

# **I'm Like You, You're Like Me**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Pretend that you are from another country and you have just immigrated to the United States. You have no family in the US, and the only English words you know are “Hello” and “See you later.” What would you do and whom would you ask for help? How are you going to survive? This task is just one of many that teachers often ask their students to write about. With the diverse ethnic make up of today’s classrooms more and more teachers at the elementary level are assuming that their students are educationally equipped to discuss and write about diverse cultures, languages, and cultural identities. Although the diversity of America’s elementary classrooms has increased, I have still learned that many American students and immigrant students have not been formally introduced to the uniqueness and diversity of each other’s culture.

The topic and subject matter of immigration is both broad and fascinating. When discussing or studying this topic, teachers have the opportunity to teach their students about the making of our culturally diverse society. I believe it is important for students to be able to explore and study other cultures. When students are taught to embrace people in our society in a non-biased way, they tend to be less prejudiced about issues surrounding race and culture. When students are allowed to compare their culture and lifestyle to that of others, they also become more acceptable and aware of our diverse society.

Research has shown that students are able to grasp concepts with better understanding when the material is relevant to their lives or current situation. Through this unit I hope to provide my students with a broader perspective and understanding of not only their own cultures but also the profound significance of ethnic and cultural celebrations in Houston, the State of Texas, and the United States.

“If you don’t know your past, then you won’t know your future.” These words are played in the back of my mind every time I begin to speak to my students about a historical event or critical part of history. I believe that history plays an important part in guiding not only the way we think but also the way we presently see ourselves. When students are taught to understand the past and the present, I believe that the future will begin to make more sense to them. History and multicultural education play a pivotal role in that future and past. The future of our society and its importance in our country depends entirely on whether or not future generations understand what resources they have, what was done to create them, and what they must do to keep them. In order for students to truly value and appreciate other cultures, they must be shown the importance of their own culture and its relevance to their personal lives.

In this two-week unit I will use a combination of technology, hand-on activities, and online field trips to give my students the opportunity to explore immigration and its relevance to our present culture and society. Upon the completion of this unit my students will be able to understand and answer the following questions:

- (1) Why is immigration important?
- (2) What is the significance of selected ethnic and/or cultural celebrations?
- (3) What identifying factors make our local communities unique?

## **UNIT OBJECTIVES**

I believe that children learn better when they are presented with material that is not only hands-on but also minds-on. I will use this two week unit as an addition to my current language arts, social studies, and geography lessons that I am currently in the process of teaching. Through the implementation of this unit I hope to cover the following third grade Project Clear language arts and social studies T.E.K.S. objectives.

### **English Language Arts**

- ELA.3.11.A. The students respond to various types of texts.
- ELA.3.10.A The student will respond to various text by demonstrating of informational text in variety of ways through writing, illustrating, developing demonstrations, and using available technology (2-3)

### **Social Studies**

- SS.3.05.A Use cardinal and intermediate directions to locate places on maps and globes.
- SS.3.05.B Use a scale to determine the distance between places on maps and globes.
- SS.3.05.C Identify and use the compass rose, grid, and symbols to locate places on maps and globes.
- SS.3.1.A History. The student understands how individuals, events, and ideas have influenced the history of various communities.
- SS.3.15.A Science, technology, and society. The student understands how individuals have created or invented new technology and affected life in communities around the world, past, and present.
- SS.3.12.A Explain the significance of selected ethnic and cultural celebrations.
- SS.3.12.B Compare ethnic and cultural celebrations in Texas and the United States.

## **IMMIGRATION IN THE UNITED STATES**

To many, America is considered to be a great melting pot filled with the richness of different cultures, ethnic groups, and broadness of diversity. In order for our great nation to reach this point in history, people from other countries and walks of life had to have found a new life in America to be of some interest. This interest to explore American soil gave birth to many nomads who were out to seek the Promised Land. Then there was the opening of Ellis Island, where many people were welcomed to America to seek political and religious freedom as well as those who were persecuted in their homeland, fortune seekers, and the adventures at heart. Before Ellis Island came into existence, a small group of Vikings arrived around the year 1000. Five hundred years after the arrival of the Vikings a great European migration began:

