

JOURNEY STORIES

Journey Stories Discussion Questions for Classrooms

Developed by Teaching Tolerance

General Questions

1. How did the movement of people affect the nation? What are the impacts of continued migration today?
2. There are many different reasons for moving from one place to another. When you think about the reasons that people moved, what themes do you notice?
3. Which examples of people moving stand out to you the most as you explore these posters? Name three facts that you learned about those movements.
4. Analyze an image from the poster set. Why do you think the artist who created this poster picked this particular image? Explain your reasoning.
5. Think about your own family's journey story. When and how did they come to your community? What motivated them? Talk to an older family member about their experience. (Note: Students can create a multimedia project on their own families' journey story and add them to an online archive at the Smithsonian by visiting our Stories from Main Street portal, museumonmainstreet.org/stories.)
- 6.

Journey Stories

1. Native American civilizations were well established when the first European colonists landed. Why would the colonists need the survival skills that some Native Americans taught them?
2. How do the influences of French and Spanish explorers still linger in our country today?
3. The poster states that the 66-day journey on the *Mayflower* was grueling. What made it grueling?
4. Think about the colonists who came to America featured on this poster. Are there any circumstances today that would make you consider leaving everything behind to move?

Forging a Path

1. Immigrants entered the U.S. through several locations in the 19th and 20th centuries, including Angel Island in California and Ellis Island in New York. What did immigrants experience when they arrived?
2. Many American Indian tribes were nomadic, meaning they moved often. Name some of the reasons those tribes routinely relocated their homes and villages.
3. What were immigrants' experiences before, during, and after their journeys? Some immigrants faced hostility and harsh conditions. Why might a nation built on immigrants be a difficult place for other immigrants?
4. Why did some settlers choose to leave the East Coast and "go west"?
5. Think about how it might have been to move around in a region without a modern transportation system. What kind of barriers and challenges did they face?

Forced Relocation

1. "We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us." What did this mean for people whose land was suddenly claimed by the U.S.? What effects does this have today on people living in the geographic area that was previously Mexico?
2. The Trail of Tears is one of the most devastating events in American history. What are some other instances of forced relocation in American history? Could such a forced relocation happen to a group of people today? Explain your reasoning.
3. How were enslaved people still being bought and sold even after legal importation was ended in 1808?
4. Analyze the poster from Boston in 1851. How does this message show how some northern cities, like Boston, promoted abolition?
5. Think about the people in this poster who were forced to move. How would you react if your family was faced with this kind of experience?

Journeys for Freedom & Survival

1. According to the poster, some Americans have migrated to other states to obtain freedom. Which freedoms does this poster refer to? Can you think of other freedoms people have moved to obtain?
2. What conditions in the South caused the Great Migration of African Americans to northern states? What did African Americans experience before, during and after migrating?
3. What is the Underground Railroad?
4. Why did so many people move to California during the 1930s?
5. Analyze the quote from the *Atlanta Independent*. How does it speak to the journeys for "freedom and survival"? How does the quote relate to the experiences of African Americans described on the poster?

6. Think about the people in the image of the Underground Railroad who are assisting the fleeing slaves. If they were caught, they could have gone to jail. How do you think you might have responded during that period in history? Does society have a moral responsibility when injustices occur?

Pursuing a Dream

1. Why did the U.S. government want to give away land in the West?
2. What challenges did people face as they traveled west? What challenges did taking advantage of the Homestead Act pose?
3. What factors made it possible for people to move to the suburbs? Why did people decide to move there? What dreams were new suburban dwellers hoping to fulfill?
4. Think about the rise of the automobile in the 20th century. In what ways do you think cars changed the American way of living? What do you think cars represent to people today?

Moving to Work

1. How did World War II affect the movement of people throughout the United States?
2. By 1970, the rural population of the United States was only 27 percent, a significant decrease from decades before. What circumstances contributed to the urbanization of the United States? How did that migration change rural communities?
3. What characterizes a migrant worker? What challenges do migrant workers face?
4. How did public transportation adapt throughout the years to accommodate urban workers? How does your family get to work each day? How does that commute effect your lives?
5. Think about how your family gets to work each day. Do they drive or use public transportation? Do they have short or long commutes?

Modern Mobility

1. Why do Americans value mobility so highly? What factors allow Americans the freedom to travel so extensively?
2. How has Americans' interest in mobility inspired innovation in transportation?
3. What would make the Sun Belt attractive to "millions looking for opportunity elsewhere"? What possible tensions might have resulted from the influx of new people in such places as Florida, Arizona and southern California?
4. The early adoption of air travel was enjoyed primarily by wealthy individuals. What do you know about who can access new forms of transportation today? What would allow a greater diversity of people to access new modes of transportation?

5. Think about all the modes of transportation that emerged in the 20th century. What recent transportation advancements have interested you?