term illegal immigrant or illegal alien refers to someone who is living in a country not of their origin and does not meet the legal requirements for living in that country (i.e., they are violating the immigration laws of that jurisdiction.) This might involve crossing the border into America illegally, but can also refer to someone who came legally but stayed beyond when their student or visitor visa expired.
  - What took place in 2006 that created even more controversy around the immigration debate?
    - Background information to share with students:
 

“In 2006, millions of people participated in protests over a proposed change to U.S. immigration policy. The protests began in response to proposed legislation known as H.R. 4437, which would raise penalties for Illegal immigration and classify illegal immigrants and anyone who helped them enter or remain in the US as felons. As part of the wider immigration debate, most of the protests not only sought a rejection of this bill, but also a comprehensive reform of the country's immigration laws that included a path to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants.

The largest single demonstration occurred in Los Angeles on March 25, 2006 with a march of more than 500,000 people through downtown. The largest nationwide day of protest occurred on April 10, 2006, in 102 cities across the country, with 350,000-500,000 in Dallas and around 300,000 in Chicago. Most of the protests were peaceful and attracted considerable media attention.

The initial protests caused much controversy after some protesters waved Mexican and Central American flags instead of American flags. As part of the backlash over the protests and the controversy over the flag symbolism issue, a group calling themselves "Border Guardians" burned a Mexican flag in front of the Mexican Consulate in Tucson, Arizona, on April 9, 2006. The following day the group proceeded to burn two Mexican flags during protest in Tucson which was estimated to have had 15,000 participants. Because of the controversy, organizers of the protests encouraged protesters to leave their Mexican flags at home, with Cardinal Roger Mahony telling Los Angeles protesters to not fly any flag other than the United States flag because, "...they do not help us get the legislation we need." As a result of this controversy later protests featured fewer Mexican flags and more protesters carrying American flags."

(Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006\\_United\\_States\\_immigration\\_reform\\_protests](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006_United_States_immigration_reform_protests))

- The introduction ends by noting that our country has typically been known for "offering the world a place of refuge and a shot at the American Dream" and asks, "Is that dream over?" What do you think?
- What predictions do you have regarding this episode? What do you think will happen when the minuteman moves in with the family of illegal immigrants?

3. Continue the episode, stopping again at 5:10 and discuss:

- What have you learned thus far about Frank George? Why, when and how did his family come to the United States?
- Are you surprised by Frank's involvement with the minutemen? Why or why not?
- Frank says "I've already been through the experience of losing a country." What does he mean? What do you think he is afraid of?
- Why did Frank get involved with the minutemen movement? What do he and the minutemen do and believe?
- What does Frank say the foremost problem with immigration is?
- Overall, what is your first impression of Frank?

4. Continue the episode, again stopping at 18:05 to discuss:

- We meet the Gonzalez family and learn that Ricardo and Karena, the youngest children, are US citizens, whereas Armida and Ariel, the two oldest children, as well as their parents, are "undocumented." What does it mean to be "undocumented?" Why is this not the case for Ricardo and Karena?
- How would you describe the conditions the Gonzalez family are living in? What would be difficult about this, particularly for Armida and Ariel, who are teenagers?
- Why does Armida argue that Frank is a hypocrite? How does he defend himself?
- Why does Armida feel that she should be allowed to stay in America?
- How much does the Gonzalez family – as a family of 7 - survive on per year?
- What type of work does Rigoberto do? Why does he work for such low wages? What debate exists concerning the employment of undocumented immigrants?
- What point does Armida try to make when bringing up the pilgrims? What is Frank's response? In your opinion, whose argument was more effective?
- What is the American Dream to Armida? To Frank? How are Armida and Frank alike? How are they different?
- How would you characterize Armida thus far? What type of student is she and why?
- Why does Armida's teacher call Frank an idiot?

- The argument between Frank and Armida's teacher gets quite heated, as is typical when many people debate issues of immigration. Why is this such a divisive issue?
- Frank says that "America is an ailing body. The sickness is illegal immigration and all the corruption that accompanies it. Americans, get up and save this country or you will have none." What is Frank upset over/worried about?
- How do you think Armida and her family felt hearing this argument?

5. Start the episode again and upon reaching 27:40, stop and discuss:

- Armida complains that Frank's view of leaving and coming back legally is "not so simple." Why is she frustrated with Frank's view?
- How does Patty contribute to the family's meager income? Why is Patty saving every little bit she can?
- What internal conflict does Frank start to experience? What causes this?
- Frank states: "It's funny to me that Armida very badly wants to be a part of main stream America. She wants to have this collegiate experience, where she'll be admitted into this big college and have what rich girls have. There is a point at which Armida has to face reality. It's very hard...very difficult...for someone to get a scholarship of the type that she wants, particularly given her immigrant status." Do you agree with Frank's characterization of Armida? Why or why not? What is even more difficult regarding Armida's college application and acceptance process than high school students who are legal citizens?
- At the time of this episode's filming, the US Senate was debating an immigration bill that would provide a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants. What is Armida's opinion regarding this bill? What is Frank's opinion?
- What is Rigoberto's argument in favor of the bill?
- Frank states that the bill is like "aiding and abetting" those breaking the law, whereas Armida argues that it is just "being humane." What is your opinion?
- How does Frank feel about the candlelight vigil? Armida tells Frank he doesn't understand - why does she say this?
- The protestors wave the American flag and chant "USA," but Frank says "they don't mean that." Why is he angry? Why do you think he again refers to this being a "revolution" and why is he uncomfortable with this?

6. Play the episode through the end and discuss:

- Why haven't Patty and Rigo seen their parents and families in over 12 years? How does this affect them?
- In what way does Frank relate to Patty in this moment?
- When Frank visits Rigo's brother, Mario, what does he find his and his family's living conditions to be like?
- What does Frank find out regarding why Rigo left for the US?
- What is the Gonzalez's old house like?
- What does Frank learn during his trip to Mexico? What is he surprised by?
- Why does he say he now understands Armida better?
- Armida and her siblings are obviously moved by seeing their grandparents on tape. What impact do you think being separated from your extended family could have?
- Rigo expresses concern for his brother's situation and explains to Frank that he has no other option but to bring Mario to America. Can Frank offer a better solution?
- When Rigo and Frank uncover salamanders in the ground, Frank says, "It's funny that when you are young, your first reaction is to kill an animal like that. But then, as we grow older, we learn to appreciate this." Why do you think the director chose to keep this in the episode? What symbolism might we glean from this segment?
- In what ways does Armida think Frank has changed?



- What do you think Frank has learned from this experience? When Frank says “...first and foremost...we are human beings and that’s the thing that overrides everything else...politics and everything else...”, what message is he trying to convey?
- Frank says: “There comes a time when you have to love people for who they are, all politics aside...It’s surprising meeting people you don’t want in this country because of the way they came in and then liking them so much. What a shock.” What does this show regarding Frank’s views?
- Even though Armida was accepted to a university, why is she attending a local community college?
- Overall, what can we learn from this episode? How does it connect to what you have been reading in “A Home on the Field?”

## Exploring Immigrant Working Conditions and Immigration Reform with “A Home on the Field”

### Overview

Immigrant workers often fill some of the most needed positions in America, while enduring difficult and exploitive working conditions. In this lesson, students will examine some of the realities of the working conditions found in positions heavily filled by immigrants, such as meat processing plants and farmwork. Given that our country depends upon such positions being filled, students will debate various reforms that could protect immigrant workers while adhering to the law.

### Materials

- “A Home on the Field,” by Paul Cuadros
  - Chapter 2, pg. 9-17
- “Poultry Packing Fire,” painting by Sue Coe (available on PPT slide)
- “Facts About NC Farmworkers,” attached; from <https://saf-unite.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/nc-farmworkers-2012.pdf>
- “Possible Immigration Reforms,” activity strips attached
- “Exploring Immigration Reform,” editorial and assignment attached

### Procedure

#### Working Conditions in Meat Processing Plants

1. As a warm-up, project slide 18 of the PPT and ask students to examine the art work. Discuss:
  - What do you see? What aspects of this painting strike you first?
  - Describe the people pictured. What do they appear to be doing or experiencing?
  - What text do you notice in the painting?
  - What location do you think is being portrayed here and why?
  - What appears to be happening?
  - What is the story the author is trying to tell?

As students discuss, allow them to walk up to the projected painting and point out particular aspects they would like to discuss. Students can be given a blank piece of white paper to hold in front of the screen over the particular object they want to focus on; thus, that particular part of the painting will be spotlighted on the blank paper.

2. Once discussion wanes, explain to students that the title of the art they are viewing is “Poultry Packing Fire,” by artist Sue Coe. The painting represents a devastating fire that occurred in the Imperial Foods chicken processing plant in Hamlet, North Carolina on September 3, 1991. Twenty-five people were killed and 54 injured in the fire, as they were trapped behind locked fire doors. It was revealed that the plant had not received a safety inspection in eleven years. A single safety inspection throughout those years might have revealed the problem and could have prevented the disaster.

A full federal investigation was launched, which resulted in the owners receiving a 20-year prison sentence. The company was fined the highest penalty in the history of North Carolina. The investigation resulted in the state's passing a number of worker safety laws. The plant was never reopened. The fire was North Carolina's worst industrial disaster.

Discuss further:

- Now that you know the background of the painting's subject matter, what symbolism do you notice that you perhaps didn't catch before?
- What do you already know about working conditions in meat packing plants? Based on what you see pictured and what you now know about Imperial Foods, what are conditions like? How would you characterize this job?

