

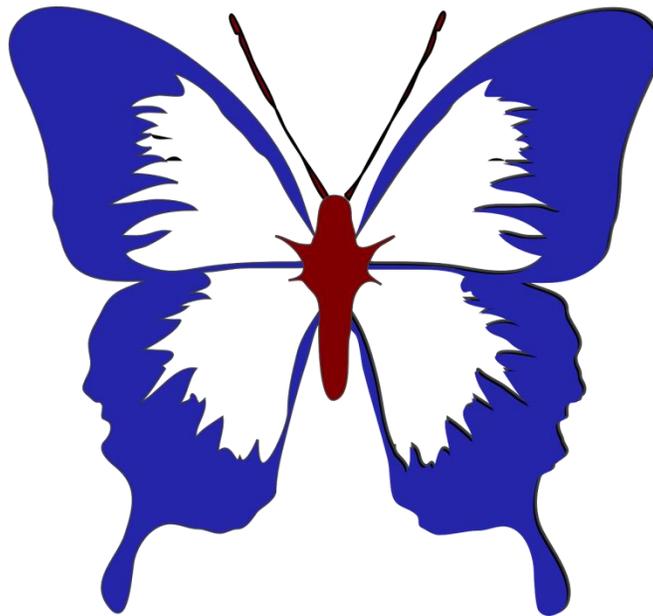
Becoming American

Second Generation American

Literature

Lesson plan with variations for middle school and high school

Written by Jyotsna Sreenivasan



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Time needed: five weeks of lessons (4 days a week; 50 minutes per day)

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INTRODUCTION

This unit can be used in a language arts or English class that is studying American literature.

“Second generation” refers to children of immigrants: people who were born in the United States to immigrant parents, or who were brought as young children to the United States by their immigrant parents.

The study of immigrant literature often throws first-generation immigrant writers into the same category as their children. In fact, the children of immigrants, second-generation Americans, may have very different perspectives from their parents. First-generation immigrant Americans tend to have strong ties to the country they came from, yet consciously chose to come to the United States. Their children, on the other hand, often have weak ties to the ancestral country and had no choice about being raised in the United States.

Studying literature by second-generation Americans can highlight the transition from immigrant to American. As Marina Budhos notes in her book *Remix: Conversations with Immigrant Teenagers*: “Immigrant teenagers often don’t have any in-between space where they can work out the pressures of their in-between lives” (p. 10). For the second generation, their lives seem in-between -- they don’t identify completely with the culture of their parents or with American culture.

Julia Alvarez, who immigrated from the Dominican Republic as a child, titled her first book of fiction *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*. The second generation typically loses their “foreign” accent, if they ever had one, and speaks like the Americans around them, but the first generation, those who came here as adults, typically don’t lose their accent. They retain their identification with the culture of origin even in the way they speak.

Because they are often straddling two worlds, because they can see American culture both from the outside looking in and from the inside looking out, second generation Americans often have a lot to say about what it means to be an American.

Note on timing

I am giving lessons for only 4 days per week on the assumption that you may have other things that need to be done during each week (such as vocabulary or grammar workbooks). Also, this allows for holidays, bad-weather days, and extra time in case things take longer than expected. You can also use the extra day as a silent reading day, or you may choose to include some of the suggestions for supplementary lessons.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, students will understand that:

1. Migration has been going on since the beginning of humanity.
2. The American Dream is a concept that has attracted and still attracts immigrants.
3. The reality of American life is sometimes, but not always, different from the American Dream.
4. Second-generation Americans often have different views of America, and their place in it, than their immigrant parents do.
5. The study of second-generation literature can help us gain a new perspective on America, and help us reflect on what it means to be American.
6. The study of second-generation literature can help us reflect on times in our own lives when we felt “in-between” in some way (in between two places, two cultures, two groups of friends, two schools, etc.) and can help foster empathy for other people who are struggling to find their place in the world.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED WITH THIS UNIT

Reading standards

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- Integrate and evaluate knowledge presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively as well as in words.
- Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
- Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Writing standards

- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Speaking and Listening Standards

- Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Language standards

- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing.
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Week 1 -- Day 1: What's in a name?

Purpose: To introduce students to the unit through names; to discuss the idea that a second generation person's name can be a source of mixed feelings as they strive to fit in to the larger American society.

Teacher needs:

- Copies of "The F Word" (short chapter from *Funny in Farsi* by Firoozeh Dumas)
- Copies of "My Name" (short chapter from *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros)
- Timer

Students need:

- Journals or paper to write on
- Pen or pencil

Lesson:

1. Ask students to free write about their own names (5 minutes). Students may answer one or more of the following questions: Do you like your name? Why or why not? Why did your parents choose this name? What does it mean? Is it common or unusual? Does it reflect your heritage or ancestry? How do others react to your name?
2. Small group or whole class sharing of free writing (limit this to 10 minutes).
3. Hand out "The F Word" by Firoozeh Dumas (from *Funny in Farsi*) and read it out loud.
4. Have students jot down reactions (time them for 2 minutes – have students write down things they thought were surprising, thought-provoking, funny, interesting; and/or questions they have).
5. Hand out "My Name" from *The House on Mango Street*. Read out loud.
6. Jot down reactions (time them for 2 minutes)

7. With a partner or in small groups, share reactions to both pieces (give them about 5 minutes)
8. Groups share selected reactions with the whole class. (Sometimes I like to have someone in each group share something that someone else in that group said; this fosters listening skills).
9. Class discussion (suggested questions):
 - Why do you think these young women felt the way they did about their names?
 - If you encounter someone with an unusual name, how might you react now that you've read these pieces?
 - Are there any connections between these two pieces, and what you wrote about your own names?
 - Both of these authors are "second-generation" Americans. What do you think that means? (If a student doesn't bring it up, give them the definition: a second-generation American was born in this country to immigrant parents, or was brought to this country as a child by their parents).
 - How do you think second-generation Americans might feel about being brought up in a country that is different than the one their parents came from?
10. In this unit we will be studying literature by second-generation Americans. As we read, write, and discuss, we will be thinking about questions like: what does it mean to be American? What views do people from other countries have about our country? What makes it easy or difficult for second-generation Americans to "fit in" to the mainstream culture? When in your own life have you felt that you didn't fit in? (NOTE: You may or may not have time to discuss these questions during this class period, but at least try to mention them.)

