



THE QUOTA SYSTEM AND AMERICAN IMMIGRATION

A re-creation of the conflict in Congress in the 1920s,
debating whether or not to adopt a quota system for immigrants

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ISBN 978-1-57336-148-4

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PURPOSE

Why were there such strong convictions about a quota system in the 1920s?

During this re-creation of the congressional debate over immigration and the quota system of the 1920s, students involve themselves in the decision and problem-solving process experienced by members of Congress during that historical era. The Pro and Con factions meet in a debate which affected the very make-up of the American nation. In the middle ground between these two powerful points of view stand the Undecided faction members who seek compromise. As your students become involved in these viewpoints, they will specifically experience the following:

Knowledge

1. Learning that both sides had strong convictions about whether or not immigration should be restricted during the 1920s.
2. Solving a problem is difficult when two strong viewpoints are in conflict.
3. Understanding that the decision to enact legislation limiting the immigrant flow into the U.S. was not made swiftly; it was made only after a long democratic process had taken place.
4. Realizing that the growth of a nation is a timely process characterized by continual conflict and challenge.

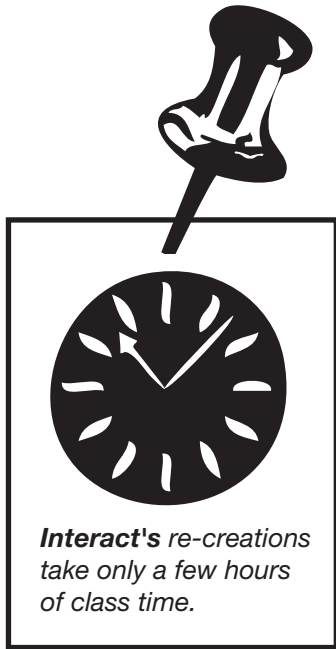
Attitudes

1. Recognizing that the democratic alternatives can be used to legislate a solution to a national problem.
2. Creating an awareness of the vast scope of “the immigration problem” and the various alternatives that could be tried as solutions.
3. Developing a spirit of cooperation in order to reach compromise and to make a decision for the whole country’s welfare.

Skills

1. Using various types of information and contrary points of view.
2. Working effectively with others in planning, executing, and evaluating a group activity.
3. Making individual and small group decisions.
4. Organizing and presenting information clearly and accurately.

OVERVIEW



Four class periods—or days—are needed for this re-creation of the debate over the quota system.

Day 1

In the first hour students are given background information concerning events of this historical period. Students are divided into three congressional factions: Pro, Con, and Undecided. With the aid of general and specific information provided, these factions meet and assign specific arguments for various members to present during the second hour. An overnight assignment is provided.

Days 2-3

During the second and third hours the classroom is divided with the three factions seated to the left, right, and center of the chairperson. (You will likely be the chairperson.) Faction members speak alternately for, against, and undecided (the latter asking questions). After the debate has concluded, a vote is taken. An overnight assignment is provided.

Day 4

The class is again divided in the final hour for debriefing/testing. Emphasis is placed on the contemporary relevance of immigration issues.

SETUP DIRECTIONS



Note: You will not need to duplicate the bulleted items the first time you use this re-creation, for Interact has provided different colored handouts for students playing these roles. If you choose to give the optional PRE-TEST and POST-TEST you will have to duplicate them. All other items necessary for the re-creation are in the Student Guide.



You will likely wish to divide the students so that each of the three groups has an equal number of capable students—particularly in their ability to speak.

- 1. Decision about time** This re-creation was written to function within four class periods—one for the preparation, two for the recreation, and one for the debriefing. However, after carefully studying the Student Guide pages and the various Teacher Guide handouts, you may want to alter it significantly because of your students' abilities, the materials on hand, and the time pressures you feel.
- 2. Handouts** See note at left the first time you use this re-creation. For subsequent classes, duplicate the number in parentheses, using the masters in this Teacher Guide.
 - PRO LEADER (one: one page)
 - PRO ARGUMENT: Issue 1 (one: one page)
 - PRO ARGUMENT: Issue 2 (one: one page)
 - PRO ARGUMENT: Issue 3 (one: one page)
 - PRO ARGUMENT: Issue 4 (one: one page)
 - CON LEADER (one: one page)
 - CON ARGUMENT: Issue 1 (one: one page)
 - CON ARGUMENT: Issue 2 (one: one page)
 - CON ARGUMENT: Issue 3 (one: one page)
 - CON ARGUMENT: Issue 4 (one: one page)
 - UNDECIDED LEADER (one: one page)
 - UNDECIDED QUESTIONS (one: two pages, cut apart for four questioners)

Optional:

 - * PRE-TEST (class set: one page)
 - * POST-TEST (class set: one page)
- 3. Grouping** Decide if you wish to assign students to groups or allow students to group themselves. Divide the class into one-third Pro, one-third Con, and one-third Undecided.
- 4. Chairperson** As the teacher you may wish to assume the role of chairperson of the Congress to keep the Congress organized and the ideas flowing. However, you may wish to give a capable, experienced student this role.