3. Tell students they will be exploring what working conditions are like in meat processing plants, as well as why many immigrants end up filling such positions. Instruct students to read Chapter 2 of "A Home on the Field" then discuss and answer the questions provided on the attached handout. Once students have read and answered the questions, allow them to share their answers as a class and further discuss:
  - Why do you think so many immigrants in particular are filling jobs at meat processing plants?
  - Immigrants are often completing grueling tasks under unjust working conditions, ensuring that Americans can have the food that they want to eat. Why then is there so much animosity towards immigrants?
  - What other jobs are immigrants often filling?

#### **North Carolina's Farmworkers**

4. Tell students another area in which immigrants are largely employed within North Carolina is the farming industry. Give each student a copy of the attached "[Facts About NC's Farmworkers](#)," from SAF and instruct them to review the handout (individually or in partners) for 5-8 minutes. Afterwards, discuss:
  - What vital role do farmworkers fill for North Carolina and the US?
  - What impact do farmworkers have on North Carolina's economy?
  - What economic challenges do farmworkers face?
  - What health challenges to farmworkers face?
  - Of these challenges, which do you think would be most difficult to deal with as a farmworker and why?
  - Consider the quote on page 1: "It's just ridiculous that we, the ones who are feeding the whole world, are the ones that live in such poor conditions." Why do you think this is the case?
5. Tell students to consider the two industries discussed thus far in class: meat packing and agricultural, both of which are largely sustained by immigrant labor, and further discuss:
  - Why are these two industries important to Americans? What do these industries provide to us?
  - Why are many immigrants employed in these two industries? (Remind students that often times, immigrants are being actively recruited for employment in these industries.)
  - What do you think would happen to North Carolina's economy if all immigrants walked off the job in these two industries?
  - What protections exist for immigrants filling jobs in these industries? Why are there so few protections for immigrant workers? Do you feel there should be more protections in place? Why or why not?
  - If you do feel that more protections should be in place, how can more protections be offered to immigrants?

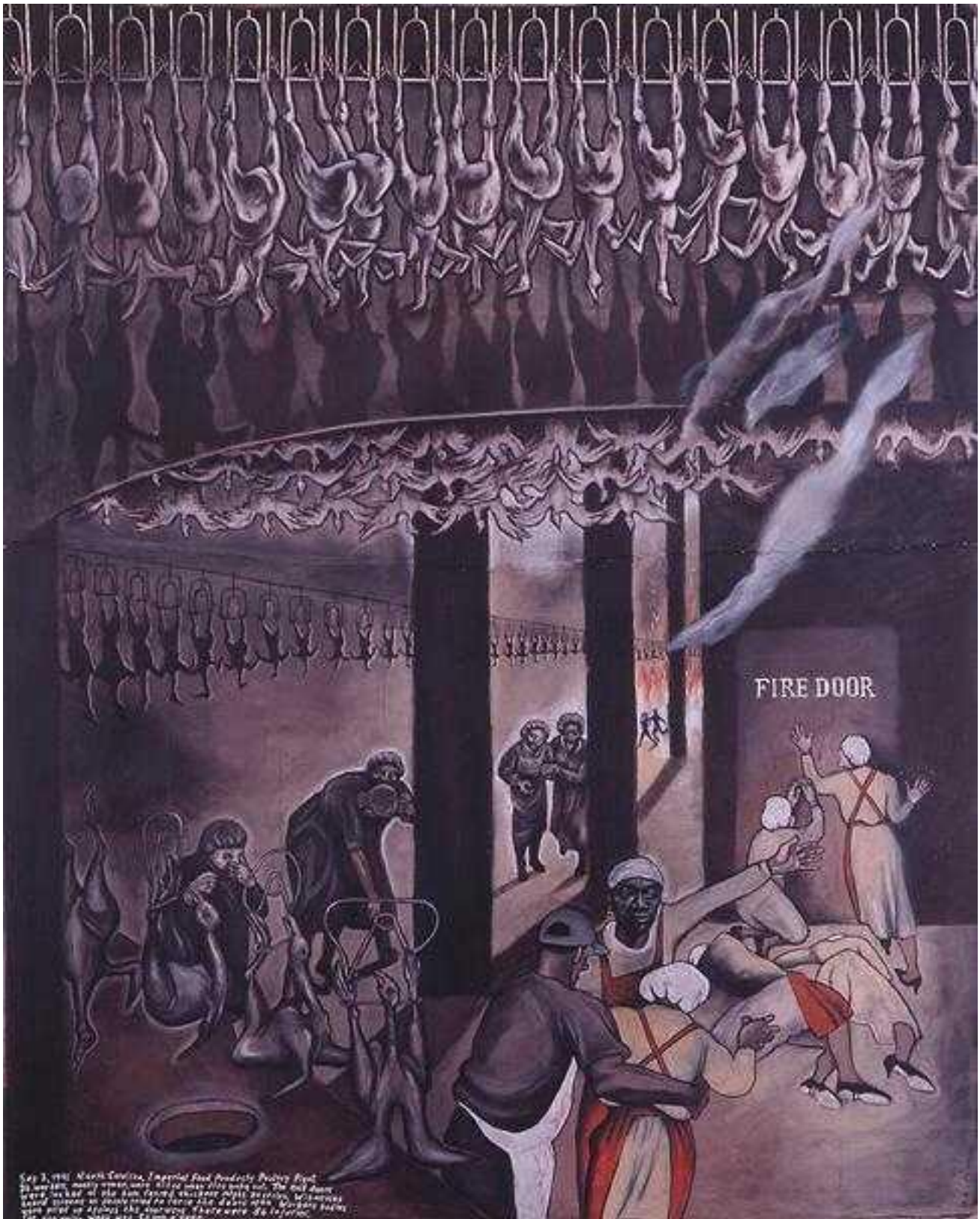
#### **What Protections Should be Afforded to Immigrants – Exploring Possible Reforms**

6. Write the words "immigration reform" on the board and ask students how many have heard the phrase. Allow volunteers to share where/when they have heard the phrase, what they think it means, and/or what comes to mind when they hear it. Explain to students that immigration reform typically conveys a hope of change and improvement through amending laws or removing abuses of immigration laws through various strategies. A challenge for immigration reform is that many different people have many different opinions regarding how to go about reforming our nation's immigration policies. In the political sense, immigration reform discussions can range from arguments for promoting, expanding, or supporting open immigration,

to reducing or eliminating immigration altogether on the other extreme. Immigration reform also refers to the various governmental proposals considered.

7. Divide students into groups of four and tell them to imagine that their group is the US House of Representatives' Committee for Education and Workforce. Explain that as members of this Committee, they are going to examine a proposal for immigration reform put forth by one of their fellow Representatives. The proposal has been assigned to them for further discussion and study. Give each group one of the attached "Possible Immigration Reforms" strips and tell students to assign the following roles:
  - Committee Chair: leads the discussion and keeps the group on task
  - Committee Secretary: takes detailed notes regarding the discussion
  - Committee Reporter: summarizes the reform proposal for the remainder of the House floor (class) and details the Committee's thoughts and recommendation regarding this reform
  - Committee Responder: answers any questions regarding the Committee's assigned reform or summarization of the reform; keeps track of time for the Committee
8. After assigning their roles, give the class approximately 10 minutes to read over the proposed reform and discuss it in detail. The Chair should first have each Committee member express their opinion regarding the proposal. Once each Committee member has said where they initially stand on the proposed reform, the Chair will lead students through answering each of the questions provided to them. At the end of ten minutes, the Committee Reporter will summarize the proposed reform on the House floor (for the remainder of class) and share the Committee's decision regarding whether they support or reject the proposal and why. After all groups have presented, allow students to discuss which of the proposed reforms they feel would be most effective (if any) and why.
9. As a homework assignment, give students the attached "Exploring Immigration Reform" assignment, in which they are to read an editorial from the USA Today, "Crackdowns in states, communities wound families and businesses," then write their own editorial regarding an issue of immigration.

"Poultry Packing Fire," a painting by Sue Coe



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Discussion Questions for Chapter 2 – “A Home on the Field”

1. What occurred at the Imperial Food Products Company in Hamlet, NC? (p. 10)
2. According to Cuadros, what job was considered one of the most dangerous in the country? (p. 10) Describe the working conditions in meat packing/chicken plants. (p. 10-11)
3. Why was worker turnover at meatpacking and chicken plants often as high as 100 percent?
4. In what ways does a worker’s illegal status benefit an unjust employer?
5. According to the US Census Bureau, in 1990 which state had the fastest growing Hispanic population? What caused this growth? (p. 12)
6. What negative effects does “chicken catching” have on a worker? (p. 13)
7. Cuadros poses a few questions at the end of this chapter: “How could Latinos be welcomed in such communities that were still struggling with their own race and class issues? What kind of Latinos would emerge as the children grew up and how would they see themselves?” (p. 12) Predict some answers to these questions.
8. What effect did the loss of commerce and the movement of businesses from downtown to franchise operations outside of town have on Siler City? (p. 14)
9. What is a worker’s union? Why do many workers make the decision to unionize? Why do you think “Union was a four-letter word in the South”? (p. 15)

## Possible Immigration Reforms

### **Intercept unauthorized immigrants at the border.**

*Proposed by Representative White:*

*"If people don't get into the country illegally to begin with, they won't be subject to terrible working conditions."*

This would entail further beefing up the Border Patrol and perhaps even calling on National Guard troops to help out. The Border Patrol has already done a better job by concentrating its forces on high-frequency crossing points, such as the 13-mile border near San Diego. Lights, fences, and automobile barriers have been built along this stretch. Opponents of interception argue that it would take a small fortune to seal the border, because people will always find a way to cross it. They point out that one effect of tightened borders is that today more undocumented workers stay in the United States instead of going back and forth across the border. And, what would happen to American industries if the immigrant labor force, even those here illegally, were no longer available to fill jobs?