Week 1 -- Day 2: Choose a novel or memoir

Purpose: To allow students some choice in what they read, and to get them excited about the reading choices.

NOTE: The “Book Pass” technique used in this lesson was adapted from *Mini-Lessons for Literature Circles* by Daniels and Steineke

Teacher needs:

- Timer for book pass
- Copies of novels or memoirs for students to choose from (see suggestions below)
- Sign-up sheets
- Bookmark supplies: stiff paper, colored pencils, and/or markers
- Calculators

Students need: Nothing

Middle School book suggestions

- *American Born Chinese*, by Gene Luen Yang (graphic novel about a Chinese-American boy; encourage kids to read this twice! It is a seemingly quick read but there is a LOT going on.)
- *Farewell to Manzanar*, by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston (memoir about a girl who must endure a Japanese internment camp)
- *Funny in Farsi*, by Firoozeh Dumas (hilarious autobiographical essays about an Iranian young woman and her family in California)
- *Habibi* by Naomi Shihab Nye (novel about a Palestinian-American girl who meets her relatives in Palestine/Israel)
- *My Name is Aram*, by William Saroyan (linked short stories about an Armenian-American boy)
- *Nilda*, by Nicholasa Mohr (novel about a Puerto Rican girl growing up in New York City)
- *Of Beetles and Angels*, by Mawi Asgedom (inspiring memoir about an Ethiopian boy growing up in Chicago)

High School book suggestions (*starred suggestions are for older or more advanced students)

- *Bread Givers*, by Anzia Yeziarska (novel about a Jewish young woman in the Lower East Side of New York City in the early 1900's)
- *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, by Jade Snow Wong (memoir about a Chinese-American girl growing up in California)
- *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*, by Julia Alvarez (a novel-in-stories about a family from the Dominican Republic settling in New York)
- *The Way Around*, by David Good (memoir by the son of a Yanomami tribal woman and an American anthropologist)
- *These Americans*, by Jyotsna Sreenivasan (8 short stories and a novella about Indian-Americans)
- *When I Was Puerto Rican*, by Esmeralda Santiago (memoir about a Puerto Rican young woman who must adjust to life in New York City)
- **Brown Girl, Brownstones*, by Paule Marshall (novel about a child of immigrants from Barbados growing up in Brooklyn)
- **The Chosen*, by Chaim Potok (novel about two boys from orthodox Jewish families)
- **Dreams from My Father*, by Barack Obama (his father was from Kenya)
- **The Joy Luck Club*, by Amy Tan (linked short stories about Chinese-American families)
- **My Antonia*, by Willa Cather (novel about children of European immigrants settling in Nebraska)
- **The Woman Warrior*, by Maxine Hong Kingston (memoir with fictional elements about a Chinese-American girl growing up in California)

Lesson:

1. Stack book choices where students can see and access them. Set out bookmark supplies.
2. Explain the book pass to the students: they will each grab one title. You will set the timer for 1 ½ minutes; during this time they are to be looking at the book to see if they'd like to read it. Ask for student suggestions on what they might look at (ideas could include front and back covers, first paragraph, and a paragraph at random in the middle of the book). They are to be engaged

- with the book for the full 1 ½ minutes—no staring off into space. Once the time is up, they must pass the book to someone else and acquire a new title.
3. Do 3 or 4 rounds of the book pass. Check to see that everyone has a book they would like to read.
 4. You might want to have students write their chosen title and name on a book sign-up sheet, for your own records.
 5. (TIP – pass out a sticky note to each student; have them write their name on this and stick it to the inside front cover, so if they misplace the book, it can be returned to them).
 6. Write on the board the actual due dates for each quarter of the book.
 7. Explain to students that they will be doing some in-class writing on the book, so they do need to keep up with their reading!
 8. Also write down the formulas for them to calculate their page numbers: $.25 \times$ last page of book; $.5 \times$ last page of book; $.75 \times$ last page of book
 9. Students make bookmarks with the page numbers and dates on them:
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ of book finished -- one week from today
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ -- two weeks from today
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ -- three weeks from today
 - End – four weeks from today
 10. Remind them to write their names on the bookmarks!
Some students enjoy spending time decorating their bookmarks, whereas others just want to write down the dates and page numbers.
 11. Time for silent reading.
 12. (NOTE: I recommend allowing students to switch to a different book within the first week, if they find they do not like their chosen book).



Week 1 -- Day 3: Picture books about immigration

Purpose: To use nonfiction children's books as a way to quickly acquire some general background information about immigration.

Teacher needs:

- Timer
- Copies of several nonfiction children's books about immigration (aim to have at least one book per student; multiple copies of the same book are fine, as long as you have several titles available). Go to a library with a good children's section, look at the immigration picture books (304.873), and pick out an appropriate selection. In order to get enough copies, you may have to plan ahead and request books from other nearby libraries.