BIBLIOGRAPHY



Consider speaking to your friendly librarian. Ask him/her to set up a special QUOTA SYSTEM AND IMMIGRATION RESERVE bookshelf so that your capable students can check out books early in order to "flesh out" their identities.

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DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 1



Also assign your students to read the chapter(s) in their textbook covering immigration controversies from the 1880s into the 1920s...

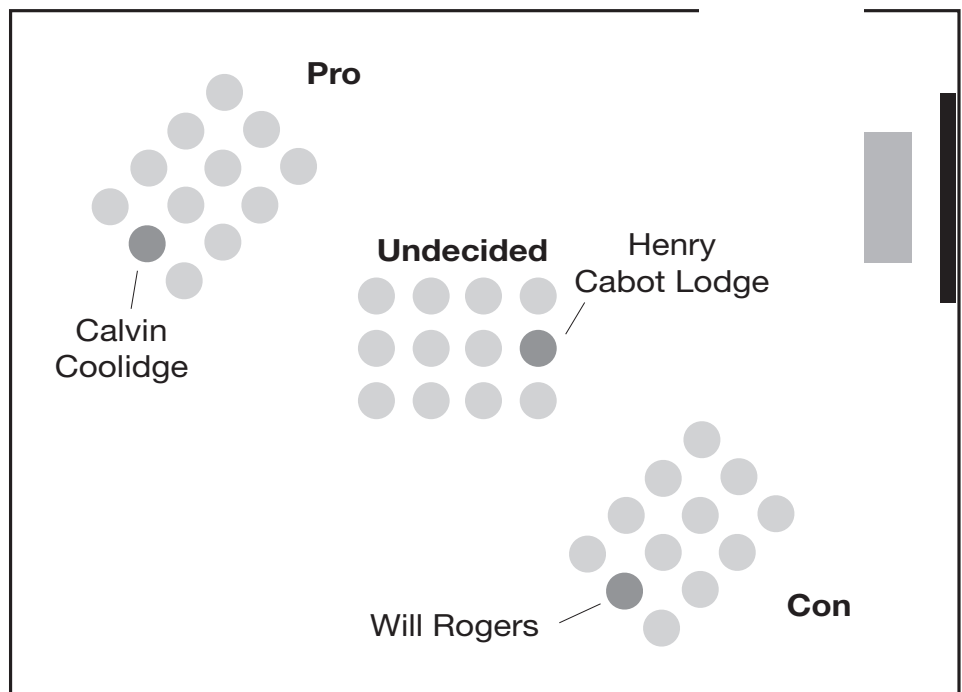
Before Day 1

Be sure you have thoroughly examined the Teacher Guide, the Student Guide, and the various handouts.

Day 1

1. Pass out the Student Guides. Read aloud to your students the Purpose section on page 1. It is vital for you to establish interest in this period of history and the re-creation students are about to enter. You can do this in one of several ways: a) a lecture reinforced by the reading of the Background Essay in the Student Guide; b) an audio-visual presentation (filmstrip, movie, or video tape); or c) completion of the PRE-TEST on page 21 in this Teacher Guide; or d) any combination of the above. (If you use it, here are answers to the PRE-TEST: 1. 0, 2. 0, 3. 0, 4. 0, 5. +, 6. 0, 7. +, 8. +, 9. +, 10. 0, 11. 0, 12. +, 13. +, 14. +, 15. 0.)
2. Have students read the Background Essay in the Student Guide. This will give each student the same background information to begin the re-creation. As an overnight assignment, have students answer the questions provided in the Student Guide concerning the information presented in the Background Essay. Refer them to the Procedure section on page 4 of the Student Guide, under Day 1, Assignment.
3. Divide the class into three factions. Divide the students yourself or allow them to divide themselves.

You will want to give all factions special places in the classroom where they regularly meet.



DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 2



Encourage your students to practice giving their speeches and asking their questions—aloud! Above all, insure that they do not simply read their material from the handouts you have given them.

4. Give each faction the handouts you duplicated for these students. Be certain that each faction receives only the handout written for its point of view. Students may refer to the Arguments Outline: Pro and Con on page 7 in their Student Guides for an overview of all sides. Encourage this.
5. Allow students to meet in their factions to assign specific arguments/questions to present during the second and third hours. (Each student will present an argument, a specific detail, or question.) Have each group elect a faction leader to keep all the members on task and to role-play a powerful leader of the faction. Encourage other students to role-play other members of their faction. Names/quotes by famous persons included in the handouts should encourage such role-playing.

