



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

to strengthen teaching in public schools®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2014 Volume III: Immigration and Migration and the Making of a Modern American City

The Settled and the Unsettled, Then and Now: Rites of Passage in Urban Life and Narrative

Guide for Curriculum Unit 14.03.07, published September 2014

by Krista Waldron

This unit explores a selection of American immigration/migration narratives from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day. They share rites of passage as a theme. This theme should be an interesting one, speaking directly to our urban and/or migrant students' personal experiences. Students will explore the historical, political, and cultural contexts which shape the narratives. Using mostly primary resources, we will hone critical reading skills with activities especially selected for challenged and on-level readers. As a final outcome, students will produce their own personal rites of passage narratives. Students in Big Picture Learning schools might use this as part of their autobiographies. We will develop the necessary skills—including social ones—for writing groups and peer evaluation. An inevitable aspect of this unit is the role that writing and narrative, particularly for marginalized youth, have in shaping social change.

This unit will be appropriate for middle and high school classrooms in urban districts, especially for those with students from diverse backgrounds and with noticeable migrant or immigrant populations. The unit was created for at-risk students but is not limited to this constituency. Nor is it restrictive to the English classroom.

(Recommended for American History, Grades 9-10; American Literature and English Language Arts, Grades 9-11; English and Social Studies, Grades 7-8)

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use