### **Discuss and report back:**

- What are the pros and cons of this proposal?
  - In what way would this reform benefit or hinder the immigrant families working in America?
  - In what ways would this reform benefit or hinder you if you were an American business owner hiring legal immigrants? Hiring illegal immigrants?
  - In what ways would this reform benefit or hinder the American economy?
- Would this reform be effective in improving rights and protections for immigrants working in America? Why or why not?
- Decide whether or not you support or reject this proposal and...
  - If you support the proposal, state why you support it and what positive impact it would have.
  - If you reject the proposal, state why you feel it would be ineffective and what changes to it or alternative reforms you would propose instead.



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### **Stop employers from hiring undocumented immigrants.**

*Proposed by Representative Jackson:*

*"If we focus our attention anywhere, it should be on the unjust company owners who are making a profit by exploiting illegal immigrants."*

This would entail stiffening punishments on employers, particularly repeat offenders. Assets from a business could be forfeited to the government. Some current federal policies being proposed urge the creation of a mandatory standard for fraud-resistant identification cards for every person authorized to work in the United States or an electronic database listing all eligible workers. Opponents argue that punishing employers would hurt business and start making employers reluctant to hire minorities. An identity card or database, they believe, would violate the privacy rights of individuals.

### **Discuss and report back:**

- What are the pros and cons of this proposal?
  - In what way would this reform benefit or hinder the immigrant families working in America?
  - In what ways would this reform benefit or hinder you if you were an American business owner hiring legal immigrants? Hiring illegal immigrants?
  - In what ways would this reform benefit or hinder the American economy?
- Would this reform be effective in improving rights and protections for immigrants working in America? Why or why not?
- Decide whether or not you support or reject this proposal and...
  - If you support the proposal, state why you support it and what positive impact it would have.
  - If you reject the proposal, state why you feel it would be ineffective and what changes to it or alternative reforms you would propose instead.



### **Give undocumented workers a path to gain citizenship.**

*Proposed by Representative O'Brien:*

*"If immigrants who are here illegally are given the chance to become legal citizens, they will have more rights as workers."*

Undocumented workers already in the United States would be given a work permit. On showing that they have no criminal record and after a period of years, they would be given the opportunity to get permanent resident status and eventually citizenship. Supporters say that these people have entered without authorization mainly because our immigration system is broken. They argue that these workers should get a chance to earn citizenship. Opponents argue that granting an amnesty has been tried before and only encourages more unauthorized immigration. They argue that it would reward unauthorized immigrants who leapfrogged over others waiting to get proper authorization to enter the country.

#### **Discuss and report back:**

- What are the pros and cons of this proposal?
  - In what way would this reform benefit or hinder the immigrant families working in America?
  - In what ways would this reform benefit or hinder you if you were an American business owner hiring legal immigrants? Hiring illegal immigrants?
  - In what ways would this reform benefit or hinder the American economy?
- Would this reform be effective in improving rights and protections for immigrants working in America? Why or why not?
- Decide whether or not you support or reject this proposal and...
  - If you support the proposal, state why you support it and what positive impact it would have.
  - If you reject the proposal, state why you feel it would be ineffective and what changes to it or alternative reforms you would propose instead.



### **Create a guest-worker program.**

*Proposed by Representative Baker:*

*"Our country will suffer without immigrant workers, so we should create an official system that will allow workers to enter legally and be protected while here."*

This would allow a limited number of Mexican nationals to enter the country legally and work in jobs that US workers are reluctant to take, such as farm work. The country did allow guest workers from Mexico (called braceros) from World War II until 1964. Supporters believe that it will be easier to enforce immigration laws and also protect immigrant workers if we have a legal procedure for letting in temporary workers and give them the full protection of US laws. Opponents say that the bracero program led to more unauthorized immigration and greater exploitation of Mexican guest workers.

#### **Discuss and report back:**

- What are the pros and cons of this proposal?
  - In what way would this reform benefit or hinder the immigrant families working in America?
  - In what ways would this reform benefit or hinder you if you were an American business owner hiring legal immigrants? Hiring illegal immigrants?
  - In what ways would this reform benefit or hinder the American economy?
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- Decide whether or not you support or reject this proposal and...
  - If you support the proposal, state why you support it and what positive impact it would have.
  - If you reject the proposal, state why you feel it would be ineffective and what changes to it or alternative reforms you would propose instead.





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### **Streamline the legal immigration process.**

*Proposed by Representative Gonzalez:*

*“We’ve got to invest federal funds to straightening out the immigration system; all the “red tape” in Washington is holding up people trying to come and work in this country legally.”*

The government would work to streamline the current system, which is clogged with requests to work in the United States or to join family members already in the United States. Supporters note that many people enter without authorization because the current system is so backlogged. Opponents point out that since the attacks of September 11, 2001, our borders need greater security and immigration officials should carefully check everyone entering the country.

#### **Discuss and report back:**

- What are the pros and cons of this proposal?
  - In what way would this reform benefit or hinder the immigrant families working in America?
  - In what ways would this reform benefit or hinder you if you were an American business owner hiring legal immigrants? Hiring illegal immigrants?
  - In what ways would this reform benefit or hinder the American economy?
- Would this reform be effective in improving rights and protections for immigrants working in America? Why or why not?
- Decide whether or not you support or reject this proposal and...
  - If you support the proposal, state why you support it and what positive impact it would have.
  - If you reject the proposal, state why you feel it would be ineffective and what changes to it or alternative reforms you would propose instead.



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### **Extend more government services to immigrant workers.**

*Proposed by Representative Bush:*

*“If our country is going to profit from the work of immigrants (by having food and goods produced cheaper based on their hard labor), then we are going to have to compensate these workers by making more public services available to them and getting them out of poverty.”*

Many undocumented immigrants filling needed jobs in America are living in poverty. While they are eligible to receive some public benefits, what is available to assist poverty stricken immigrants varies by location. What little is available is often not utilized due to those immigrants who are undocumented fearing deportation. With the two most impoverished groups in America being children from 0-5 years old and immigrants, supporters feel that steps should be made to ensure illegal immigrants are able to access aid risk free. Immigrants give much more to this country than they take, thus allowing them access to needed benefits is the humane thing to do. Proponents also note that the US Supreme Court, *Plyer v. Doe*, declared that laws prohibiting immigrants from certain rights based on immigration status is unconstitutional and must be closely examined. Opponents argue that this will lead to an increase in taxes, with citizens paying for the services utilized by undocumented immigrants. They also argue this would lead to an increase in unauthorized immigration, as more people would seek residence in America to obtain the benefits offered.

#### **Discuss and report back:**

- What are the pros and cons of this proposal?
  - In what way would this reform benefit or hinder the immigrant families working in America?
  - In what ways would this reform benefit or hinder you if you were an American business owner hiring legal immigrants? Hiring illegal immigrants?
  - In what ways would this reform benefit or hinder the American economy?
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  - If you reject the proposal, state why you feel it would be ineffective and what changes to it or alternative reforms you would propose instead.

*Source: Modified from the Constitutional Rights Foundation's, “Unauthorized Immigration – What to Do?”;*

## Exploring Immigration Reform

- I. Read the following editorial. Underline phrases and sentences that strike you (perhaps you agree or disagree, find something interesting or confusing, have a question, etc.) Write down thoughts, questions, opinions, etc. that you have as you read in the margins.

**USA Today Opinions**  
**April 16, 2008**

### **Crackdowns in states, communities wound families and businesses.**

When Congress gave up trying to pass a balanced immigration law last year, it opened the door for states, counties and towns to write their own immigration laws. The result has been a disquieting national experiment in handling illegal immigration almost solely with arrest and deportation.

Several states have enacted laws that show no mercy, even for immigrants with steady jobs, deep community roots, a history of paying taxes and children who are citizens. They have just one goal: Get illegals out.

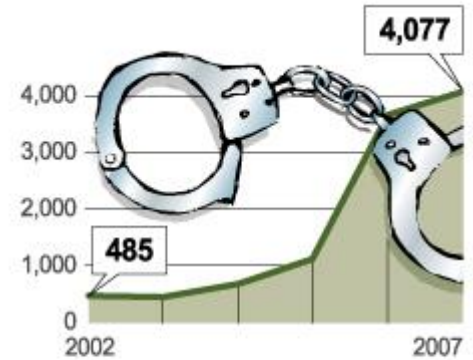
As a matter of ice-cold reasoning, those states make a case that would pass any logician's test: The law must have meaning, so if the federal government won't act against wanton law-breaking, then the states must. Oklahoma, which has one of the toughest new laws, now bars illegal immigrants from receiving state services, requires employers to verify that new workers are legal, gives people a way to sue companies that hire illegal immigrants, and makes it a felony to transport, harbor or conceal an illegal immigrant. It was meant to be harsh, and it is.

It's also undeniably effective. Oklahoma Hispanic groups estimate that as many as 25,000 left the state after the law was approved last year. School attendance dropped, workers disappeared, church attendance shrank and Latino businesses lost customers.