In some cases, the co-existence of Europeans and Native Americans was peaceful. In other cases, there were cultural clashes, leading to violence or disease. Many settlers from Europe and Asia came to seek fortune in a new country which was thought to have unlimited resources. Many people from Africa, however, were bought here against their will to work as forced laborers in the building of a new nation. As early as 1619, slaves from Africa and the Caribbean were brought forcibly to America. (“U. S. Immigration History”)

The past 400 years of immigration began with the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, which announced the separation of the colonies from Great Britain, and their right to establish themselves as the United States. During the colonial era, the majority of the immigrants who came to the U.S. were from Northern Europe. Most of the immigrants came from Germany and Ireland where failed crops had forced many of them to leave their homelands. Other groups also arrived from Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, and Eastern European countries.

Today many immigrants come from all over the world. “The current phase of U.S. immigration history followed the elimination of strict quotas based on nationality. In 1978, the U.S. government set an annual world-wide quota of 290,000 people per year” (“US Immigration History”).

This number was again increased to 700,000 in 1990. Today the number of new immigrant to the United States has exceeded 1,000,000 per year. America is truly a land of immigrants that is filled with cultural diversity of many unique and different countries (“U. S. Immigration History”).

### **Immigration in Texas**

Through the Port of Galveston came many of Texas’ most enduring immigrants. Political strife, economic hardship, and letters home from settlers already in the region brought a wave of immigration to Texas from Germany and its neighbors, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, beginning in 1847. (Houston Institute for Culture)

The declining social economic conditions and lack of technology along with the availability of land in the frontiers of Texas made the Lone Star State an ideal place to migrate to. New immigrants to Texas settled the lands across the southeast and central part of the state from west of San Antonio to north of Waco, which in turn bear the names of towns like New Braunfels, Schulenburg and Shiner. German immigrants settled with ease amongst Hispanic, Blacks, and Anglo Americans of Irish/Scottish descent. Though they were well established many German immigrants experienced severe persecution during World Wars I and II.

The U.S. census reported that in 2000, 10.4 percent of the U.S. population was made up of immigrants who had recently settled in America. Only a few states represent the majority of the foreign born population. Nearly 8.8 million immigrants in California account for 30.9 percent of the nation’s total immigrant population, followed by New York with 12.8 percent, Florida with 9.8 percent, Texas with 8.6 percent, New Jersey with 4.3 percent, and Illinois with 4.1 percent. Despite having only 39.3 percent of the US’s total population, the six states account for 70 percent of the nation’s immigrant population (U.S. Census Bureau).

### **Unit Vocabulary**

Vocabulary plays a very important role in developing a student’s reading comprehensions skills and their ability to communicate effectively at a higher level. With this in mind I have created daily vocabulary list for my students to read, comprehend and implement through out the learning process of this unit. The vocabulary words introduced to students will be actively included in the lessons. I have listed several of the expected vocabulary words to be used during the implementation of this unit.

immigration	culture	ecosystem	North	symbol
South	East	West	custom	tradition
latitude	longitude	ethnic group	equator	migration