Suggested titles:

- *Ellis Island*, by Bob Temple
- *Ellis Island*, by Melissa McDaniel
- *Ellis Island*, by Molly Aloian
- *History of American Immigration*, by Peter Hammerschmidt
- *Immigration in the U.S.*, by Tammy Gagne
- *Immigration*, by Peter Benoit
- *Let's Talk About Being an Immigrant*, by Sarah Levette
- *Migration and Refugees*, by Cath Senker

Students need:

- Journals or paper to write on
- Pen or pencil

Lesson:

1. Stack the picture books where students have access to them.
2. Each student should choose a book, look through it, and write down three or more things they learned about immigration. (Give them about half an hour for this. If they are finished with one book, they should choose another book.)

3. Call on students to share one thing from their list. The other students should add anything new that they hear to their own lists.
4. Class discussion (suggested questions):
 - What did you think was most surprising or interesting about what you learned?
 - Why do people leave their home countries and come to the United States?
 - How do you think children might feel about being brought to a new country by their parents?
 - Why do you think the story of immigration often begins with Ellis Island or in the 1800's? What about the black slaves who were brought to the U.S.? Why aren't they called immigrants? What about the pilgrims, or the founding fathers? Why aren't they called immigrants?
 - What about people from the United States who live in another country? Why are they often called "expats" (short for expatriates) rather than immigrants to that country?
 - When did immigration really start? (Make the point that humans have always been migrating to different places. Moving to a new place is the way humans spread over the world.)

Week 1 -- Day 4: The American Dream and the second generation

Purpose: To introduce (or re-introduce) students to the concept of the American Dream; to help them understand that the American Dream is something that has and still does influence people to immigrate to America; and to begin considering how second-generation Americans might react to the American Dream.

Teacher needs:

- Copies of “What is the American Dream?” for each student:
<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/american-dream/students/thedream.html>
- Copies of “Introduction” (pages 6-12) from *Remix* by Marina Budhos
- Copies of “The New Colossus” (poem by Emma Lazarus – available at <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/46550>)
- Timer

Students need:

- Journals or paper to write on
- Pen or pencil

Lesson:

1. What is the American Dream? Ask students to share their ideas.
2. Pass out handout about the American Dream from the Library of Congress site. Read aloud. Ask for questions or reactions.
3. Pass out Introduction from *Remix*. Explain that this author, Marina Budhos, interviewed immigrant teens, and that the class will be reading some of these interviews in the coming days.
4. Begin reading aloud in the middle of page 6 (“In the old days . . .”) Stop as appropriate to check for understanding.
5. Have students jot down things they found interesting, or things they learned from the article, as well as any questions they have (you can time them for 2 or 3 minutes).

6. Class discussion (suggested questions):
 - On page 6, the author states a popular expression among immigrants: “In America, the streets are paved in gold.” What does this mean? How does this relate to the American Dream?
 - At the top of page 7, the author states, “Today, it’s the school halls that are paved in gold.” What does this mean? How does this relate to the American Dream?
 - How do the immigrant teens see America and Americans?
 - What challenges do the immigrant teens face?
 - What else did you find interesting or confusing about this introduction?
7. If you have time, read aloud “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus (explain to students that this is the poem printed on the base of the Statue of Liberty)
8. (TIP – I like to read poems 3 times. The first time I read it out loud to the students. Then I ask if anyone has questions about unfamiliar words. Second, they read it silently to themselves. Third, a student reads it out loud.)
9. Class discussion (suggested questions):
 - What does this poem mean? What is going on in the poem?
 - What questions or comments do you have?
 - What rhyme scheme do you notice?
 - Do you think our country lives up to the promise of this poem?

Week 2 -- Day 1: In-Between Lives: interviews with immigrant teens

Purpose: To allow students a view into the lives of immigrant teens, as a way to understand the sometimes difficult process of “becoming American.”

Teacher needs:

- Copies of immigrant teen interviews from *Remix* by Marina Budhos. Each group of 4 or 5 students will read about one immigrant teen. You can choose any of the interviews, but I suggest:
 - Claris – Dominican Republic (p. 53)
 - Farida – Bangladesh (p. 63)
 - Mariwat – Ethiopia (p. 89)
 - Kaying – Laos (p. 95)
 - Vladislav and Victor – Ukraine (p. 105)
 - Hector – Guatemala (p. 119)
- Copies of Immigrant Teens worksheet (see HANDOUTS section)

Students need: Pen or pencil

Lesson:

1. How many people know what country their ancestors came from? Ask for volunteers to share where their ancestors are from.
2. Pass out Immigrant Teen worksheets.
3. Explain to students: we’ll be using a technique called “jigsaw” today and tomorrow. Today we’ll break into groups of four students each. Each group will read about a different immigrant teen. After reading, groups will discuss the person they read about and fill out the first two pages of the worksheet. (The other pages will be filled out tomorrow).
4. Break the students into groups of four. Some groups could have five students, in which case the fifth student will partner with one of the others when they break into new groups tomorrow.
5. Hand out copies of the immigrant teen interviews to each group member.

6. If possible, move them into spaces where they can read aloud and discuss without disturbing other students.
7. You can circulate among groups to make sure students understand what they are to do, and stay on task.
8. Remind them: each student must understand their immigrant teen so they can present this person to a new group tomorrow!
9. (TIP: depending on the age and maturity level of your students, you may want to collect the worksheets to hold onto them until tomorrow, so they don't get lost).

Week 2-- Day 2: In-Between Lives (continued)

Lesson:

1. Get into the same groups as last time.
2. Each group counts off by four. If there is an extra person, that person should pair with one of the other numbers and work as a team. (In this case each student will need to fill out their own worksheet, but they will do their presentation as a team).
3. The students with the same numbers get together. (In other words, all the ones get together in a new group; all the twos get together in a new group; and so forth.)
4. Using their worksheets from yesterday, each student takes a turn explaining their teen's story.
5. The other group members fill out the last two pages of the worksheet.
6. Once everyone is finished, get back together as a whole class.
7. Class discussion (suggested questions):
 - What similarities did you see between the teens you read about? What about differences?
 - What was surprising to you?
 - How does the concept of the American Dream relate to these students' lives?
 - Have you experienced anything similar in your own life, in which you must adapt to a very different environment while still being true to yourself?

