



# Understanding Migration

Curriculum Resources for the Classroom  
*Revised Edition*



Hemispheres is a partnership of:

Center for European Studies  
Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies  
Center for Middle Eastern Studies  
Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies  
South Asia Institute

in the College of Liberal Arts  
at the University of Texas at Austin



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**Understanding Migration**  
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Revised Edition  
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## Introduction

Why do people move? Simple as it may seem, this question raises complex questions about the causes of individual versus large-scale migration as well as the global effects of migration. This curriculum unit was conceived in response to numerous requests from educators concerning the discussion of issues related to human migration in the social studies classroom. Our goal was to present this fluid and nebulous concept in an easy-to-follow manner, with clear lesson objectives and outcomes.

Given our own strength as content providers for world studies courses (in Texas, this consists of the 6th grade Contemporary World Cultures course, 9th grade World Geography course, and 10th grade World History course, in addition to AP-level courses and other electives), we chose to address these essential questions by using a case-study approach looking at the phenomenon of migration in a global context.

The unit is aligned to middle and high school standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, as well as National Geography Standards) and so the activities have been designed for Grades 6–12, although some suggestions for use at lower levels are included below.

In 2011, following the revision of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS—the state-mandated educational standards) for social studies, we created the revised edition of this unit. It incorporates feedback from field testers and educators who have offered constructive comments on the unit since its first publication. We hope that this unit, which has been used in classrooms nationwide, will be even more useful in this revised edition.

We welcome any feedback or comments you may have.

### How to use this unit effectively in the classroom

The unit allows maximum flexibility on the part of the classroom teacher: modular in design, any section (or case study within a section) can be used individually or in combination with other sections. Based on previous coverage of the topic and the academic level of your students, you may incorporate as many or as few activities as support your learning goals. We encourage you to familiarize yourself with the entire unit so as to select the activities/topics that best suit your needs.

## Section Overview

### Section 1

A brief PowerPoint introduction to migration theory incorporates key vocabulary (e.g., push-pull factors) and real world examples. The original document can be downloaded from the Hemispheres website at: <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/orgs/hemispheres/>.

### Section 2: Introductory Activities

Once students have a basic understanding of the forces that affect migration, we offer two classroom activities to generate a general discussion. Although these activities are intended to be used before Sections 3 or 4, they can also be used individually (or not at all). They should be implemented insofar as they facilitate learning goals and enrich your students' understanding of migration. **Student Activity 1** examines migration trends in your community through a series of interviews. This activity can easily be modified for use at the elementary level, by either interviewing one person as a class or using a story or video; you can discuss migration stories without conducting the spectrum graph activity. **Student Activity 2** examines film, asking students to think critically about the film and plot elements relating to migration. Since most films dealing with this topic are for more mature audiences, we suggest using this activity at the high school level. There are some films, such as the animated picture *An American Tail*, that could be used with younger audiences.

### **Section 3: Using T-Charts and Writing Prompts to Explore Migration**

Intended for a middle school audience, the T-chart case studies may also be used with older students in place of the advocate/decision-making activity. The five topics, which are simplified versions of real world issues from Section 4, include background information for the teacher, short readings for students, and four variations of an analysis activity.

For a high school audience, a writing prompt is provided in the instructions as Variation 4 to use the documents in the T-chart case studies to write a DBQ essay. A grading rubric for the essay can be found on page 68.

### **Section 4: Using an Advocate/Decision-Making Activity to Discuss Migration**

This “controlled debate” activity requires students to argue one side of a real migration issue. Two to three pages of essential reading are included for each topic; supplemental materials are provided if time allows or if you feel that the issue needs additional coverage. We have made a conscious effort to use as many primary document sources as possible in order to help build critical reading and interpretation skills; reading levels vary according to the documents selected.

A writing prompt is provided in the instructions (p. 65) to use the documents provided in each case study to write a persuasive DBQ essay. The essay exercise can be done as an assessment piece for the Advocate/Decision-Making Activity. A grading rubric for the essay can be found on page 68.

### **Appendix: Glossary of Terms**

We have provided a list of terms defined in footnotes in the glossary for handy reference.

### **Additional Resources**

Each case study in Section 4 also includes a list of Web and print resources for learning more about the topic it covers. *ABC-CLIO*, *History Alive!*, and other content providers may have additional materials that will help facilitate the coverage of migration in your classroom.

We hope you find this unit useful and that you feel free to select and modify activities as they fit your classroom needs.