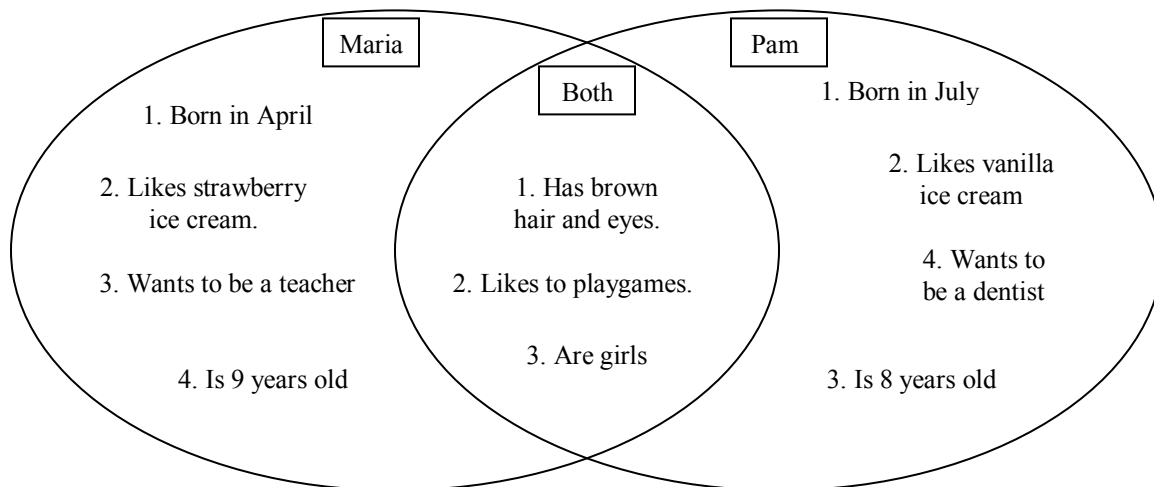
## Implementation

### Week 1

Many students who enter third grade are aware that our society is made up of different types of people from all walks of life. However, they have not been introduced to the cultural differences of the people in their communities, city, or country. I will begin my unit by teaching students that we are all alike in some way. I would also like them to recognize that they have attributes in common with their classmates as well as characteristics that may be unique to themselves.

### Lesson One

To begin lesson one I will read a story entitled *I'm Like You, You're Like Me* by Cindy Gainer. In her book Cindy Gainer explores the ways in which we are alike and how our differences make us unique. She discusses many aspects of diversity, including features of different ethnic groups, body size, feelings, and cooperation. While reading this book, readers will discover that even though people are different, they can still enjoy spending time together and learning about one another. After reading this story, I will then initiate a class discussion about the ways listed in the book that two people might be alike and ways they might be different. I will then have my students discuss other ways people can be different and alike. During the discussion I will draw a Venn diagram on the chalk board or a large sheet of chart paper. In the Venn diagram I will label each circle with a student's name. Then I will ask the class how their two class mates are different. When student respond I will write their responses in the appropriate circle. I will then ask how both students are alike. As students respond to this question, I will record their answers in the intersecting part of the circles.



I will pair the student into group of two and distribute paper to each group. Each group of students will draw a Venn diagram on their paper and write at least four ways they are alike and different from their partner. Once they have completed this group activity, each student will be given a picture of a child from a different region or country. I will instruct the students to create another Venn diagram; however, this time they will describe how they are alike and different from the child in the picture. After completing their Venn diagrams, I will bring the entire class back together for a group discussion. Students will be asked to share what they discovered once completing this activity. We will then discuss how although the children in the pictures live in other parts of the world, they still have many things in common with the students in our class.

Each student will then write a short story describing their differences and how they were like the child in the picture.

Although my school is located in a historical African American neighborhood, the students in my class and on my school campus represent at least 4 different countries and ethnic backgrounds. Many of my students sometimes feel disconnected from the community and country in which they live.

Lesson Two

I have entitled lesson two “Where in the World Are You?” This lesson will focus on teaching students how use maps and other geographic tools to determine locations. We will focus on learning to find points on a grid using latitude and longitude. To prepare for this lesson, I will first divide the floor of my classroom into a grid of latitude and longitude lines using black masking tape. I will then label one line with the term equator and another one prime meridian. Each line will also be labeled in 10 degree increments. On index cards I will write the words North, South, East, and West; then I will place the cards on the appropriate wall in the class room. Using an atlas we will look up the latitude and longitude of our state capitol; then we will practice looking up the capitols of other states that are represented by students in our class. Next the students will be shown how the floor is divided. We will then practice finding certain spots on the grid by calling out location on the grid and having a student stand at that point. Once I am comfortable that everyone understands, I will pass out cards with the names and locations of several countries.

Example:

<b>Country</b>	<b>Capitol</b>	<b>Latitude and Longitude</b>
<b>Honduras</b>	<b>Tegucigalpa</b>	<b>14° 5’N, 87° 14’ W</b>
<b>Guatemala</b>	<b>Guatemala City</b>	<b>14° 37’N, 90°32’ W</b>
<b>Senegal</b>	<b>Dakar</b>	<b>14° 34’N, 17° 29’W</b>

I will expect my students to work together with a partner to quickly find their place in the world and stand on it. Once every group has identified their location, we will use colored tacks to locate and plot the same countries on the classroom map. We will discuss on which continents each country is located.

