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SHOULD THERE BE AMNESTY FOR UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS?

Word Generation - Unit 2.20

Focus Words

amnesty | undocumented | orient | exclude | compound



Weekly Passage

From the time he came to the United States as a child, Marcos studied hard while his parents worked long hours. Now he is a top student in his high school class. But he may not be able to go to college because the government won't give him the same help it gives to other students. There are jobs that he will not be allowed to take, even though he could do the work. And he won't be allowed to get his driver's license. Marcos is an undocumented immigrant, someone who doesn't have papers that prove he has the right to live in America. The laws and programs that help many people in America exclude Marcos and his family.

Some people say Marcos' family broke the law when they entered the country. Therefore they should not have the rights of legal immigrants. Others say it's unfair that our laws exclude hardworking people. They think America is a place where everyone should have equal rights. Some want the government to give undocumented immigrants amnesty, so that they can become legal. The U.S. passed a law like this once before. It let immigrants who had been in

America from 1982 to 1986 get legal documents. Many argue that the U.S. should pass a new amnesty law to help people like Marcos and his family.

Other people say there should not be amnesty for undocumented immigrants. They say we should orient our immigration laws toward protecting those who went through the proper channels, not those who "jumped the line." As it is, they say, we don't have enough jobs to go around, or enough money to pay for everyone's education. Giving amnesty to undocumented immigrants will only compound the problem.

What do you say? Should there be amnesty for undocumented immigrants?

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Reading Comprehension/Discussion Questions:

- ▶ What is amnesty?
- ▶ Why do some people think undocumented immigrants should get amnesty?
- ▶ Why do some people think it's not a good idea?
- ▶ Should immigrants who arrived as children before the age of eight be granted amnesty?

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Focus Word Chart

Word	Meaning	Forms		
		Inflectional	Basic Word Classes	Prefixes/ Suffixes
amnesty	(n.) - forgiveness	amnesties (pl.) amnesty (v.) amnestied amnestying		
undocumented	(adj.) - without legal papers	documents (v.) documents documented documenting	document (n.)	
orient	(v.) - to adjust, to align	orients oriented orienting	Orient (n.)	orientation disorient disorientation disoriented reorient oriental
exclude	(v.) - to leave out	excludes excluding excluded		exclusion exclusionary exclusive
compound	(v.) - to add to	compounds compounded compounding	compound (n.)	compoundable compound (adj.)

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Problem of the Week



Immigrants must adapt to a strange new culture. **Undocumented** immigrants face a **compound** problem: they must adapt without revealing that they entered the country illegally. This means that undocumented immigrants are **excluded** from opportunities that help other immigrants **orient** themselves in the United States. An **amnesty** could give back these opportunities. But how many undocumented immigrants are there?

Option 1: According to the Department of Homeland Security, the **undocumented** immigrant population was 11.6 million in 2008. It dropped to 10.8 million in 2009. What happened to the population of **undocumented** immigrants between 2008 and 2009?

- A) it decreased by about 4.3%
- B) it decreased by about 5.1%
- C) it decreased by about 6.8%**
- D) it increased by about 7.9%

Option 2: In 2008, the number of **undocumented** Mexican immigrants in the U.S. was 6.65 million. The year before, in 2007, the number of **undocumented** Mexican immigrants had been 380,000 higher. Describe the decrease from 2007 to 2008 as a percentage.

Answer: This was a decrease of about 5.4% ($6,650,000 + 380,000 = 7,030,000$; $380,000 / 7,030,000 \approx .054$)

Math Discussion Question: When asked to explain the decrease in **undocumented** immigrants in 2009, officials gave a **compound** answer. They said it was partly due to increased border security, and partly due to the slow U.S. economy. The slow economy caused many people, including immigrants, to lose their jobs. Some people want to keep lowering the number of **undocumented** immigrants by **excluding** them from the workforce. People who support this idea say that instead of considering **amnesty**, we should punish employers who hire **undocumented** workers. Is this a good solution? Why or why not?

CBS News. (2010, February 11). Number of illegal immigrants plunges by 1m. *CBS News.com*. Retrieved on October 24, 2010 from <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/02/11/national/main6197466.shtml>

Should there be amnesty for undocumented immigrants?