What's missing is simple humanity — a recognition that the vast majority of those affected lack any malicious intent. They came not to rob banks but to improve their lives through hard work. Yet families are uprooted, and parents are separated from their kids.

Legal residents and citizens are hurt, too. When spouses, parents or children are illegal, a relative can be placed at risk for "harboring" them at home or "transporting" them to church. There are persistent reports that police in some places target Hispanic drivers for roadside stops and document checks. Some citizens have taken to carrying passports or birth certificates to avoid being jailed.

By intent, the laws have also hit businesses, which have scrambled to replace lost workers. Employers say they're being asked to become immigration police with imperfect tools. A study in Oklahoma predicted that the law could cost the state's economy more than \$1 billion a year, and a firm that specializes in finding new locations for businesses said some companies have crossed Oklahoma off their lists. The state Chamber of Commerce and other business groups filed suit to block the law.



#### **Work-site crackdowns**

Federal arrests of undocumented workers for immigration law violations have grown almost tenfold since 2002.

Source: Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
By Julie Snider, USA TODAY

If there's virtue in all this, it is to highlight the hypocrisy that has long been at the heart of ineffectual federal immigration law: The nation doesn't want illegal immigrants, but it does want the cheap labor they provide. So it passes laws then doesn't pay to enforce them.

Laws such as Oklahoma's may now expose the downside of being harsh, just as federal law has exposed the downside of being lax.

There's a better remedy, of course, but Congress gave up on it last year. President Bush's immigration bill would have toughened workplace enforcement with a strong verification system and effective ID requirements. It would also have acknowledged reality by fostering a temporary worker program and providing a rigorous path to citizenship for the most qualified of the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants already here. That's still a worthwhile proposal.

Laws such as Oklahoma's are satisfying for those who seethe over illegal immigration. But they worsen a polarized, anti-immigrant atmosphere that ill-serves the nation.

*Source: <http://blogs.usatoday.com/oped/2008/04/our-view-on-ill.html> Posted at 12:22 AM/ET, April 16, 2008 in Immigration - Editorial, Politics, Government - Editorial, Reforming Washington - Editorial*

- 1. Summarize the opinion presented by the author:**
- 2. What alternative solution(s) is the author advocating for?**
- 3. Do you agree or disagree with the opinion presented and why?**

## **II. Writing an Editorial**

An editorial is an article that presents the newspaper's opinion on an issue. Editorials are meant to influence public opinion, promote critical thinking, and sometimes cause people to take action on an issue. Since an editorial is an opinionated news story, it should build on an argument and try to persuade readers to think the same way as its author. Based upon the editorial you just read, write your own editorial regarding immigration. Your editorial can focus on a specific issue of your choice (i.e. rights for immigrant workers, a recommendation for immigration reform, a response to the editorial you read, etc.)

### **Your editorial should have:**

- An introduction, body and conclusion like other news stories (at least 3 paragraphs that are grammatically and structurally correct)
- An objective explanation of the issue you are addressing
- Your opinions delivered in a professional and convincing manner. Good editorials focus on the issues and refrain from name-calling
- Opinions from the opposing viewpoint that you challenge and refute
- Alternative solutions to the issue being criticized. A good editorial doesn't just complain; it takes a proactive approach to making the situation better by using constructive criticism and giving solutions.
- A solid and concise conclusion that powerfully summarizes the writer's opinion. The more memorable you can make it, the better.

## Complete Reading Guide for “A Home on the Field,” by Paul Cuadros

### Pre-Reading Questions

1. When you hear the word immigration, what comes to mind? What are some commonly held beliefs or stereotypes regarding immigrants? Which of these do you think are true or untrue?
2. Who were the first inhabitants on North America? What languages were initially spoken on North America? Why are those inhabitants and languages largely nonexistent today?
3. When and how were the 13 colonies on North America formed? What groups of people colonized North America and what languages were spoken?
4. Even though English was not even one of the first languages spoken on this country, why is speaking English so prominent and controversial today in terms of the immigration debate?
5. When and how was the United States formed? What values would you say were part of this formation?
6. What is the “American Dream?” Is a “dream” only open to certain people? Explain.
7. What are some examples of historic migrations to the United States?
8. What are the various reasons people throughout history have immigrated to the United States?
9. Unless you are Native American, at some point in history (or recently) you and/or your ancestors were immigrants. Do you know the history of your ancestors and their journey to the United States (i.e. what country they came from, why they came to the U.S., how they came (by choice, by force, by necessity, etc.)?)
10. Are there any of you who identify yourself as an immigrant today? If so, would anyone like to share what reasons led your family to migrate to the United States?
11. Even though we have always been a nation of immigrants, and even though many of our own relatives emigrated to America just as new immigrants come today, our nation has a short historical memory. Meaning, today, there is a lot of anger and controversy surrounding immigration. Why do you think this is? For those of us whose ancestors emigrated to this country generations back, how would you feel if your own relatives were treated as many immigrants are treated today?
12. Why do you think immigration is such a controversial issue?

### Introduction

1. Why does Cuadros characterize the Mexican and Latin American migration to America as a previously “silent migration?” (vi) What caused America to recently “become aware of this migration and its impact on our society?” (vii)
2. What does Cuadros identify as the origin of America’s immigration debate? What caused the initial influx of immigrants to this country? (vi)
3. Describe the “free trade” policies of the United States and their effect on Mexico. (vii)
4. What is the North American Free Trade Agreement and why was it passed? What was the impact of this Agreement on “the Mexican farmer”? How did the agreement affect immigration to America? (vii)
5. What transformation took place in the food processing industry and why did this transformation result in an increase in migrant workers? (viii)
6. Why did companies actively recruit Latino workers? (viii)
7. Many Americans express anger towards immigrant workers, even though such workers are being actively recruited, hired, and exploited by American business owners. Why do you think the immigrants themselves take the brunt of the anger, rather than the business owners who strategically profit off of the situation?

8. What led the migration of Latinos to become a permanent situation? (viii) If you were recruited to work in another country for several years, would you want to bring your husband or wife, children, and other close family members for a better life? Explain.
9. What does Cuadros mean when he says that “Small rural communities like Siler City, North Carolina were at a crossroads when the Latino migration began?” (ix)
10. What positive effects has the migration of Latino workers had on Siler City? Why do you think native North Carolinians often focus on the negative aspects of immigration (i.e., legality) rather than benefits? (ix)

## **First Season**

### **Chapter 1**

1. How does Cuadros describe the game of soccer? How does he describe the Latino love of the game? (p. 5) What does he mean when he says “the game is always played in our throats”?
2. Cuadros notes that as a coach, it was important for him to connect with the players and “switch something on in them so they can believe in themselves.” (p. 5) What are the various ways a coach can do this? Why might reaching this goal with immigrants be more challenging?
3. What challenges facing the team are noted or alluded to throughout the first chapter?
4. In this chapter, the team has returned to face the same competitors they lost to 2 years earlier, the Hendersonville Bearcats. What differences between the two teams (cultural and otherwise) are noted? What sense does the author give the reader regarding how the Hendersonville team treated the Jets?

### **Chapter 2**

1. What occurred at the Imperial Food Products Company in Hamlet, NC? (p. 10)
2. According to Cuadros, what job was considered one of the most dangerous in the country? (p. 10) Describe the working conditions in meat packing/chicken plants. (p. 10-11)
3. Why was worker turnover at meatpacking and chicken plants often as high as 100 percent?
4. In what ways does a worker’s illegal status benefit an unjust employer?
5. According to the US Census Bureau, in 1990 which state had the fastest growing Hispanic population? What caused this growth? (p. 12)
6. What negative effects does “chicken catching” have on a worker? (p. 13)
7. Cuadros poses a few questions that he seeks to answer at the end of this chapter: “How could Latinos be welcomed in such communities that were still struggling with their own race and class issues? What kind of Latinos would emerge as the children grew up and how would they see themselves?” Predict some answers to these questions.
8. What effect did the loss of commerce and the movement of businesses from downtown to franchise operations outside of town have on Siler City? (p. 14)
9. What is a worker’s union? Why do many workers make the decision to unionize? Why do you think “Union was a four-letter word in the South”? (p. 15)

### **Chapter 3**

1. According to Cuadros, why were North Carolina communities segregated? What other reasons not mentioned do you think may lead to such segregation? (p. 20)
2. Why does Cuadros want to start a soccer team for the Latino students at Jordan Matthews High School? (p. 21)
3. What issues does Cuadros have with American soccer? (p. 21)
4. Why did Cuadros have difficulty growing up in an all white neighborhood? (p. 22) Have you ever personally experienced a similar situation? (p. 22)
5. Why might being different than the majority of people around you, whether different in race, religion, language, culture, etc., be hard for a young person? Many people who are white have never considered what it feels like to feel like an outsider based on such characteristics – why do you think this is?
6. Why did Cuadros spend a lot of time in Pilsen? (p. 22)

7. Why did Enrique and Eli's mother move the family from Chicago to North Carolina? (p. 22-26)
8. How do you imagine Enrique and Eli felt while being harassed by the gang members?
9. What can be done to protect the youth whose family do not make such a move for safety?
10. Even though involvement in a gang has numerous negative consequences (from illegal activity to the danger of jail time or even injury or death), why do you think some young people choose to join?
11. Why does Enrique say that Siler City was "like a dream?" (p. 26)