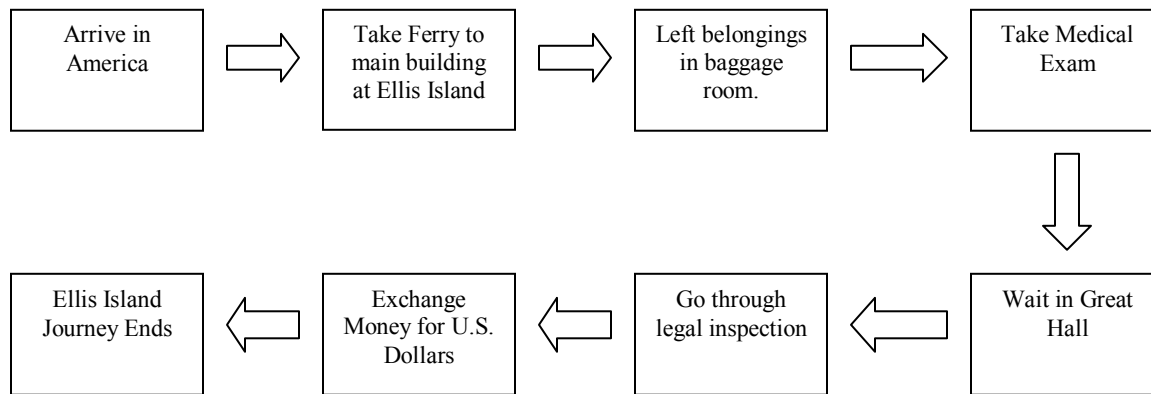
Lesson Three

Lesson three during week one will begin with my presenting my students with the term “immigration.” I will spark a discussion amongst my students by asking them if they know what the word means. I will ask each student to create a KWL chart in their notebooks. In section one of the chart, they will write what they know about the term immigration. In section two they will write about what they would like to learn about this term. Section three will be the last section the students will complete at the conclusion of this lesson.

<b>K</b> <b>(What I know about immigration)</b>	<b>W</b> <b>(What I want to learn about immigration)</b>	<b>L</b> <b>(What I learned about immigration)</b>

Once there KWL charts have been complete I will divide my students in groups of 2 to 3 students so that they are able to experience an Interactive tour of Ellis Island. During their interactive online tour via the website <http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/immigration/tour/stop1.htm>, they will make several stops experiencing the opportunity to walk in the shoes of many immigrants to enter into America through Ellis Island. The first stop they will make will be at the main building at Ellis Island. New students will enter the main building and proceed to visit the baggage room. After leaving the baggage room, they will enter the Great Hall for medical and legal examination. The next to last stop during our Ellis Island tour will be to the money exchange room were immigrants exchanged their homeland money for U.S. dollars. The last and final stop in our tour will be at what is ideally known as the kissing post. The kissing post is the exit for Ellis Island, and it is the spot where many emotional reunions and departures to begin new lives begin.

After my students have finished the online interactive tour, they will be given several blank index cards, markers, crayons, a whole punch, and yarn or string. In their group they will create timelines with their materials that represent an immigrant’s journey through Ellis Island.



Before we begin lesson four during week one student will be asked to interview their parents or closest relative for homework. At the end of the school day, each student will receive an interview form to take home.

#### Lesson Four

We will begin lesson four with a discussion about immigration and ancestors. I will introduce the term “interview” to my students by writing it on a sentence strip and placing it at the front of the room. Many immigrants were interviewed before they were allowed to enter the United States. Students will be asked why they think it was important to interview these new immigrants as they entered the U.S. Next I will select students to ask them, “How old were you when you started kindergarten?” I will then record the students’ answers on the chalkboard. Once I’ve complete my recording, I will inform the classes that what I have just done is interview their classmates. I asked a question and recorded the answer. The class will then be informed that they will be interviewing their classmates.

Students will partner up and interview each other. Once all interviews have been completed, I will ask several groups to share their information. We will then take the information that we recorded from our classmate interviews and parent interviews, and each student will rewrite the information on a separate sheet of paper entitled “Me and My Family.” I will attach everyone’s assignment in a decorative pattern on butcher paper for the displaying of our classroom ancestor quilt.

