



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2026 Volume II: Latinx Histories, Cultures, and Communities

Identity in Motion: Passport of Caribbean Culture and Community in America

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This inquiry-based unit explores how migration influences culture, identity, and belonging by examining experiences from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Brazil. Rooted in the themes of movement, culture, place, and human interaction, it encourages students to consider how individuals stay connected to their homelands while building new communities in the U.S. The essential questions guiding the unit are:

- How do migration, culture, and family shape who we are?
- How do stories from the Latinx community relate to our personal experiences?

The unit begins by exploring immigration through excerpts from *Esperanza Rising*, giving students an introductory understanding of migration and the experiences involved before focusing on specific countries. In research teams, students will examine memoirs, oral histories, maps, demographic data, and primary-source documents to understand why people migrate and how culture spreads across borders. They will also analyze texts such as *When I Was Puerto Rican* by Esmeralda Santiago, *Stormy Seas: Stories of Young Boat Refugees* by Mary Beth Leatherdale, *Childhood Regained: Stories of Hope*, and *Turning Points: True Stories of Change*, which feature the voices and experiences of young migrants and their families.

Throughout the unit, students will explore push and pull factors, migration trends, cultural traditions, and the formation of transnational identities. They will examine how language, food, music, religion, celebrations, and family stories help maintain cultural heritage while adjusting to new environments. The unit concludes with a creative performance task in which students demonstrate their understanding through a migration poetry presentation, a museum-style exhibit, or a historical narrative, all supported by primary and secondary sources. By the end, students understand that migration is an ongoing process that continually shapes individuals, communities, cultures, and identities, while also preserving important connections to their roots.

(Developed for World Geography, grade 6; recommended for World Geography and ELA, grade 6)

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