#### Chapter 4

1. Why was Lenin's family homeless for two weeks upon moving to Siler City? (p. 29) Do you find it wrong that while the chicken plant was happy to have Lenin's father do the grueling work at the chicken plant, members of the community would not rent to the family? Why or why not?
2. How did Lenin embody active citizenship? (p.29)
3. Why do you think Mr. Hamilton ignored Lenin's request for a soccer team at Jordan Matthews? (p. 30)
4. What does Cuadros mean when he says that "it was difficult to have hard feelings or be too pushy when people rubbed up against one another so much?" (p. 30)
5. In what ways do the attitudes towards Friday night football mirror the attitudes towards immigration? (p. 30)
6. Cuadros notes that Jordan Matthews was an all-white school until 1968. In what ways were the effects of segregation still present at the school in the 1990s? (p. 31)
7. In what ways can you still see the lasting impact of segregation in various communities today? Many people mistakenly assume that because segregation took place in the past, there are no issues with racism today. In what ways is our society still struggling with issues of race? Why is it still important to learn about and address such issues?
8. Why did some African Americans take issue with the Jordan Matthews' mascot? (p. 31)
9. Why do you think football was the one area where integration successfully occurred? (32) How can this same mentality be extended beyond the football field?
10. What reasons did Mr. Hamilton note that prevented the formation of a soccer team at Jordan Matthews? (p. 33) Why do you think he had so many excuses? Do you believe race was playing a factor in Mr. Hamilton's opposition? Why or why not?
11. Evaluate Cuadros' technique of listening when someone talks, letting them say all they want to say while taking notes, then coming back to particular points. (p. 33)
12. What are some problems that Rick Givens notes Siler City was experiencing with immigration? What action does Givens take to try and correct the issues? Do you feel his decision was a good one? Why or why not? (36)
13. Cuadros explains that Siler City "... was expending resources to deal with the labor force the poultry industry was actively recruiting. It was subsidizing the poultry industry, making up for inadequate and costly health plans that workers didn't choose..." Yet, when placing blame, it is seldom directed towards the industries profiting from immigration. Rather, blame is placed on the immigrant himself. Why do you think this is the case? (p. 36)
14. What does Cuadros mean when he says that Givens saw the problems with immigration "as a matter of black and white?" (p. 36) Is viewing things in this way effective? Why or why not?
15. What types of discriminatory acts towards Latinos occurred after Givens' letter? (p. 37)
16. What change in Siler City's schools occurred in 1995? (p. 37)
17. By 1998, what percentage of Siler City's schools were "Limited English Proficient"(ESL)? At that time, what support did the state offer the schools and teachers dealing with this surge of ESL students?
18. Why did "white flight" start to occur in Siler City's schools? (p. 38)
19. Why do you think language is always a major aspect of contention with immigration? (p. 39) Even though we are officially an English speaking country today, English was not the first language originally spoken in North America. How should this fact shape the language debate in your opinion?

20. Describe the September, 1999 school board meeting on Siler City Elementary transfer policy. Did some of the parents have valid concerns? Explain. On the other hand, were some of the views expressed unfair? Explain.
21. What does Cuadros allude to as being “the South’s solution to all problems when it comes to race?” (p. 40) Why is this an unrealistic and unjust solution in practice?
22. What messages do Heidi Green, Doris Marsh, and Sam Gregor send in their statements to the crowd? (40-41) Do you agree or disagree with their statements and why?
23. How do you imagine the Latino parents felt throughout this meeting?
24. Do you agree with David Gonzalez, who said the true issues at play were “segregation” and “discrimination?” Explain. (p. 41)
25. Why do you think it is a misconception that Latinos do not pay taxes? (p. 41)
26. Cuadros notes of the white parents: “They were abandoning their institutions in favor of places like the new charter school where their children would not be in the minority. They felt they had no choice. Their own prejudice and fear were pushing them out of their own town and they were mad. The white power structure in town was being challenged by the fast migration. Its members didn’t know how to handle it. They needed the Latino workers to man the chicken plants and keep their economy going, but they didn’t necessarily want the people or their children to live with them and share resources.” What does he mean by a “white power structure?” Based on looking at the situation from this perspective, how would you characterize the parents and the Siler City community in general? (p. 41)
27. How do you imagine the immigrant children felt when attending Siler City Elementary? Did any of these children have any choice in being brought to or born in America? Why then do you think they are being blamed and purposefully made to feel unwelcome?
28. What are the positive aspects of having a multicultural classroom? Why do you think the majority of teachers and parents were not addressing such positive possibilities?
29. Explain the comparison Cuadros makes in terms of how towns deal with migration. (p. 42)
30. In your opinion, why do communities often refute change so passionately? (p. 42)

## Chapter 5

1. Why was Givens receiving so much “flak”? Do you think he was rightfully portrayed as a “bigot?” Why or why not? (p. 43)
2. Why do you think many Southerners dismiss the idea of race being a factor in decision making? What does Cuadros mean when he says that “White Southerners had decided that the end of Jim Crow had also been the end of racism”? Why do many people, particularly people who are white, carry this misconception that racism is no longer an issue? (p. 43)
3. What message is Cuadros trying to convey when he says that “race in America is an extremely complicated issue, intertwined with class and history, and it runs across the surface of many different issues like topsoil...”? (p. 43)
4. Why are many people so uncomfortable talking about issues of race? Cuadros notes that many white people resent being labeled as racist and don’t want to confront “the economic and social structure of their communities [that] favored them, to the disadvantage of others.” What point is Cuadros making? (p. 44)
5. Cuadros notes that Latinos were confused as to why they were being met with such hostility. What double-standard does Cuadros explain as the impetus of their confusion? (p. 44)
6. What realization does Givens have after traveling to Mexico? (p. 44-45) How does his acquired cultural awareness better prepare him to deal with immigration issues? How could such understanding aid us all?
7. While visiting Mexico, Givens meets a teenager who, though deformed, limps for miles on his crutches to attend school. How does the value this student places on education compare to the value students at our school place on education? (p. 45)
8. How would you characterize Givens based on his statement after his visit to Mexico: “I still say illegal is illegal but I found out it wasn’t just a simple black-and-white issue...I was wrong and I am man enough to admit it,” (p. 45)

9. In what ways did Givens live up to his pledge to “help the community assimilate and become more a part of the greater Siler City community?” (p. 45)
10. Describe Richard Vanderford. (p. 46)
11. Why did many in the African American community support the Latinos and denounce the KKK rally on February 19<sup>th</sup>? (p. 47)
12. Cuadros notes that Latino children “went to school in fear and trepidation” and that “they couldn’t understand why people were so against them. Their families worked hard and supported themselves, they went to school, why did people hate them so much? What had they done?” (p. 48) Imagine being faced by a small child asking these questions of you. How would you respond?
13. Why do you think the “schools ignored what was happening?” Do you think the schools should have taken a different approach? Why or why not? (p. 48)
14. What message is Margaret Pollard conveying when she says: “So long as there is no talking there is no chance of resolution. When the conversations begin, even though they may begin in conflict, it is out of conflict that we get a sense of those things that unite us and see our common issues, our humanity, our common needs.” (p. 49)
15. Why do you think Cuadros said that “color film seemed inappropriate” for the day of the rally? (p. 50)
16. Summarize the message in David Duke’s speech.
17. Why does David Duke call on African-Americans? (p. 52) How do you imagine the African American community responded to this call?
18. Cuadros says that the rhetoric of Duke’s speech was similar to what professionals within the community had been saying, yet when spoken by the Klan member, “The hate within the words was laid bare by the identity of the speaker.” What point is Cuadros making? (p. 53)
19. What validity can be found in both Dwight Jordan’s and Julio Perez’s perspectives? How could their differing perspective be reconciled? (p. 53-54)
20. Why was David Duke’s action of filling his plate with fried chicken significant to Cuadros?
21. What does Cuadros say that people sincere in their interests in reducing illegal immigrants would do? (p. 56)
22. Why do you think many Latinos feel “unrequited love” for America? (p. 56)
23. How would you describe the tone/mood at the end of this chapter? If you had an opportunity to speak to the author in this moment, what would you say to attempt to lift his spirits? (p. 56-57)

## Chapter 6

1. What strategies does Cuadros employ throughout this chapter to try and get a soccer team started at JM? (p. 61)
2. Cuadros identifies the real issue with starting a soccer team being one of “commitment.” What does he mean by this? (p. 63)
3. What did it take to finally get a soccer team started at JM? (p. 65) What skills did it take on Cuadros’ part to see this through to fruition?
4. What commitment does Cuadros make regarding the soccer team? What does it say of his character that he made this commitment? Why is it important for each of us to make similar commitments (be it volunteering, leading an initiative, etc.) to our community? (p. 66)

## Chapter 7

1. Whereas some students were initially excluded from playing soccer based on eligibility, how might participation on the soccer team help to combat low grades and poor attendance? (p. 70)
2. In what ways do cultural differences in Latino families and American families result in Latino students missing school?
3. Why did Cuadros not allow the boys to play a *cascarita* on the first day of practice? (p. 71)
4. Describe the team members we are introduced to in this chapter. (p. 71-73)
5. How do Latino students view working? Do you feel this is similar or different to the way white American-born teens view working? Explain. (p. 76)



6. What significance do you think the soccer uniforms presented to the boys held? What significance did the uniforms hold for Cuadros? (p. 77-78)
7. Cuadros tells the team, "Now we'll see if you have the will. The *ganas*." What is the meaning of *ganas* and why is it significant to this story? (p. 78-79)
8. What is symbolic about Cuadros lining the football field for soccer? How does his comment, "I was tracing over Siler City's traditional lines," apply to more than just soccer? What does Cuadros mean when he says, "We all had our own ideas about what was in bounds and what was out-of-bounds?" (p. 80-81)
9. What controversy occurred with Juan? Why did Cuadros take this situation so seriously? (p. 83)
10. Describe what Cuadros means when he says that the Latino students "lived in two different worlds with two different identities." (p. 84) What would be difficult about this for a young person?