**THIS CURRICULUM UNIT ADDRESSES THE FOLLOWING STANDARDS  
IN THE TEXAS ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS (TEKS), 2010 REVISION:**

**113.18 Social Studies, Grade 6**

**GEOGRAPHY**

4) The student understands the factors that influence the locations and characteristics of locations of various contemporary societies on maps and globes and uses latitude and longitude to determine absolute locations.

The student is expected to:

- B) identify and explain the geographic factors responsible for patterns of population in places and regions;
- C) explain ways in which human migration influences the character of places and regions.

**ECONOMICS**

8) The student understands the factors of production in a society's economy.

The student is expected to:

- A) describe ways in which the factors of production (natural resources, labor, capital, and entrepreneurs) influence the economies of various contemporary societies;
- B) identify problems and issues that may arise when one or more of the factors of production is in relatively short supply; and
- C) explain the impact of relative scarcity of resources on international trade and economic interdependence among and within societies.

**HISTORY**

1) The student understands that historical events influence contemporary events.

The student is expected to:

- A) trace characteristics of various contemporary societies in regions that resulted from historical events or factors such as invasion, conquests, colonization, immigration, and trade; and
- B) analyze the historical background of various contemporary societies to evaluate relationships between past conflicts and current conditions.

**SOCIAL STUDIES SKILLS**

21) The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired through established research methodologies from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology.

The student is expected to:

- A) differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as computer software; interviews; biographies; oral, print, and visual material; and artifacts to acquire information about various world cultures;
- B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions;
- C) organize and interpret information from outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps;
- D) identify different points of view about an issue or current topic;
- E) identify the elements of frame of reference that influenced participants in an event.

### **113.33 World History Studies**

#### **CULTURE**

18) The student understands the ways in which cultures change and maintain continuity.

The student is expected to:

A) analyze cultural changes in specific regions caused by migration, war, trade, innovations, and diffusion.

#### **GEOGRAPHY**

7) The student understands the growth, distribution, movement, and characteristics of world population.

The student is expected to:

B) explain the political, economic, social, and environmental factors that contribute to human migration such as how national and international migrations are shaped by push-and-pull factors and how physical geography affects the routes, flows, and destinations of migration.

#### **HISTORY**

13) The student understands the impact of major events associated with the Cold War and independence movements.

The student is expected to:

F) explain how Arab rejection of the State of Israel has led to ongoing conflict.

#### **SOCIAL STUDIES SKILLS**

31) The student uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others, in a variety of settings.

The student is expected to:

A) use a problem-solving process to identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, choose and implement a solution, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution; and

B) use a decision-making process to identify a situation that requires a decision, gather information, identify options, predict consequences, and take action to implement a decision.

### **113.34 World Geography Studies**

#### **HISTORY**

1) The student understands how geography and processes of spatial exchange (diffusion) influenced events in the past and helped to shape the present.

The student is expected to:

A) analyze the effects of physical and human geographic patterns and processes on the past and describe their impact on the present, including significant physical features and environmental conditions that influenced migration patterns and shaped the distribution of culture groups today.

#### **GEOGRAPHY**

7) The student understands the growth, distribution, movement, and characteristics of world population.

The student is expected to:

B) explain the political, economic, social, and environmental factors that contribute to human migration such as how national and international migrations are shaped by push-and-pull factors and how physical geography affects the routes, flows, and destinations of migration.

8) The student understands how people, places, and environments are connected and interdependent.

The student is expected to:

A) compare ways that humans depend on, adapt to, and modify the physical environment, including the influences of culture and technology;

- B) describe the interaction between humans and the physical environment and analyze the consequences of extreme weather and other natural disasters such as El Niño, floods, tsunamis, and volcanoes; and
- C) evaluate the economic and political relationships between settlements and the environment, including sustainable development and renewable/non-renewable resources.

#### GOVERNMENT

- 14) The student understands the processes that influence political divisions, relationships, and policies.

The student is expected to:

- C) analyze the human and physical factors that influence the power to control territory and resources, create conflict/war, and impact international political relations of sovereign nations such as China, the United States, Japan, and Russia and organized nation groups such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU).

#### CITIZENSHIP

- 15) Citizenship. The student understands how different points of view influence the development of public policies and decision-making processes on local, state, national, and international levels.

The student is expected to:

- A) identify and give examples of different points of view that influence the development of public policies and decision-making processes on local, state, national, and international levels; and
- B) explain how citizenship practices, public policies, and decision making may be influenced by cultural beliefs, including nationalism and patriotism.

