



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2026 Volume III: Asian American History and the Making of the U.S. Immigration System

Front Desk: The Exploration of the United Stew of America

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This elementary curriculum unit, aimed at 3rd or 4th graders, is centered around exploring the themes of identity, community, and belonging by connecting *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang to the multicultural stew that is the United States. Students will dive deep into the life of our protagonist and ride alongside her as she manages to help take care of her family, deal with racism, and develop her identity as a 10-year-old immigrant in the United States. Throughout the reading of the novel, snippets of historical background knowledge on the United States immigration system will be shared with the students to further understand how the protagonist and her family are being affected by past events that came far before them. This novel is also teeming with material to carry discussions about self-identity and gives students a chance to be introspective about the unique components they contain. Additionally, the unit is designed to help students improve their reading fluency and understand character traits, figurative language, and summarization. By its conclusion, students will be able to relate to our protagonist by embracing their own cultural identities and knowing that they are, too, a piece of the United Stew of America.

(Developed for Reading, grade 3; recommended for Reading, grade 4)

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