



Primary Source Study – Documents of Displacement

Lesson Plan for High School Social Studies

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OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Immigration, Identity, and Survival

EDUCATION STANDARDS

- HS.US.29 – Analyze the causes and consequences of migration and immigration to the United States, including the experiences of diverse groups.
- HS.Civics.16 – Evaluate the role of documents and narratives in shaping cultural identity and civic participation.
- HS.Hist.26 – Analyze multiple sources and perspectives to develop historical arguments.
- HS.Skills.1 – Analyze and evaluate primary and secondary sources for credibility, perspective, and relevance.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Examine primary source documents (e.g., passports, baptismal certificates, photographs) to understand the experiences of families forced to flee persecution.
- Interpret how these documents reflect identity, belonging, and the immigrant

struggle.

- Construct connections between personal stories of migration and broader historical themes of displacement and resilience.
- Reflect on the human dimension of historical events through evidence-based discussion and writing.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- The Blake Family presentation
- Teacher-selected primary sources (copies of passports, baptismal certificates, naturalization papers, photographs, letters, etc.) As many of these papers are not in English, a rough translation or guide explaining the document will be provided.
- Primary source analysis worksheet (scaffolded with prompts: origin, purpose, message, significance)
- Projector/whiteboard
- Student notebooks

VERIFICATION

- Formative: Group discussions and analysis worksheets.
- Summative: Written reflection connecting the documents to broader themes of migration and identity.

ACTIVITY

1. Hook / Bellwork

Display a passport photo, official document, or certificate (with personal details redacted if needed).

Ask: “What story can this document tell about a person’s life? What can’t it tell?”

Quickwrite in journals.

2. Context Mini-Lecture

Provide a brief historical overview of the Blake family and why and how they fled persecution.

Introduce the idea that documents are not just paperwork—they are evidence of survival, identity, and forced transition.

3. Primary Source Analysis

Divide students into small groups.

Each group receives a packet with different primary sources (or the same set, depending on class size).

Using the analysis worksheet, students answer:

Who created this document and for what purpose?

What does it reveal about the Blake family’s identity, culture, or displacement?

What challenges or emotions might the Blake family have faced at this moment?

What larger historical forces are reflected here?

4. Group Discussion

Each group shares their findings.

Teacher records key themes on the board: identity, loss, resilience, bureaucracy, survival, belonging.

5. Individual Reflection

Students write a short response: “If these documents were all that remained of a person’s life, how would future generations understand their struggle?”

EXTENSION OPTIONS

- Compare historical documents with contemporary immigration documents (visas, refugee applications).
- Create a “document biography” where students narrate the imagined journey of one family member through their surviving papers.
- Invite students to connect this study with oral histories from local immigrant communities in New Mexico.