Week 2 -- Day 3: Book Response Worksheet #1

Purpose: To hold students accountable for their reading; to give them an opportunity to reflect on the reading, share their thoughts with other students, and learn from others' reactions to the same book.

Teacher needs:

- Copies of Book Response Worksheet #1 (see HANDOUTS section)

Students need:

- Copy of book they are reading
- Pen or pencil

Lesson:

1. Hand out Book Response Worksheet #1. NOTE: if you prefer to have students react to their reading in a different way, feel free to substitute that.
2. On their own, have them write or draw some kind of reaction to what they've read so far regarding the main character (fiction) or the main subject of the memoir. They should use the book to find relevant details and page numbers. Give them about 30 minutes for this.
3. NOTE: I've had students ask me whether it was "cheating" to look at the book while responding to it. I tell them: the goal is not to memorize the book; the goal is to think deeply about what you are reading, and to get into the habit of referring to the details on the page as you reflect about the book.
4. Once they are finished responding, students should share what they've drawn or written with others reading the same book.
5. I recommend not having a full-blown discussion of the book until the end, because students who are ahead may not be able to help revealing spoilers.
6. If time, they may continue reading silently.
7. As they are working, you (the teacher) could circulate to ask students what page they are on and how they are enjoying the book. NOTE: As I circulate, I

like to jot down the page number and any follow-up notes on my class status sheet, which I carry on a clipboard. See Nancie Atwell's book *In the Middle* for examples of status-of-the-class sheets.

8. IF A STUDENT IS NOT ENJOYING THEIR CHOSEN BOOK, now is the time to switch. Ask them if there is another book, from among the choices offered, that they would prefer. If they switch, they will still need to meet the same page deadlines.
9. WHAT IF A STUDENT IS BEHIND IN THE READING? Have a conversation with them about why they are behind. Often, students don't see reading as "real homework" and so they put it off. Remind them that this is homework. Suggest that they set aside 15 or 20 minutes every day to read. Ask them: what are some good times for you to read? Perhaps during the commute to school, or just before bed? If the student is very far behind, you could send an e-mail home asking parents to help the student set up and stick to a reading schedule.

Week 2 – Day 4: Introduce author study of poet Gregory Djanikian

Purpose: To introduce students to a second-generation American poet, and to read, discuss, and enjoy his poetry throughout the rest of the unit.

Teacher needs:

- Cue up video interview of Gregory Djanikian (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jStDbHp3Nrs>)
- Cue up a map of Middle East and North Africa (such as this one: <http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/me.htm>)
- Copies of poem, “Sailing to America” by Gregory Djanikian <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/48206>
- Copies of poem, “First Supper in the New Country” by Gregory Djanikian <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse?volume=182&issue=1&page=37>

Students need: Nothing

Lesson:

1. Show 3 to 5 minutes of interview with Gregory Djanikian (start at about 1 minute and stop before you get to 6 minutes).
2. This poet, Gregory Djanikian, is a second generation American. What country do you think his family is from? (Take guesses from students).
3. Does he look and sound the way you think someone from an immigrant family would look and sound? (Take comments from students). Why or why not?
4. What did you learn about him so far in the interview?
5. Tell the students: he was born in Alexandria, Egypt in 1949. His parents were originally from Armenia. He came to the United States at the age of 8.

6. Let's look at a map. Who can point out Armenia? Who can point out Egypt? What is similar about these two countries? How are they different? (HINT: they both border Middle Eastern countries. Armenia is part of Europe, while Egypt is in northern Africa.)
7. How do you think he spoke when he first came to the U.S.? Do you think he spoke English?
8. Pass out poem, "Sailing to America".
9. Read it three times. (First, the teacher reads it out loud. Ask if anyone has questions about specific words. Then, students read it silently. Finally, a student volunteer reads it out loud.)
10. Class discussion (suggested questions):
 - What is this poem about? What is happening in this poem?
 - What makes this a poem, rather than a short piece of prose?
 - What comments or questions do you have?
 - What is the mood or emotion of this poem? (You can give them suggestions: happy? sad? nostalgic? angry? funny? wondrous?)
 - How does the journey to America in the children's imagination contrast with the actual journey?
 - Comment on the last 6 lines of the poem (starting with "And it would take me a long time") – what do they mean?
 - Are there any symbols in the poem, and what do they represent?
11. Pass out poem, "First Supper in the New Country".
12. Read it three times. You can let the students know that Yerevan is the capital city of Armenia.
13. Class discussion (suggested questions):

- What is this poem about? What is happening in this poem?
- What comments or questions do you have?
- What does the home in America look like, compared to their home in Alexandria, Egypt?
- Are there any symbols in the poem, and what do they represent?
- Compare and contrast the house and surroundings in America to the Armenian surroundings that Uncle Hagop imagines.
- How do you think the boy and his sister feel about his uncle's cooking?
- How does Uncle Hagop feel about his cooking?
- His sister asks "if we could return to normal." What is "normal" for this family? What do you think the boy and his sister would like "normal" to be?
- (If no one points it out, you might point out that the boy and his sister already feel "in-between" their Armenian heritage and their new American home.)

Week 3 -- Day 1: Brainstorm for an autobiographical essay

Purpose: To introduce students to the writing assignment – an autobiographical essay about a time in their lives when they were caught between two things (two places, two cultures, two groups of friends, two schools, and so forth).