## Chapter 8

1. Describe the work required of Latinos in the tobacco fields. (p. 85)
2. What is green tobacco sickness? (p. 85)
3. What was the original mascot for South Stanly High School? (p. 86) Why might some people be offended by such a mascot? Do you think mascots such as this should be changed? Why or why not?
4. How are the Latino players treated by the South Stanly players? How does Cuadros tell the boys to respond? (p. 86) Do you think this was good advice? Why or why not? How did the treatment of the Latino players worsen at South Davidson? (p. 87)
5. Evaluate the team's performance in its first year. What challenges has the team faced thus far that makes such success even more noteworthy? (p. 87)
6. What is Cuadros referring to with the term, "chicken-bone circuit?" (p. 88)
7. Why do you think it was so important to Cuadros that the boys at Jordan Matthews play as a team? (p. 88)
8. Why were Latinos often the targets of crime? (p. 90)
9. How would you describe Enrique & Edi's mother, Dolores, based on what we learn about her in this chapter? (p. 91)
10. Based on what you read and your own inferences, how do you imagine Enrique & Edi felt when they heard what had happened to their mother? (p. 91)
11. Describe the flyer posted above the head coach's desk. Why is Cuadros "stung" by this flyer and its contents? (p. 96) Do you feel Cuadros handled the situation effectively? Why or why not? Do situations like this often occur, when one person feels something is funny, but another person feels insulted? How can we better prevent such situations from occurring, or deal with them appropriately when they do occur?

## Chapter 9

1. Cuadros states: "Americans never really understood where their food or other agricultural products like Christmas trees came from. If they fully grasped the work, the sweat, the long hours for little pay, the cold that the workers endured during the hard winter months in the mountains of North Carolina, they might begin to view their Christmas morning differently." (p. 100) What message is he trying to convey? Why do you think most Americans don't consider what is endured to produce our necessities and luxuries?
2. What type of pressure does Cuadros note that the boys are under when playing "public" games? (p. 104) Why might this be exacerbated by their being a mainly Latino team?
3. Cuadros tries to raise the team's spirits after its loss, encouraging them to look back on all they have accomplished. Describe which accomplishments you feel are most noteworthy. (p. 106)

## Second Season

### Chapter 10

1. Why did Alberto Cuadros, the author's father, leave his home in Peru? (p. 112)
2. How and why does Dr. Lucchesi help Alberto? (p. 112) How is Alberto's story similar to that of many of our own ancestors?
3. What does Cuadros mean when he says that "fathers and sons can pick up the same thread in life and weave a single cloth from two lives?" (p. 112)

4. Cuadros mentions the “pain and embarrassment of not speaking English” that he experienced when entering school as an immigrant. (p. 113) Yet, when debating immigration, we seldom consider the feelings of the children involved. Why do you think this is?
5. Based on what you learn in this chapter about Cuadros’ background, why do you think he developed such a love for soccer? (p. 112) Why does he want to impart this on to the boys at JM?
6. What examples does Cuadros note of feeling “the cold slap across my face of racial prejudice”? (p. 113)
7. Illegal driving is one of the complaints many US residents have of immigrants. What solution do you imagine Cuadros would pose to this issue were he asked? (p. 114) In your personal opinion, what solution makes most sense?
8. Why were Enrique, Edi, and Arabe evicted? Is there any recourse for an undocumented family when experiencing such injustice from a landlord? Why? (p. 116)
9. How would you characterize Dolores and her family’s ethics? (p. 116) Why is the family’s situation difficult for Enrique? How would you feel were you in his situation? Imagine living in this way, then experiencing racial taunting at school and/or in the community. How do you imagine you would feel?
10. Why does Cuadros feel that the “club teams were becoming a deterrent to good soccer in the United States?” (p. 118)
11. Beyond being a very painful and serious injury, what makes Enrique’s ACL injury even more problematic? (p. 120)
12. What happens to many undocumented workers who become injured on the job? (120-121) Summarize the “worst case” Cuadros has come across. (p. 121)
13. Why were names an issue in the Latino community? (p. 122)
14. To whom does Cuadros feel is to blame for over-crowded community health centers? Do you agree or disagree and why? (p. 123)

### Chapter 11

1. What does the term “Chicanos” refer to? Why do you think the Chicanos have a harder time fitting in at school and in life? (p. 126)
2. Why do many Latinos drop out of school? What are the consequences of such actions? Why does Cuadros say that many Latinos “fail their kids”? (p. 126)
3. Why does Lenin feel like he wants to burn the football field? (p. 127)
4. Why does Fish have to return to Mexico? What is he risking by returning? (p. 132) What does taking this risk say about Fish’s character?
5. Why does Cuadros say that “Neither a fence nor the United States Army” can stop immigrants from coming to America? (p. 133)
6. What does Cuadros mean when he says, “What I found truly ironic about the migration of Latinos to the United States, was that it was motivated by a truly American desire...”? (p. 133)
7. How does Cuadros define being an American? Do you agree with his definition? Why or why not? What is your definition of an American? (p. 133)
8. What evidence notes that immigration “makes us a stronger nation, more adaptable and smarter, and fosters unique and creative talents”? (p. 133)

### Chapter 12

1. Why was Fish unable to say goodbye to his grandmother? (p. 135-136)
2. What type of help is there for the poor and sick in Mexico? How does having a relative working in the United States help change this situation? (p. 137)
3. What does a person risk by crossing the border with a coyote? (p. 140)
4. Describe the experience and conditions of attempting to cross into the U.S. that Fish experiences. (p. 139- ) How do you imagine he felt being lost and alone after the group was discovered by the US Border control and scattered? (p. 142) Why was this a life and death situation for Fish?
5. What does Fish risk by re-crossing with the man he meets in Agua Prieta? (p. 142)
6. What do you think Fish means when he says, “It’s like a dream, Cuadros?” (p. 146)

### Chapter 13

1. Why does Cuadros tell the team that they beat themselves in the game against the Rebels? (p. 148)
2. What is La Liga? Why does Cuadros feel playing or watching La Liga has inspired “bad and destructive” soccer habits in the team? (p. 149-150)
3. What changes does Cuadros implement in an attempt to keep the team from “coming apart?” (p. 152) Why do you think the team members are “fragile mentally,” as described by Cuadros? (P. 152)
4. Cuadros states that “Many of the Latino kids saw America in terms of brown and white. It was white to work indoors at a desk. It was brown to work outdoors. It was white to study hard and do well at school. It was brown to get by.” (p. 153) Why do you think this perception exists? Are there similar perceptions regarding other races? Explain.
5. Even though Lenin is described as the most “assimilated kid on the team” who “spoke perfect English, was bright, and could get along with anyone,” he still felt “isolated and alienated at his job.” Why do you think this was the case? (p. 154)
6. Why is assimilation a complicated experience? What difficulties do immigrants that do successfully assimilate into American culture experience in regards to their Latino culture? Cuadros notes that “gaining wealth, acting ‘white,’ assimilating, and not speaking Spanish separated people from the community.” What is the affect of such attitudes on those who are successful at assimilation? (p. 155)
7. What are the three groups of Latinos that Cuadros says can be indentedified in the halls of JM? Why don’t these groups “mix?” How does the soccer team help these groups come together? (p. 155)
8. What type of reception does the team receive from the Wildcat fans at the South Davidson High School game? How do the fans’ comments affect the boys? (p. 156)
9. Describe the altercation between Edi and Tereso. How would you characterize Edi’s response? Would you have been able to respond in the same way? Why or why not? (p. 158)

### Chapter 14

1. Why is the team upset at practice? What is ironic about their coming together to address this particular issue with the coach? (p. 161-163)
2. What does Cuadros mean when he says that “Showing anger meant you had lost an argument...”? Do you agree or disagree and why? (p. 162)
3. “Sometimes you have to be willing to lose everything in order to gain everything.” (163) Do you agree or disagree and why? Did Cuadros make the right choice suspending Edi and Lechero, even at the risk of the team losing their next game? Why or why not?
4. In what way have the members of the team become a family? (p. 163-164)
5. Why did two of the three boys in Lechero’s family come to tryouts on alternate days? (p. 165) What might this tell us about their familial circumstances? What does it tell us about the boys’ love for soccer?
6. Based on what you learn in this chapter, characterize Lecherito.
7. Why are the boys happy, even though they lose the game with Albemarle? Why does Cuadros feel they have finally “turned a corner” and become a “real team?” (p. 166)
8. Based upon the description of how Enrique has dealt with his knee injury, how would you characterize him? (p. 167)
9. “For all the cloudy days that he had seen in his young life, there were moments of shining glory as well, when the warm rays of the sun would touch his brown face. No matter what would happen to him, Enrique would always come back. He had proven that he could take adversity and turn it around into victory.” (p. 169) What does this quote tell us about Enrique’s character?

