

INTERVIEW WITH AN IMMIGRANT

Instructions: Arrange an interview with an immigrant—a school friend, family friend, relative, or a person you met in the community. Your interviewee must have lived in their native country long enough to have definite memories and views about their native land. Use this handout to take notes during the interview. In addition, write two or three questions of your own to ask your interviewee. You will refer to these notes to write a final interview combining your own writing with direct quotes from the interviewee.

1. What is your name? In what town or city were you born? What country? How old were you when you arrived in the US? What year was that?

2. Describe your homeland. What language did you speak there? How did your community differ from where you live today? What foods did you eat? Did people dress differently there than they do in the US? What do you miss about your homeland?

3. Why did you or your family leave your native country? Describe your trip to the US. What obstacles did you have to overcome? What experiences did you have?

4. What did you think life in the US would be like? How did you think your life would be different in the US as compared with your homeland?

5. Once you arrived in the US, what did you experience? Was it different than what you expected? Explain.

6. What kinds of challenges did you experience adjusting to life and culture in the US? Did you have to learn English? Did you change your eating habits? Did you change the way you dress? Did you change the way you related to your family and friends? Did you change the way you learn? Did you change your leisure activities?

7. What challenges has learning English created for you? Do your parents speak English? If not, has this created any communication problems? What language will your children speak? Do you think you will ever forget your native language? How does that make you feel?

8. Have you experienced any type of discrimination in the US? If yes, had you ever had a similar problem in your homeland? How did the experience(s) in this country make you feel? What did you do to overcome prejudice? What advice would you give to recent immigrants from your country about this problem?

9. What do you believe it means to "be an American?" Do you feel mostly American now or something else? Do you believe a person can change his or her culture to fit into a country like the US? Do you believe a person can be "an American" and still retain his or her native culture? Explain.

10. What laws do you think the US should have towards immigration and immigrants? Do you think the US should restrict immigration in the future? Do you think the US should have an open door policy to any person who wants to immigrate? Explain.