Teacher needs:

- Copies of “In-Between” autobiographical essay ideas worksheet (see HANDOUTS section)
- Timer

Students need:

- Pen or pencil

Lesson:

1. Explain that students will be writing an essay based on a time in their life when they felt “in-between”.
2. Hand out one copy of the autobiographical essay ideas worksheet to each student. Go over the instructions.
3. Give students 15 minutes or so to think about their lives and to fill out three rows of the worksheet.
4. During this time you can circulate to make sure students stay on task and that they are filling out the worksheet correctly with specific incidents that occurred in a specific year of their life.
5. Once they have filled out the worksheet, students can share with someone else. Try “wander and share”: have them all stand up with their worksheets. They should wander randomly around the room until you say “stop”. Then, they should share one incident from their worksheet with the person they are nearest. You can repeat this a few times.
6. If, as they share, they remember something else to add to their worksheet, they should add it to the back of the worksheet.

7. Once they've shared a few times, they should go back to their seats and choose one idea from the worksheet.
8. Have them take out their journals or a clean sheet of paper. Time them for five minutes, and ask them to free write about the incident. Remind them that this is just free writing—it doesn't have to be any good. They are just getting their thoughts on the page. The only rule is to keep their pen or pencil moving for the entire 5 minutes. Bullet points are fine. If they want to do a web, that's fine too.
9. Class sharing of free writing. (If lots of students want to share, you could have them share within small groups or with a partner).

Week 3 -- Day 2: Begin drafting autobiographical essay

Teacher needs:

- Copies of “When I First Saw Snow” by Gregory Djanikian
<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse?contentId=36610>

Students need:

- Journal or paper to write on
- Pen or pencil
- Access to a computer

Lesson:

1. Pass out copies of “When I First Saw Snow”. Read it three times as explained above. Explain to students that “waiting for papers” means waiting for some sort of official status as immigrants.
2. Class discussion (suggested questions):
 - What is this poem about? What is happening in this poem?
 - What comments or questions do you have?
 - What words or phrases let you know how the boy thinks and feels about the first snow he’s ever seen?
 - What do all the details in the poem represent – the songs, the games, the tree? Think about these details in relation to the details in previous poems by this author.
 - Why do you think the boy says he was “falling deeply into America”?
3. After the poem and discussion (10 minutes or so), students should continue brainstorming for or drafting their autobiographical essays. Write on the board the kinds of details they should be jotting down:
 - Where and when this took place

- What happened in chronological order
 - How they felt about each thing that happened
 - Relevant descriptive details
 - Dialogue (they'll have to make this up based on what they remember)
 - What they learned from the incident, or how it affected them
4. When they feel they have completed their notes, they should begin typing a rough draft.

Week 3 -- Day 3: Book Response Worksheet #2

Purpose: To hold students accountable for their reading; to give them an opportunity to reflect on the reading, share their thoughts with other students, and learn from others' reactions to the same book.

Teacher needs:

- Copies of Book Response Worksheet #2 (this was adapted from the "Written Conversation" chapter in *Mini-Lessons for Literature Circles* by Daniels and Steineke)

Students need:

- Copy of book they are reading
- Pen or pencil

Lesson:

1. Hand out Book Response Worksheet #2 (see HANDOUTS section). NOTE: if you prefer to have students react to their reading in a different way, feel free to substitute that.
2. This worksheet asks students to choose a question and answer it. They then exchange papers with a partner, and respond to their partner's answer.
3. As they are working, you can circulate and ask students what page they are on. If you have time, you could ask a question to gauge the student's involvement with the book, such as: what new perspective about America are you gaining?
4. If a student is behind on the reading, refer to the suggestions on page 21.

Week 3 -- Day 4: Pass out writing rubric; continue drafting essay

Purpose: I recommend passing out the rubric once students are finished brainstorming or free writing and have begun typing their rough draft. This way, students are not overwhelmed by the requirements of the assignment while they are brainstorming.

Teacher needs:

- Copies of “How I Learned English” by Gregory Djanikian
<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse?volume=149&issue=4&page=39>
- Copies of rubric (see HANDOUTS section)
- Timer

Students need:

- Access to a computer

Lesson:

1. Pass out copies of “How I Learned English”. Read it three times as explained above. (This is a funny poem so students may laugh.)
2. Class discussion (suggested questions):
 - What is this poem about? What is happening in this poem?
 - What comments or questions do you have?
 - How do the other boys feel about the new boy? Are they mean or nice to him? How can you tell?
 - How does he feel about the other boys laughing at him? How do you know?
 - At what moment in the poem does the boy feel like he’s starting to fit in?

3. Hand out copies of the rubric. Time students for 1 or 2 minutes and ask them to read the rubric silently and think of questions. (I like to time them and require them to put their eyes on the page during those 1 to 2 minutes, because if you just ask them to read it with no time limit, many students will delay or drag out the process.)
4. Ask for questions, and answer them.
5. You might point out to the students that there is no length requirement. If they address all points of the rubric, their essay will be of an appropriate length for their subject. (You can suggest that they aim for 1 to 3 double-spaced pages—depending on their age and grade level—if that makes them feel more secure.)
6. Students should continue drafting their essay.
7. If they are finished with the draft, they should seek comments from the teacher. I recommend sitting beside the student, reading over what they've written, and giving them verbal comments. NOTE: I like to jot down a summary of my suggestions on my class status sheet.
8. If their piece is long or if you don't get to everyone who needs comments during class, you may have to comment after class.

Week 4 -- Day 1: Peer reviews

Purpose: To allow students to improve their own writing by analyzing essays by peers, and receiving suggestions from peers. Studies have shown that engaging in a peer review process helps the reviewer in addition to the person receiving the suggestions (see article by Michael Graner, cited in Suggested Reading). Also, I believe that the peer review process helps students take their own writing seriously, because they know a classmate will be reading it.