## ***Week 2***

### **Lesson 5**

Lesson 5 will be taught in two parts. I will begin lesson five by having each student create a suit case. I will explain to my students that for the past few days we have been discussing immigration and how people move from one country to another. Now we will actually visit some of the countries from which these immigrants have traveled. Using a file folder, yarn, crayons, markers, and glue, each student will be asked to create a suit case to help them organize their new knowledge, ideas, and observations about the countries we study. Students will be encouraged to bring articles and other personal information from all types of sources to include in their suit cases.

As a class we will study the countries of India, Mexico, and Senegal. We will evaluate each area, the culture, and the influence immigrants from these countries have had on our way of life in the United States. When discussing the contributions of each area, students will be asked to pay close attention and compare and contrast the differences in languages, clothing, food, and other customs.

During the second part of lesson five I will introduce the country of India to my students. To engage my students in a discussion about India, I will first ask them what they already know about the country. They will then be asked about things they would like to learn about the country of India. I will go on to explain that India is a country of great size and diversity. India also represents one of the world's oldest civilizations, and it is one of the youngest nation states. In addition, India is one of the world's fastest growing democracies with the fourth largest global economy when it comes to having the ability to purchase items in our society. I will encourage students to locate books in the school library that are related to the culture, foods, and people of India. Each student will then be given a handout that represents a quick glimpse or snapshot of India. They will search the Internet to find the continent, capitol, population, president, official language, national bird, and national flower of the United States. Students will then use the snapshot information and Internet research work to compare the U.S. and India. After making their comparisons, students will answer the following questions:

- (1) Which country has the largest population?
- (2) While conducting your research did you notice the size of each country?

If so which country seemed to be larger?

<b>Snapshot of India</b>	
Country Name	India
Continent	Asia
Capitol	New Delhi
Population	1,027,000,000 <i>(2001 census)</i>
President	Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam
Official Language	Hindi
National Bird	Indian Peacock
National Flower	Lotus

After the discussion of India is completed, I will discuss the countries of Mexico and Senegal with my students. We will talk about each country's background and use the Internet to research

cultural celebrations and daily living activities of the people who live in these countries. Each student will be given a snapshot of these countries to place in their suitcases that they created during lesson five. I will require my students to answer the same groups of questions as before.

<b>Snapshot of Mexico</b>	
Country Name	Mexico
Continent	North America
Capitol	Mexico City
Population	107,029,000 <i>(2005 est. census)</i>
President	Vincente Fox Quesada
Official Language	Spanish
National Bird	Crested Caracara
National Flower	Dahlia

### Lesson Six

This lesson will be entitled “Our Community Is a Melting Pot.” To prepare for this lesson I will take pictures of street signs, communities, and people around them to display in a power point slide to continuously show while I’m teaching. As a way to begin this lesson, I will have my students reflect on everything we have learned in the past lessons. I will then remind the class that the country that we live in is made up of people from other countries. I will ask those students who were born in a different country or state to share their experiences. We will then talk about the term melting pot. As a group we will discuss what it means and if this term can be used to describe the people who come to and live in Houston. I will explain to my students that Houston has a large diverse population that is made up of many languages, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds. Many places in our city emphasize this diversity when we see street signs in other languages, different places to practice religion, and whole communities that have brought their cultural practices and foods to our communities. Students will then draw a picture of their communities that show at least 3-5 places, houses, or people they have seen that represent a culture other than their own. Students will then share their drawing with the class while it is my hope that they will point out stores and other establishments that are owned and run by immigrants.

### Lesson Seven

To conclude our studies the final lesson of our class study will consist of a food tasting booth and class celebration. Prior to this event I will divide my students into committees. Each committee will be responsible for a different task in order to make our final celebration successful. Committee one will be responsible for researching recipes of native dishes for India, Mexico, and Senegal. Committee two will locate pictures and other articles for each country. Committees three and four with my help will put together scrapbooks for each country to be displayed during the celebration. Lastly, committee five will be responsible for creating posters, banners, and other decorations. We will then invite other students and teachers to our classroom to help us celebrate the diversity and uniqueness of the countries of India, Mexico, and Senegal.