### Chapter 15

1. What is the drinking age in Mexico? Do you think the drinking age in the US should be lowered? Why or why not? (p. 172)

2. Cuadros notes that Enrique was very in touch with his Mexican culture. What examples does he give to illustrate this? Why do you think he clings to such memories, even though he now lives in Siler City? (p. 173)
3. Why are the Bulldogs fouling the Jets? Why does Cuadros advise the Jets to not retaliate? (p. 178)
4. Cuadros tells the team that “We have to learn to win with honor and to lose with honor. If you can’t do that, then we can’t have a team.” What message is he trying to convey? What does he expect the boys to do when other teams aren’t playing fairly or justly? What would be difficult about following his directions? (p. 182)
5. Why does Mr. Moody say that the boys’ tears are a positive sign? (p. 182)
6. Why is Cuadros angered by the driver’s-license check point? (p. 182-183)

### **Third Season**

#### **Chapter 16**

1. Why might the new players be getting into trouble? (p. 189)
2. What decision did Loco face? What was so difficult about this decision? (p. 189-190)
3. What is the message of the story that Cuadros shares with Loco? (p. 190)
4. What improvements did Siler City experience based on increased immigration? (p. 191-193) When discussing immigration, why do you think people so often focus on the negative?
5. In what ways had Jordan Matthews High School had been transformed? What caused this transformation? (p. 193)
6. Cuadros notes that “Many Latinas feel the pressure of living in two cultures...” In what ways are these students “living in two cultures?” What might be difficult about this? What challenges does Cuadros note? (p. 194)
7. Explain the cultural differences between Americans’ views of dating and Latino/a views. (p. 194)
8. Why does Don Indio dictate a letter to Cuadros? (p. 196-197) Why is Don Indio worried about whether he will come back?

#### **Chapter 17**

1. What were the living conditions provided by “Pelucas” like? (p. 199)
2. What point is Cuadros trying to make to Indio about adaptation? (p. 201)
3. Like Indio, many immigrant parents travel to the US first, leaving their children behind, often for years, as they seek a better life for their families. What would be difficult about having a parent who resides in another country? (p. 201)
4. Describe Indio’s crossing into the US. How old was he when he made this journey? (p. 202-203)
5. Based on what we learn about Indio in this chapter, how would you describe him?
6. Even though Indio has worked hard in school and earned the academic qualifications for college acceptance, what challenges does he and other immigrants who are not legal residents face regarding actually attending? (p. 204-205)
7. How do you imagine it would feel to be brought here as a child, something you have no control or choice over, to work hard your whole school career, to want to attend college, but to be able to do so because you find out you are not a legal immigrant? Is this a fair policy in your opinion? Why or why not?
8. Cuadros states, “There is very little difference between a chicken-plant manager who fires a Latino worker who cuts his hand or a construction foreman who lays off a bricklayer who breaks his foot and a state that says that a child who has been accepted and educated in its system is suddenly an outsider.” (205) What message is he conveying? Do you agree or disagree and why?
9. Cuadros goes on to state that “Having a group of smart, educated people who are forced to live in a permanent underclass will do nothing toward fostering a healthy society.” (205) What point is he making? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?
10. What attribute did Indio have that may help him achieve his dreams of attending college? (p. 205)
11. What examples does Cuadros note that the boys are “juntado”? (p. 206)

Cuadros says that he envies these boys, even with all of the barriers they face: “I envied them their lives, their youth, their challenges, and the ways they found to circumvent the barriers they faced. They suffered terrible defeats but also enjoyed wonderful victories.” (p. 207) Why do you think he feels this way?

12. In this chapter, Cuadros alludes to the title of the book: “They all knew what a hard day’s work was, had been tested in hardship, experienced terrible prejudice, and faced an uncertain future. But all that faded away when they strapped their boots on and ran onto the pitch. If there was one place they could call home, a place where they could really feel at home, it was here – between two goals on a dusty field.” (207) What makes the field a home for the boys?

## Chapter 18

1. Why is Cuadros disheartened? Do you think his fear that the boys will not be prepared for life in the United States is a valid one? Why or why not? (210)
2. According to Cuadros, why will the boys face a state of perpetual fear upon graduating from high school? Is there any way for the boys to avoid this? (p. 210) Do you believe our government should offer a legal path to citizenship for immigrants? Why or why not?
3. Why does Cuadros feel that the team “...would always be contenders but never champions?” What would you say to him to reinvigorate his hope? (210)
4. What shift within Chatham County’s Latino population does Cuadros note? (p. 211) What is significant about this change?
5. What problems do many Latinos who are born in America face? (p. 211)
6. What does Cuadros mean by “soccer is a game of spirit as well as skill?” Do you think this is true for all sports? Explain. (p. 212)
7. Why is facing Albemarle once more such an emotional game for the students?
8. Why is the referee’s comments to the team at the start of the game offensive? Why does Cuadros refrain from addressing the insult with the referee in front of the team? Do you agree with his decision to “let it slide?” Would you be able to do the same? Why or why not? (p. 212)
9. What is the chain Cuadros brings to the team meant to symbolize? (p. 213)
10. Why does Cuadros say that the team came off the field in disgrace the last time they played Albemarle? What is he trying to instill in the boys by saying, “Win or loose, we will carry ourselves like men”? (p. 213)
11. “*Fuerza y honor*. Strength and honor. What does that mean? With *fuerza* we will win games. But with honor we will be winners.” (p. 213) What is Cuadros trying to instill in the players with these words?
12. Why is it important that the team beat Albermarle? (p. 214)
13. How do you imagine this victory felt and why? (p. 214)
14. What challenges does the team face after this monumental win? (p. 216-217)
15. Why do you think Guero is “heading down a dark path”? (p. 217)
16. Why does Cuadros say that a lot of undocumented students are “disillusioned”? Why should such disillusionment be of concern to educators, government officials, community members, etc.? (p. 217) What would you say to Guero to encourage him?
17. How does Cuadros convince Guero to not drop out of school? (p. 218)
18. Why does Cuadros say that the game against Thomasville would be a “test of our collective character”? Do you think following his instructions (“hold their tempers if they were insulted, shoved, pushed, pulled, or tackled from behind...”) will be hard for the team? Why or why not? (p. 219)
19. Describe the spirit of both team’s players after the South Davidson game. In what ways had the South Davison team and fans changed? (p. 219)

## Chapter 19

1. What was the “special phone” that Cuadros brought to the game? (p. 223)
2. What pressure has Cuadros placed on himself? (p. 226)
3. Cuadros states, “I placed an enormous amount of pressure on myself. I wanted to make the guys winners – to insulate them from the prejudice, their residency status, and allow them to overcome the barriers

erected by the close-minded.” (p. 226) Do you believe he has he been successful in any of these goals? Explain.

4. Why does Cuadros say that high school ball teams often have the “dreams of a community behind them?” What type of pressure comes with this? (p. 226)
5. “I had spent my life searching for my own place. I grew up isolated and cut off from my own community, always on the periphery. Coaching had brought me to the center. On the field, with my boys around me, I was home. We played, fought, laughed, and cried there. And I knew that in this Southern town, on this field of green and blue, I had found a place to call my own.” (p. 228) Why do you think the field, with the high school players around him, is where Cuadros felt “at home?”
6. Who does Cuadros dedicate their final game to? What is significant about this dedication? (p. 229)
7. The Jets make it to the finals at the end of the chapter – how do you imagine this felt for them? What challenges have they overcome to make it this far? (232)
8. Cuadros ends the chapter by stating that he didn’t care whether the team won the state championship: “There was only one thing I wanted. And I wanted it real bad. It had been the thing I had wanted since starting the program, the image I kept my eye on, not even allowing myself to utter it out loud. I told no one. Throughout every practice and during every game for the past three years, I had thought only about this one thing.” (p. 233) What do you think it is?

## Chapter 20

1. Based on Cuadros’ description, what are the two worlds Indio slips between? (p. 241)
2. What is Cuadros really questioning when he asks: “Was the soccer field any different from the tomato field? Or the chicken field? Or the construction field? Latinos were always safe when they kept to their fields. But when they stepped beyond them, when they moved from under the protective lights of their fields, they stepped into the darkness, the unknown world of being undocumented.” (p. 241)
3. Even though his grades were good, Cuadros notes that Indio’s chance of being able to go to college is slim. Why? What might assist him in achieving this dream? (p. 241)
4. What strange phone call does Cuadros receive? Characterize Cuadros’s response to the man: “If he was looking for a fight or an outburst, he has called the wrong guy. That was never my style.” (p. 242)
5. “Sports have a way of making people behave in all kinds of different ways. In some, it brings out an ability to rise above adversity and to compete hard but honestly. In others, it raises the baser instincts – behavior that can at best be deemed unsportsmanlike.” (p. 242) What examples throughout the novel illustrate these opposite forms of behavior?
6. Why does Cuadros have the boys meet him in the school? (p. 243)
7. What issue does Cuadros take with the wall of champions? (p. 243)
8. What does Cuadros mean when he tells the boys that their picture is the brick wall; that their history has not been written there yet and is still in brick and mortar? (243)

## Chapter 21

1. Compare the arrival of the Jets to the Devil Pups. (p. 248)
2. What had the team done on the anniversary of September 11<sup>th</sup> to honor America? Why do you think this memory came to Cuadros now? (p. 250)
3. What type of support did the Jets get at the championship game? (p. 250-251)
4. What is the outcome of the game? How do you imagine this felt to the Jets? (258)
5. According to Cuadros, why was this win so important for the immigrants on the team? (p. 258)
6. What all had the team proven with their win? (p. 258)
7. What type of reception does the team receive upon their return to Siler City? (p. 260) Why is this reception significant?
8. Why do you think Cuadros reminds the reader of the David Duke demonstration that had occurred in Siler City in 2000 specifically at this point in the book? (p. 261)
9. In what ways has the town progressed in their attitude towards Latinos from the beginning of the book until now?