Days 2-3

1. You should likely assume the role of chairperson of the Congress. This will put you in the role of controlling the flow of arguments on all sides. You will fulfill the same role that the faction leader does in the three factions.
2. Arrange students by factions facing the chairperson. Place the Undecided in the center between the other factions.
3. On the first issue have the Pro speaker(s) speak first, the Con speaker(s) second, the Undecided questioner(s) third. It is important to keep things moving. Tell speakers to use about one minute for the argument, about one minute for the quotation when he/she either becomes the historical identity or quotes that person because he is absent.

Example: The first Pro member stands and speaks to the first issue, summarizing the argument provided in the faction's handout. This summary should last about one minute. Next, this same student (or a second Pro member) reads aloud Rep. Carl Vinson's own words and reaction to the ideas in Issue 1. This should take about one more minute. The Pro member then may make a brief closing remark and invite a Con response. The total time the first speaker(s) speaks should be kept to about two minutes. Then the first Con member stands. This speaker(s) speaks for about two minutes, using the arguments and quote found in the faction's handout. Lastly, the Undecided questioner(s) questions both the Pro and Con speakers on Issue 1. This question/answer process should last about two minutes. The chairperson will then move the Congress on to the next issue, following the suggested sequence.

4. At the end of the debate, allow the two opposing factions'

DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 3



leaders time to make statements summarizing their factions' key points.

5. As chairperson, say that you are going to call the role of the delegates to vote for or against the Quota System. Remind students that they are not committed to vote for their faction. They may use their free choice to vote for or against based on the arguments presented. As chairperson, you may also be a voting member of the Congress.
6. Be sure that after the vote you explain to your students how legislation in the 1920s did set up a Quota System that restricted the number of immigrants—particularly those who were not from the old immigrants' countries in northern and western Europe. Before the re-creation ends, you should also have your students read America's current immigration policy, if it is discussed in your textbook. If it is not, you should explain it to your students.
7. Finally, give students an overnight assignment such as that found in the Student Guide. *Note:* If you plan to give students the POST-TEST, refer them to the Testing section on page 8 in their Student Guides.

Final Day

1. *Optional:* Pass out the POST-TEST and have students complete the objective part of the exam and/or the essay questions. (Key to Part 1: 1. 0, 2. +, 3.0, 4. +, 5. +, 6. +, 7.0, 8. 0, 9. +, 10. +.)
2. If you plan to do the Debriefing activity, have students turn to the Debriefing section on page 8 in their Student Guides. The *situation* and *instructions* are clearly provided for the students. Be sure you are familiar with the situation before you present it to the students. The debriefing situation is a modern re-creation of a similar problem involving three factions: Pro, Con, and Undecided. Allow students to meet in groups and develop arguments pro and con on the situation. The Undecided faction must generate questions to ask each side. Allow students about one-half the period to prepare their arguments. Appoint a spokesperson for each side to present the arguments to the large group and other students to participate in a debate until it is time to take a vote. Allow enough time to answer the discussion questions provided in the Student Guide. If you run out of time, you may give these questions as an overnight assignment.
3. You may wish to do the Debriefing activity during one class period and the POST-TEST on the next day.

PRO LEADER

Introduction

You, **Calvin Coolidge**, lead the Pro faction. You are committed to passing legislation that would limit the number of immigrants entering the United States each year. Unrestricted immigration into our country can no longer be tolerated. Specific quotas must determine the exact numbers of immigrants who can enter the U.S. from particular countries. Immigrants from northwestern Europe, the old immigrants, will have higher quotas. On the other hand, the new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe must be restricted more because they so often lack the proper traits and customs to merge successfully into the mainstream of American life. Consequently, their numbers will be carefully regulated.

Instructions

1. Your faction has met and has selected you as the person most qualified to lead your faction.
2. Carefully explain the following responsibilities to your faction members. Lead your group so that all members live up to their responsibilities.
 - a. You must convince the Undecided faction of Congress that they should vote for the Quota Act to help keep America more “American.”
 - b. Present the best arguments you can to advance our point of view.
 - c. While preparing to speak, consider the argument, concerns, and the reinforcing quote.
 - d. You will have approximately two minutes to speak. Use your first minute to present your argument and concerns, your second minute to reinforce the concerns by reading the quote provided.
 - e. **Note well:** When you read the quote, you are not role-playing the individual whom you are quoting—unless he was a member of Congress at that time. If he was not in Congress, explain that you are quoting this person to reinforce your argument. In either case, whether you are the person being quoted or are only quoting him, point out the person’s name/background before presenting the quote.
 - f. You will be questioned by a member of the Undecided faction. Answer this individual as clearly and forcefully as you can, for members of this faction represent the swing vote. We must win them over to our position in order to win this crucial debate.
 - g. **Note well:** This issue we will be debating was one that disturbed thinking Americans during the 1920s. Therefore, as you present your arguments or answer questions, don’t speak blandly. Instead speak passionately!



Thank your group's members for choosing you to be their leader.

And now, having been chosen leader, lead!

Look everyone in the eye and speak slowly as you present 2a through 2g.

To check for understanding, ask questions about 2a through 2g so that your members demonstrate that they understand specific responsibilities.