## LESSON ONE

### Week 1

#### *Objective*

Student will learn that people are alike and different in many ways.

#### *Materials*

- chart paper or large sheet of paper
- markers or crayons

#### *Special Instructions*

Students will need to work in cooperative groups of 2-4 students to complete this assignment.

Locate pictures of children from different parts of the world and the United States.

#### *Focus*

Read the story *I'm Like You, You're Like Me* by Cindy Gainer

#### *Engage*

Discuss with students how people are alike and different. Model comparing and contrasting to students by creating a Venn diagram that compares two of their classmates.

#### *Independent Practice*

Distribute materials to students and have them to compare and contrast the children in the picture to themselves.

## LESSON FOUR

### Week 1

#### *Objective*

Students will learn interview techniques and will conduct interviews with their classmates and their parents.

#### *Materials*

- Sentence strips
- parent surveys
- Markers
- Construction Paper
- Butcher paper

#### *Special Instructions*

Introduce the term interview to the class by writing this word on a sentence strip and place it in front of the room.

#### *Focus*

Explain to the class that many immigrants were interviewed before they were allowed to enter the United States. Ask the student why they think why it was important to interview these new immigrants as they entered the US.

### ***Engage***

- Select a student to ask the question “How old were they when they started kindergarten?”
- Record their answer on the board.
- Inform the class that this is what they will be doing to day. Interviewing their classmates.

### ***Independent Practice***

Students will partner up and interview each other. Once all interviews have been completed ask several groups to share their information. Then take the information that they recorded from their classmate interviews and parent interview and have each student rewrite the information on a separate sheet of paper entitle me and my family. Attach everyone’s assignment in a decorative pattern on butcher paper for the displaying of our classroom ancestor quilt.



- Today I am interviewing:
  
- What is your favorite thing to do?
  
- What sports do you like?
  
- Do you have pets?  
If yes, what pets and how many?
  
- What do you want to do when you grow up?
  
- Where do you want to live when you grow up?



### ***My Mother***

What country or countries did your family come from?

About when did your family come to the United States?

Where did your family live when they first came to the US? (city or state)

### ***My Father***

What country or countries did your family come from?

About when did your family come to the United States?

Where did your family live when they first came to the US? (city or state)

## I'm Like You, You're Like Me

\_\_\_\_\_ and I are friends. We are alike  
in many ways. We both \_\_\_\_\_

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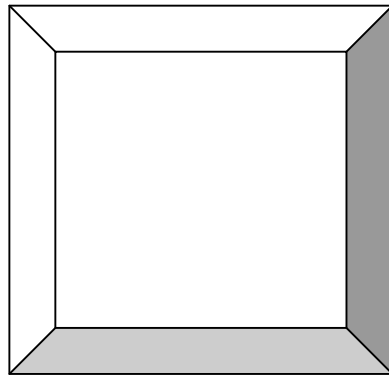
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We are different from each other, too. One of us \_\_\_\_\_

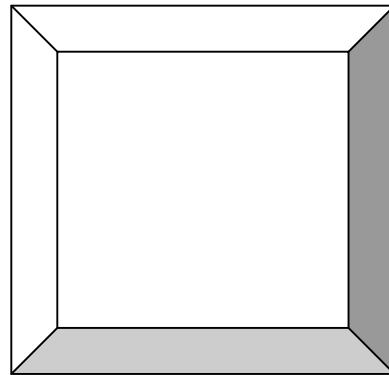
and the other \_\_\_\_\_

One of us \_\_\_\_\_

and the other \_\_\_\_\_



**Me**



**My Friend**

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- American Immigrant Wall of Honor. April 15, 2006. <<http://www.wallofhonor.com/>>.  
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This website was created by the Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco. This organization has devoted their entire website to educating and supporting the appreciation of Chinese and Chinese American art, history, and culture in the United States.

Statue of Liberty Ellis Island Foundation. April 9, 2006. <<http://www.ellisland.org/default.asp>>.

The Statue of Liberty Ellis Island Foundation website allows you to search passenger arrival records of immigrants who have come to the United States.