Teacher needs:

- Copies of peer review form (see HANDOUTS section)

Students need:

- Copies of their own rough draft, either on paper or accessible via computer

Lesson:

1. Ask students why we do peer reviews. (I like to inform students that studies have shown that the peer review process helps the reviewer as well as the person receiving the suggestions).
2. Pass out copies of the peer review form and go over it.
3. NOTE: I like to hand out a peer review form for several reasons. 1. It keeps students focused on the rubric items, rather than on finding spelling errors or some other minor issue with their partner's essay; 2. It holds the reviewer accountable for doing a decent job; 3. It encourages on-task behavior
4. Pair up students for peer reviews. Have them carefully read their partner's essay either on paper or on the computer, and fill out the peer review form.
5. Students should be encouraged to chat with their partner about their suggestions.
6. You, the teacher, should circulate and give points for completing the peer reviews. If you do not have time to look over everyone's peer reviews during class, you may have to collect some of the peer reviews to record the grades.

7. Once the grade is recorded, the peer review should be given to the author to keep, so they can use it as they revise their essay.
8. When both partners are done with their peer review, they should be paired with someone else.
9. Once everyone has done and received the requirement number of reviews (I recommend 2 or 3), students should start revising.
10. Any student who has not received comments from the teacher should request them at this point.

Week 4 -- Day 2: Revision

Purpose: To allow students to revise their writing based on teacher and peer comments.

Teacher needs:

- Copies of “In the Elementary School Choir” by Gregory Djanikian
<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/detail/36608>

Students need:

- Copies of their own rough draft
- Completed peer review forms from their partners
- Access to a computer

Lesson:

1. Hand out copies of “In the Elementary School Choir” by Gregory Djanikian. Read the poem three times.
2. Class discussion (suggested questions):
 - What is this poem about? What is happening in this poem?
 - What comments or questions do you have?
 - What does the boy in the poem think of when he sings songs about America?
 - What does Linda Deemer represent to him? How does he feel about Linda Deemer?
 - Why does the boy think America is exotic?
 - Do you think America is exotic? What might someone from another country find “exotic” in America?
3. Students should continue with revisions as you circulate to encourage on-task behavior, and to offer help and suggestions.

Week 4 -- Day 3: Book response Worksheet #3

Purpose: To hold students accountable for their reading; to give them an opportunity to reflect on the reading.

Teacher needs:

- Copies of Book Response Worksheet #3

Students need:

- Copy of book they are reading
- Pen or pencil

Lesson:

1. Hand out Book Response Worksheet #3 (see HANDOUTS section). NOTE: if you prefer to have students react to their reading in a different way, feel free to substitute that.
2. This worksheet asks students to respond independently to the prompt. I am not including a sharing component with this assessment because in my experience some students need a lot more time for this than others.
3. As students are working, you can circulate and ask students what page they are on. If you have time, you could ask a question to gauge the student's involvement with the book, such as: How is the character or subject of the memoir growing or changing?
4. If a student is behind on the reading, refer to the suggestions on page 21.
5. Once students are finished, they may continue reading silently or work on their essay.

Week 4 -- Day 4: Proofreading

Purpose: To make sure students understand how to proofread, and to make sure they take the time to proofread their essay effectively

Teacher needs:

- Copies of “Immigrant Picnic” by Gregory Djanikian
<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/detail/40607>

Students need:

- Copies of their own revised essay
- Access to a computer

Lesson:

1. Hand out copies of “Immigrant Picnic” by Gregory Djanikian.
2. Listen to the poet read this poem:
<http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Djanikian.php> (scroll down until you see “Immigrant Picnic” and click on the arrow or MP3 to listen)
3. Have the students read the poem silently to themselves; then have a student volunteer read the poem out loud.
4. Class discussion (suggested questions):
 - What is this poem about? What is happening in this poem?
 - What comments or questions do you have?
 - How old do you think he is in this poem?
 - How does he feel during this poem? How can you tell?
 - How do his family members feel? How can you tell?
 - What do the foods mentioned in the poem represent?

- Why is the date significant?
5. Ask students: what is proofreading? How is it different from revising? What are you looking for when you proofread? I like to remind them of the four areas in which they should be looking for errors by writing this mnemonic on the board:
- Capitalization
 - Usage (using the right word—to, too, two; there, their, they're)
 - Punctuation
 - Spelling
6. Suggest some proofreading techniques. I recommend the following:
- Have the computer run a spell check, and correct the spellings to the best of your ability.
 - Read your work slowly out loud to find and correct errors.
 - Tap each word on the paper or screen as you read, or follow along with a pen or pencil to slow yourself down as you read.
 - Read your work carefully multiple times. You might read it once for each of the items on the above CUPS list.
7. You might also want to remind students about any format requirements you have for a final draft, such as margins, font style and size, and any header that you require.

Week 5 -- Day 1: Finalize and turn in essay

Purpose: To allow time for final edits, printing and assembling of essay

Lesson:

1. I recommend writing on the board the format for the final draft, as well as a list of items to be turned in (I generally require rough draft, peer review from a classmate, revised draft, and final draft).
2. If you have time, you might want to have students fill out the three questions on their Book Group Worksheet for tomorrow.

Week 5 -- Day 2: Book discussion groups

Purpose: To allow students to discuss questions they have with other students; to help each other to understand and reflect on the book; to be open to alternative viewpoints

Teacher needs:

- Copies of Book Group Worksheet (see HANDOUTS section)

Students need:

- Copy of book they are reading
- Pen or pencil

Lesson:

1. Hand out copies of the Book Group Worksheet. Go over the instructions with them.
2. Students may not understand the difference between Section B and Section C on the worksheet. Section B asks them to state what members of their group said during the discussion. They should write down three or four responses that other people gave to the questions that were raised. Section C asks them to listen carefully to what others said, and to reflect on that.
3. Give students time to come up with their own three questions (5 or 10 minutes).
4. Students should gather in small groups (I would recommend not more than 6 people per group) with others who read the same book. They should take turns bringing up questions, and responding to questions.
5. As you circulate, you may need to remind students to allow everyone's opinion to be heard, and to be respectful of everyone's opinion.