Debating the Issue



GO!

1. Get ready...

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A Undocumented immigrants should not receive amnesty. They are here illegally and should be forced to leave.

B Immigrants should receive amnesty. They work hard for what they have and contribute to the U.S.

C Undocumented adults should be denied amnesty but those who were brought here before the age of 8 are not to blame and should receive amnesty.

D Undocumented immigrants do not deserve amnesty but they are crucial to the economy and should not be sent away.

E _____

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

I think it's more accurate to say...

That's interesting - can you tell why you think that?

I think the evidence is contrary to what you're saying because. . .

Let me share something from the reading that will help us...

2. Get set...

Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:

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Whatever the debate format, ask students to use academically productive talk when arguing their positions. In particular, students should provide reasons and evidence to back up their assertions. It may be helpful to read these sample positions to illustrate some possibilities, but students should be encouraged to take their own positions about the issue at hand.

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Science Activity



This activity is designed to help you practice thinking like a scientist and to use this week's focus words. Sometimes the data are based on real research, but they should never be considered true or factual.

Professor Kahn's class is debating an immigration **amnesty**. Cesar and his family are **undocumented** immigrants. Cesar has the highest GPA in the class.

"I can't afford college," says Cesar. "College grants and loans are **oriented** toward American citizens. People like me get **excluded**. What kind of career can I have? I don't have papers. Having no college education will **compound** my problems. I'll probably get stuck in a low-paying job. With an amnesty, I can get a better education and a better job."

"You're assuming an amnesty would lead to a better job," says Takemi. "You can't predict the future!"

"We can't predict the future, but we *can* look at what happened in the past," says Professor Seemy. "Let's investigate!"

Question:

Do immigration amnesties lead to better jobs for undocumented immigrants?

Hypothesis:

The immigration amnesty of 1986 resulted in better jobs for at least 30% of undocumented immigrants.

Materials:

- ▶ 10 immigrants who became legal during the 1986 amnesty

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Real Research

-The paper cited below says that the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) led to better jobs for previously undocumented immigrants. By 1992, 48% of men and 38% of women subjects had secured better jobs than they had held as undocumented immigrants. All subjects attained legal status under the IRCA.

Powers, M.G., Kraly, E.P., and Seltzer, W. (2004, July). IRCA: Lessons of the last U.S. legalization program. Migration Information Source. Retrieved on March 7, 2010 from <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=233>

A "Better" Job?

The study used the Nam-Powers Occupational Status score, which assigns scores to occupations based on workers' average earnings and average education.

Classroom Discussion

Summarize the real research. (By 1992, 48% of men and 38% of women who gained legal status through the 1986 amnesty had better jobs.) Are students surprised by this finding? Why or why not? How does the finding connect to this week's topic? Which side(s) of the debate could it support?

Procedure:

1. Interview subjects.
 - Ask about jobs held before the amnesty.
 - Ask about jobs held after the amnesty.
2. Analyze the subjects' answers to find out the number who got better jobs after the amnesty, and the number who got similar jobs.

Data:

	Got Better Jobs	Got Similar Jobs
After 1986 Amnesty	5	5

Conclusion:

Is the hypothesis supported or not by the data?

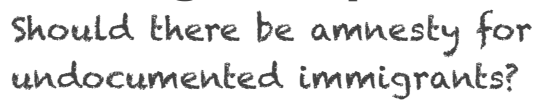
Supported

What evidence supports your conclusion?

Fifty percent of the people interviewed got better jobs following passage of the 1986 IRCA.

How would you make this a better experiment?

Encourage students to consider sample size, number of trials, control of variables, whether the procedure is a true measure of the question, whether the experiment can be repeated by other scientists, data collection and recording systems, and other potential explanations for the outcome. Students should understand that these simple experiments represent the beginning of an exploration, not the end. If time permits, have students suggest how the experiment could be strengthened, emphasizing the use of the target words in the discussion.



Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

Put the writing prompt on the overhead projector (or the board) so that everyone can see it. Remind students to refer to the word lists in their Word Generation books as needed.

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1 counterargument
- ☐ Used 2-5 focus words

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