

Share: Storytellers in Newcomers (Grades 4-8)

Program Description:

GRPM's *Newcomers* exhibit shares the stories of West Michigan immigrants from all around the world. Through a series of perspective-taking exercises, students will be encouraged to empathize with these stories to answer the question of what it feels like to be a newcomer to a new home. The program will culminate with a creative-writing piece, written in first person, where students will put themselves in the shoes of a West Michigan newcomer and demonstrate their take home understandings.

What content standards align with this program?

ELA Common Core Standards by Domain: Text Types and Purposes, Production and Distribution of Writing, Range of Writing.

Michigan Social Studies Standards: H1: The World in Temporal Terms: Historical Habits of Mind; H2: Living and Working Together in Families and Communities, Now and Long Ago; H3: The History of Michigan and the Great Lakes Region; H5: The History of Peoples from Many Cultures Around the World; U6 The Development of an Industrial, Urban, and Global United States; G2: Places and Regions; G4: Human Systems; C5: Citizenship in the United States; P1 Reading and Communication; P2 Inquiry Research and Analysis

Museum Program Strand:

1. *Cultivate a community of empathetic contributors who value diversity.*
2. *Help learners tell, interpret, create, and share compelling stories so no history is ignored or untold.*

This program is aligned with the following Museum Learner Outcomes:

Holders of Foundational Knowledge	Masters of Fundamental Literacies	Original Thinkers in an Uncertain World	Generous Collaborators for Tough Problems	Learners For Life	
	X	X	X	X	

What will students know and be able to do after completing this program?

- Students will be able to empathize with diverse viewpoints.
- Students will be able to describe the experiences and challenges that newcomers/immigrants have when moving to a new home.
- Students will create a short creative piece in written or pictorial form.

What questions will students answer?

- What does it mean to practice empathy?
- What do you learn when you aim to walk in the shoes of your assigned character?
- What can I learn about the immigrant experience?
- What might it feel like to be a Newcomer to a new country?

Key vocabulary

Empathy
Perspective-taking
Immigration
Discrimination

Materials List and Setup:

Whiteboard and dry erase markers
Clip boards
Pencils
Worksheet
Laminated pictures for perspective-taking activity
“Julia Moves to the United States” short story
Self-reflection half-sheets (exit slip)

Program Activities: 90 minutes

1. Introduction and expectations.
 - a. Mini Lesson on perspective taking
 - i. This pre-writing activity encourages students to consider another individual’s wants, needs, and motivations. The activity asks them to step outside of themselves and consider the perspectives of another--an important precursor that they will need to achieve this program’s objective. The lightheartedness of this prompt will hopefully be an approachable way to start to practice empathy.
 - b. Have a discussion to draw out student prior conceptions of important terms: empathy and perspective-taking.
 - c. Introduce focus of the program: work through a series of activities to practice perspective-taking and empathy with the characters in the exhibit. What can we learn about the immigrant experience? What might it feel like to be a newcomer to a country?
2. Instructor gives important context and information about the content/themes of the exhibit.
3. Reflection on primary source:
 - a. “Julia Moves to the United States” story about a young girl who immigrated to the U.S. and the challenges/bullying she faces.
4. Empathy journey through the exhibit
 - a. ESL classroom--Think/pair/share discussion about English language learners
 - b. Quinceanera bedroom--Think/pair/share discussion about cultural traditions
 - c. Roger Wilkins--Think/pair/share discussion about discrimination
5. Instructor introduces creative writing prompt.
 - a. Read through the directions and prompts with students. Students will be instructed to write their responses like a diary entry from the perspective of someone who is just moving to Grand Rapids from a different country.
 - b. Students spend time writing/sketching their story from that perspective.
6. Students share their stories (as a whole group or small group, depending on size of group).
7. Students complete a self-assessment to check what they learned about perspective-taking and empathy.