Week 5 -- Day 3: Wrap-Up

Purpose: To have students reflect on how their understanding and thinking have deepened or changed.

Teacher needs:

- A selection of magazines that can be cut up for collages
- Poster board or cardstock for collages
- Scissors, glue, colored pencils
- Copies of poems and essays read in class that could be cut up for collages
- Timer

Students need:

- Copy of book they read
- Journals or paper to write on
- Copy of their in-between autobiographical essay

Lesson:

1. To refresh students' memories, write on the board a list of unit lessons. You could do this list as a class, asking students to recall what was studied. Be sure the final list contains:
 - What's in a Name?
 - Novel choices
 - Picture books about immigration
 - The American Dream
 - Interviews with immigrant teenagers
 - Poetry by Gregory Djanikian
 - "In-Between" autobiographical essay

2. On their own paper, have students brainstorm or free write about what they have learned or what they now understand about immigration, second-generation Americans, the American Dream, new perspectives about America, and/or about their own situation of feeling in-between. Time them for 5 minutes or so.
3. Students should use this brainstorming to create a collage reflecting one or more aspects of what they now understand about immigration, second-generation Americans, the American Dream, new perspectives about America, and/or about their own situation of feeling in-between. They can use words (words from their own essay, words from the poems or essays read in class, and/or words from the novel they read); they can use pictures from magazines, pictures printed from the internet and/or pictures or symbols they've drawn themselves.
4. You may opt to have students work alone, with a partner, or in small groups.
5. Optional: you could ask students to write a short paragraph reflecting on the unit and explaining their collage, and to attach this paragraph to the back of the collage.
6. NOTE: depending on the age and maturity level of your students, you may want to keep the collages until tomorrow (verbal presentations).

Week 5 -- Day 4: Wrap-Up (continued)**Teacher needs:**

- Collages to hand back (if you kept them)

Students need:

- Their collages

Lesson:

Taking turns, students should present their collages to their classmates, explaining verbally why they included the selected images and words. If you have a large group or are pressed for time, this could be done in small groups.

SUPPLEMENTARY OR ALTERNATIVE LESSONS

1. Have students watch and discuss this wonderful, hilarious, warm speech by Firoozeh Dumas: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bC22NzqLbFI> (21 minutes long)
2. Have students read and discuss this nonfiction article: "Why are white people expats when the rest of us are immigrant?" by Mawuna Remarque Koutonin - <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/mar/13/white-people-expats-immigrants-migration>
3. Many textbooks include stories and poems by second-generation writers such as Julia Alvarez, Lensey Namioka, Naomi Shihab Nye, and Amy Tan.
4. Mary Jemison was a European settler who was captured and raised by the Seneca tribe. She lived the kind of in-between life we associate with second generation Americans. Selections from her life story, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* (as told to James Seaver), could be read and discussed in class.
5. Research presentation: research a famous child of immigrants; present your findings to the class through an oral and visual presentation. Here are some web sites with names of famous children of immigrants who could be the subject of research:
6. Please see my web site (Second Generation Stories -- <http://www.secondgenstories.com>) for more ideas on novels, memoirs, and short stories to include in this unit, as well as reviews of selected books.

HANDOUTS

(in the order they are mentioned in the lesson plan)

Immigrant Teenagers worksheet	p. 45
Book Response Worksheet #1	p. 49
“In-Between” Autobiographical Essay ideas	p. 51
“In-Between” Autobiographical Essay rubric	p. 52
Book Response Worksheet #2	p. 53
“In-Between” Autobiographical Essay Peer Review Worksheet	p. 55
Book Response Worksheet #3	p. 56
Book Group Worksheet	p. 57

Immigrant Teenagers worksheet - 30 points

Your name: _____

Name of person you are reading about: _____ Age: _____

Country of origin: _____ Where this person lives now: _____ (4 points)

Before this person moved to the US, what did this person or family hope to gain by moving to the US? (This probably corresponds to their idea of the "American Dream"). (4 points for a specific, thorough answer - bullet points are fine)

In reality, what did they end up gaining or losing? (What was the reality of the American Dream for them?) (4 points for a specific, thorough answer - bullet points are fine)

Immigrant Teenagers worksheet (continued)

Describe ways that this teen is “in between” two cultures. Conflicts with parents? Comparisons with home culture? (4 points for a specific, thorough answer – bullet points are fine)

Other thoughts, questions, or surprising things about what you read. (4 points for a specific, thorough answer – bullet points are fine)

Immigrant Teenagers worksheet (continued) -- 10 points for these two pages

Name of person you are learning about: _____

What you learned from your classmate about this person's life:

Your thoughts, questions, or things you found surprising:

Name of person you are learning about: _____

What you learned from your classmate about this person's life:

Your thoughts, questions, or things you found surprising:

Immigrant Teenagers worksheet (continued)

Name of person you are learning about: _____

What you learned from your classmate about this person's life:

Your thoughts, questions, or things you found surprising:

Name of person you are learning about: _____

What you learned from your classmate about this person's life:

Your thoughts, questions, or things you found surprising:

Book response worksheet #1 - 15 points

Your name: _____ Title of book: _____

By now you have read at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of your chosen book. You should have a good idea of what the main character (or the main subject of the memoir) is like. Please WRITE something on this side which reveals what this person is like. Appearance? Interests? Conflicts? Family? Friends? Personality? Dislikes? Secrets? (FLIP THE PAGE IF YOU WANT TO DRAW INSTEAD.)

