



## Immigration Podcasts

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Eighth grade humanities students explored historical waves of immigration, focusing on these essential questions: Why do people immigrate to the United States? What challenges have immigrants faced throughout history? How do immigrants navigate between two cultural worlds? Sources included fiction, nonfiction, and guest speakers ranging from United States Border Patrol to Border Angels, a non-profit organization that helps ensure the safety of undocumented immigrants. We also visited Border Field State Park, on the beach between the U.S.A. and Mexico. In the end, students created Podcasts about the struggles of immigrant groups, past and present.

### Teacher Reflection

I think my biggest learning moment from this project was when my students shared their feelings about the disconnect between the United States and Mexico. I don't think they really saw that disconnect until they looked first-hand at the prison-like fence that divides our two nations.

### Student Reflection

Near the border, a hawk circles the empty fields that begin San Diego. The scene evokes the loneliness you feel as you walk through the muddy landscape of Friendship Park. Passing over the bridge that separates the mud and the sand, a tower comes into sight. The border fence, made of tall metal rods, radiates feelings of sadness. When the talks begin, I dive deep into my thoughts. The presenter says that those who only want to start a better life end up deported, back where they started. They have even less money from paying their smugglers. How can people be so cruel as to divide people through a fence? In the early 1970s, when the park was established, did anyone think to split it down the property line? What was it like then? And what would have become of the park, and America, if not only this border, but all borders, were destroyed? I look back on the fence, and hear voices of migrants. "Hurry," they would say, "Almost there." Who would know if I walked among migrants searching for the American Dream? Who would know if they found it?

—Shea Saulino

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