10. Why do you think Guero dropped out of school? Why does Cuadros take it personally? (p. 262)
11. Why does the photograph of the Jets present a “promise of a brighter future?” (p. 264)

### Epilogue

1. In what ways is the population of the United States changing? Why are so many people threatened by this change?
2. What examples of historical oppression does Cuadros allude to when discussing the “color line”? (p. 265) What specific examples can you think of throughout history when groups of people have been oppressed or treated unjustly based on their race, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, etc.? Is there a way to ensure such oppression does not continue? Explain.
3. What “new beginning” does Cuadros hope for? (p. 265)
4. Why does Cuadros classify the Latino migration as a “silent migration?” (p. 265)
5. What does Cuadros mean by the term “white privilege?” What examples does Cuadros note of groups trying to protect “white privilege?” (p. 266)
6. Cuadros states that “Children who were brought here unauthorized by their parents should not bear the same stigma nor suffer the same consequences currently being debated. They are innocents caught up in the whirlwinds of globalization, corporate greed, and the deprivations of its aftermath.” He asks, “Does America now believe that the sons shall bear the inequities of the father? What will America do with this illegal generation?” (p. 267) How would you answer this question? IN your opinion, how should the government deal with children who were brought here through no choice of their own and currently live with the limbo status of “undocumented” or “illegal” immigrant?
7. Do you believe that America has the ability to accept immigration in its near future? Why or why not?

### Overall/Culminating Questions

1. Cuadros says that “Siler City has a lot to teach America about how to handle this situation [regarding immigration].” (p. x) After reading the book, what do you think he means? What does Siler City have to teach the rest of the country?
2. If you could ask the author one question, what would you want to know and why?
3. Why do you think Cuadros chose the title “A Home on the Field”? If you were to pick an alternate title for the book, what would you title it and why?
4. Why do you think Cuadros wanted to tell this story of the Jordan Matthews soccer team and its Latino players?
5. Of the players, who did you learn something from and what did you learn? Who inspired you and why? Which player do you feel faced the greatest amount of challenges and why? Which player do you feel overcame the challenges presented to him and in what way?
6. What can this book teach us about immigration?
7. If you could recommend it to one person or one particular group of person, who would that be and why should they in particular read this book?

### Quotes for further exploration (i.e. class interpretation/discussion, short answer, journal response, etc.)

“But race in America is an extremely complicated issue, intertwined with class and history, and it runs across the surface of many different issues like topsoil.” (p. 43)

“Big business had invited them to come and work – in many cases, it had transported them, provided them housing, and given them jobs that others in Siler City didn’t want. This is something that anti-immigrant advocates refused to admit. Many workers, whether undocumented or documented, had been invited by America’s most influential and best representative – Corporate America. It was business that decided that it needed a more pliable and cheaper labor force, and it went out and got it despite, or encouraged by, Washington’s lack of official immigration policy.” (p. 44)

“So long as there is no talking there is no chance of resolution. When the conversations begin, even though they may begin in conflict, it is out of conflict that we get a sense of those things that unite us and see our common issues, our humanity, our common needs.” (p. 49)

“America spoke with its stomach and it wanted its tomatoes picked, its cucumbers gathered, its organs harvested, its blueberries busheled, its hamburger ground, its pork processed, its Thanksgiving Day turnkeys slaughtered, its Christmas trees cut, and its chicken butchered, and it didn’t much care how that was done as long as the people who brought its food were kept invisible and cheap.” (p. 56)

“I love this country but it’s an unrequited love. I think that many Latinos, especially the newer generations, feel this way toward America. We love it, but America can be capricious with her affection, leaving us like jilted lovers, would-weary, but perennially hopeful.” (p. 56)

“Americans never really understood where their food or other agricultural products like Christmas trees came from. If they fully grasped the work, the sweat, the long hours for little pay, the cold that the workers endured during the hard winter months in the mountains of North Carolina, they might begin to view their Christmas mornings differently.” (p. 100)

“[My father and I] were mirror images of each other. I became the man he always wanted to be and his life always inspired me to be the man I had always wanted to be. Funny how fathers and sons can pick up the same thread in life and weave a single cloth from two lives.” (p. 112)

“Talk in Congress by men from immigrant families themselves, like Representative Bill Tancredo from Colorado, about building a fence at the border and deporting people, would never stop the tide of immigrants from risking everything to come to the United States. Tancredo and others like him never fully understood why people came here. They were desperate for a better life and they were willing to risk their own lives and the lives of their families to find it. Neither a fence nor the United States Army could stop what was beating in their hearts. Human beings will find a way to improve their lives, no matter what obstacles are thrown in their path.” (p. 132-133)

“Being an American is so much more than just having citizenship. It’s that beat in your heart to be free, to be your own man, to have control over your own destiny. America has always been an idea. It has nothing to do with papers, documents, or immigration laws. It has a lot to do with ideals and dreams.” (p. 133)

“Many of the Latino kids saw America in terms of brown and white. It was white to work indoors at a desk. It was brown to work outdoors. It was white to study hard and do well at school. It was brown to get by.” (p. 153)

“Sometimes you have to be willing to lose everything in order to gain everything.” (163)

“Family. I thought about family long and hard on the way home from practice that evening. I wanted the players to think of one another like that. And they did. They had grown up together, sharing so many of the same experiences. They had faced being segregated in this community together. They had all shared the hot embarrassment of saying a word or phrase in English incorrectly and being laughed at. They had endured the stares and the muttered words behind their backs. They played soccer with one another for hours on hot days in the summer or cold afternoons in the winter. They knew one another well...They were all entwined with one another.” (163)

“For all the cloudy days that he had seen in his young life, there were moments of shining glory as well, when the warm rays of the sun would touch his brown face. No matter what would happen to him, Enrique would always come back. He had proven that he could take adversity and turn it around into victory.” (169)



“They all knew what a hard day’s work was, had been tested in hardship, experienced terrible prejudice, and faced an uncertain future. But all that faded away when they strapped their boots on and ran onto the pitch. If there was one place they could call home, a place where they could really feel at home, it was here – between two goals on a dusty field.” (207)

“I began thinking that no matter how hard I worked with the boys, or how much I pushed them to be greater than their individual selves, it would never be enough to overcome their problems. I wanted them to be champions, to prepare them for their lives here in the United States. I knew they would be profoundly tested by this society in unforeseeable ways. The humiliations, the degradation, the pride-crushing blows – all were on the horizon for them when they graduated – if they graduated.” (210)

“They had a vague awareness of what awaited them after high school. For now they lived in a bubble, unexposed to the indignities of being Latino in America. They were secure, could use their real names, and didn’t have to negotiate the shadowy world of the undocumented migrant. But in a couple of years, all their achievements would be swept away and they would be left with little more than the ‘status’ of illegal immigrants. They would have to assume new identities and live in a state of perpetual fear of being found out.” (210)

“*Fuerza y honor*. Strength and honor. What does that mean? With *fuerza* we will win games. But with honor we will be winners.” (p. 213)

“I had spent my life searching for my own place. I grew up isolated and cut off from my own community, always on the periphery. Coaching had brought me to the center. On the field, with my boys around me, I was home. We played, fought, laughed, and cried there. And I knew that in this Southern town, on this field of green and blue, I had found a place to call my own.” (228)

Indio ...”walked off the field and I watched as he stepped into the diffused light around the track. He seemed to hang there for a moment, suspended in doubt – a figure out of focus – before slipping finally into the dark. I bent over to pack the balls that had been scattered on the field into their black bag and watched as Indio stepped into an unknown world. On the field he was a gifted athlete, one who inspired adoration because of his talents, and he had a promising future. But once he stepped off the field, beyond its blue lines, he became illegal – an animal to be rounded up and deported. This is the way the country saw him.” (p. 241)

Was the soccer field any different from the tomato field? Or the chicken field? Or the construction field? Latinos were always safe when they kept to their fields. But when they stepped beyond them, when they moved from under the protective lights of their fields, they stepped into the darkness, the unknown world of being undocumented.” (p. 241)

“They were all champions now. No matter what happened in their lives, they would always know in their hearts that they could be the very best at something. When things were even they could compete and win.” (258)

“America is in the midst of fundamental population changes that will forever alter its national character. In the next fifty years there will be more people that will look like me, and the country’s identity will be transformed. By 2050, half the population in the U.S. will be white, non-Hispanic, according to U.S. Census projections. The remaining half will be composed of people of color with Latinos representing the largest group at an estimate twenty-four percent. The discussion of race and ethnicity will forever be altered and a new language will have to be developed in dealing with America’s most persistent and complex issue. The idea of a minority class of people may be discarded and a new paradigm of fellowship forged. If one can claim a majority then no one can be in the minority and perhaps the color line that has enslaved, marginalized, and hurt so many, both the

exploited through physical humiliation and the exploiter through moral degradation, can be washed away, and we can emerge together clean and at a new beginning.” (p. 265)

The migration of Latinos to America in the past fifteen years has left the country angry and raw. Now America only seeks to punish – even those who are innocent of any violation of the law. Children who were brought here unauthorized by their parents should not bear the same stigma nor suffer the same consequences currently being debated. They are innocents caught up in the whirlwinds of globalization, corporate greed, and the deprivations of its aftermath. Does America now believe that the sons shall bear the inequities of the father? What will America do with this illegal generation? Is there no more room in America’s heart for forgiveness, for amnesty, for children who broke no law? Is this how Pharaoh’s heart hardens?” (p. 267)