Page or chapter number: _____ What you learned about this character or person (give specific details from the text plus your own interpretation):

Page or chapter number: _____ What you learned about this character or person (give specific details from the text plus your own interpretation):

Page or chapter number: _____ What you learned about this character or person (give specific details from the text plus your own interpretation):

Book response worksheet #1 - 15 points

Your name: _____ Title of book: _____

By now you have read at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of your chosen book. You should have a good idea of what the main character (or the main subject of the memoir) is like. Please DRAW something on this side which reveals what this person is like. Appearance? Interests? Conflicts? Family? Friends? Personality? Dislikes? Secrets? Around your picture, add at least 3 page or chapter numbers with words to summarize briefly what you've drawn. (FLIP THE PAGE IF YOU WANT TO WRITE INSTEAD.)

“In-Between” Autobiographical Essay ideas

Please fill out three rows of this worksheet to generate ideas for your essay. The first row is an example. Use the back if you have more ideas.

Age or grade in school	A time when you felt “in-between” and didn’t quite fit – starting a new school, visiting a friend of a different culture, two groups of friends, moving to a new place but missing the old place, parents divorcing, etc.	How did you feel about being in between?
EXAMPLE: Age 12	When I moved from a small rural town to a suburban town in 6 th grade, I had to attend a new school where I didn’t know anyone. The other kids were not very friendly. I didn’t know how to go about making friends.	I felt lonely and almost like I didn’t exist. I felt like I was outside looking in.

Name: _____ Score: _____

“In-Between” Autobiographical Essay Rubric – 100 points possible

Category & points	Outstanding - A	Proficient -- B	Basic – C	Developing – D	Zero points	YOUR SCORE
“In-Between” situation 20	The entire essay very clearly shows how this “in-between” situation changed or affected you in an important way. (20)	You show fairly clearly how this “in-between” situation changed or affected you in an important way. (18)	It is somewhat clear how this “in-between” situation changed or affected you in an important way. (16)	It is unclear how this “in-between” situation changed or affected you in an important way. (14)	Essay is completely off topic.	
Show, don’t tell 30	You effectively use lots of dialogue, action, emotion, & sensory details. The reader can really experience vicariously what is going on. (30)	You effectively use some dialogue, action, emotion, and sensory details. (27)	Not much dialogue, action, emotion, or sensory details, and/or some parts may be unclear or confusing. (24)	Very little dialogue, action, emotion, or sensory details. (21)		
Introduction and conclusion 20	The introduction and conclusion are relevant, interesting, and insightful. (20)	The introduction and conclusion are appropriate. (18)	The introduction and conclusion are very basic. (16)	The introduction and conclusion are not relevant to this essay. (14)	No introduction; no conclusion	
Sentence structure and diction 10	Great variety in sentence structure and length. Appropriate, varied, rich vocabulary. (10)	Some variety in sentence structure and length. Vocabulary is appropriate, but may not be as varied. (9)	Sentence structure is limited. Vocabulary may be limited, and/or may not be used appropriately. (8)	Sentences are simple and monotonous. Vocabulary is limited. (7)		
Proofreading 10	Fewer than 1 error on average per double-spaced page. (10)	1-2 errors on average per double-spaced page. (9)	3-4 errors on average per double-spaced page (8)	5-6 errors on average per double-spaced page (7)	More than 6 errors on average per double-spaced page	
Process 10	All parts of process turned in (rough draft, peer review, revised draft, final draft). (10)	One part missing (9)	Two parts missing (8)	Only final draft turned in (7)		

“In-Between” Autobiographical Essay Peer Review worksheet (12 points possible)

Reviewer name: _____ **Author name:** _____

DIRECTIONS: Read your partner’s essay carefully. Fill out this sheet with specific comments. Give sheet to teacher.

1. Is it clear how the “in-between” situation changed or affected the author in an important way? If so, state how this situation affected the author. If not, give suggestions for improvement.

2. Does the writer effectively use lots of dialogue, action, emotion, and sensory details? If so, jot down some notes about what was especially effective. If not, give the writer suggestions for improvement.

3. Introduction and conclusion: are these appropriate for the essay? What could the writer do to make these more interesting or insightful? Or, what do you think the author did really well with the introduction or conclusion?

4. Additional praise, comments, or helpful suggestions (optional):

REVIEWERS – YOU WILL BE GRADED ON WHETHER OR NOT YOU INCLUDE SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS OR COMMENTS FOR AT LEAST THREE OF THE FOUR QUESTIONS.

SUGGESTED READING

In the Middle, by Nancie Atwell

The Reading Zone, by Nancie Atwell

Mini-Lessons for Literature Circles, by Harvey Daniels and Nancy Steineke

“Revision workshops: An alternative to peer editing groups,” by Michael Graner. Published in *The English Journal*, 76 (3), 1987, 40-45. Michael Graner surveyed the research literature on peer reviews and found many studies from the 1970s and 1980s which showed that “the effect of reading peers’ work may be significant” (41).

The Book Club Companion, by Cindy O’Donnell-Allen

The Understanding By Design Guide to Creating High-Quality Units, by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe

ABOUT JYOTSNA SREENIVASAN

I am a second-generation American: my parents are immigrants from India, and I was born and raised in Ohio. I have written some books based on my experiences as a second-generation American: *These Americans* (a collection of 8 short stories and a novella), *And Laughter Fell from the Sky* (a novel for adults), and *Aruna’s Journeys* (a novel for ages 8-12). I am the creator of the web site Second Generation Stories: Literature by Children of Immigrants (www.SecondGenStories.com), which lists and reviews fiction and memoir by children of immigrants.

I am also a secondary school teacher. I have used variations of this unit plan in my middle school classes. I would love to know how these lessons worked for you, as well as any suggestions for improvement that you have. Please send messages to: jyotsna1sree@gmail.com