#### SOCIAL STUDIES SKILLS

- 31) The student uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others, in a variety of settings.

The student is expected to:

- A) use a problem-solving process to identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, choose and implement a solution, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution; and
- B) use a decision-making process to identify a situation that requires a decision, gather information, identify options, predict consequences, and take action to implement a decision.

#### THIS UNIT ALSO ADDRESSES THE FOLLOWING NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS:

**Standard 9, Human Systems:** The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.

#### GRADES 5–8

By the end of the eighth grade, the student knows and understands:

- 3. the types and historical patterns of human migration and;
- 4. the effects of migration on the characteristics of places.

#### GRADES 9–12

By the end of the twelfth grade, the student knows and understands:

- 1. trends in world population numbers and patterns and;
- 2. the impact of human migration on physical and human systems.

## Student Activity: Rural–Urban Migration in Brazil

### Time needed:

1 class period (45 min.–1 hour) should be sufficient to complete the reading and T-Chart or writing prompt activities. The writing prompt may be done in class or assigned as homework. (Although the T-Chart and writing prompt activities complement each other, it is not necessary—and may be redundant—to assign both to your students.)

### Supplies for this activity:

- Map of the world (not included)
- Reading: *Rural–Urban Migration in Brazil*
- Either the *T-Chart: Brazil* worksheet (p. 35) or the *Writing Prompt: Brazil* worksheet (p. 36)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board

### Preparation:

Have students identify Brazil on a map of the world. Compare its size to that of the United States.

You may wish to go over the following terms with your students:

- **Rural:** something or someone that is from or about the countryside.
- **Slum:** a group of houses or a neighborhood that is in bad condition where very poor people live.
- **Urban:** something or someone that is from or about a city.

### Class activities:

Distribute the *Rural–Urban Migration in Brazil* reading to all students. Have them read quietly.

### **Variation 1:**

Distribute the *T-Chart: Brazil* worksheet and have students complete the chart individually or in small groups. When finished, draw a T-Chart on the board and have each student or group offer one point and write it in the appropriate place on the board. Continue until all of the unique points offered by students are included. Discuss the results with the class. Ask students to compare the answers they gave with the answers that others gave. Are there any similarities? Are there any differences? Why? Or why not? Ask for a show of hands to determine which side the students feel has a stronger argument. Ask one or two students to explain their reasons.

### **Variation 2:**

After students have finished reading, replicate the T-Chart from the *T-Chart: Brazil* worksheet on the board. Complete the T-Chart by having students suggest points in favor of and in opposition to urban migration and write them in the appropriate column. As a follow-up to this activity, you may wish to assign the *Writing Prompt: Brazil* worksheet as homework or an in-class activity.

### **Variation 3:**

Assign both the *Rural–Urban Migration in Brazil* reading and the *Writing Prompt: Brazil* worksheet as homework. In class the next day, replicate the T-Chart from the *T-Chart: Brazil* worksheet on the board. Complete the T-Chart by having students suggest points in favor of and in opposition to urban migration and write them in the appropriate column. Continue until all of the unique points offered by students are included. Discuss the results with the class. Ask students to compare the answers they gave with the answers that others gave. Are there any similarities? Are there any differences? Why? Or why not? Ask for a show of hands to determine which side students supported in their writing, and have some of the students read the conclusion from their writing prompt out loud to the class.

**Variation 4:**

Use the readings as primary documents for an introductory DBQ exercise. Students should identify the push and pull factors given in the readings, explaining why each factor is either a push factor or a pull factor. Students should also discuss the reason(s) for the migration issue, whether they are economic, social, political, or environmental in nature, and defend their analysis (note that there may be more than one correct answer). Finally, students should identify the argument that they find more persuasive, and explain their position using information either cited in the documents or found elsewhere.

You may wish to use the following prompt:

*Read the introduction and the two documents provided. In each document, identify the push and pull factors given. Consider the overall issue. Are the causes economic, social, political, or environmental (or more than one of these) in nature?*

*Write an essay in which you describe the issue presented. Identify the major push and pull factors that advocate for migration, as well as the factors that can be used to argue against migration. Explain the causes behind the factors. Cite specific passages and examples from the documents to support your answers. Remember to consider the perspective of the author of each document.*

*Finally, explain which argument you find more persuasive, based on the reasons given by the authors. Explain your answer citing information from the documents or from additional research.*

A grading rubric may be found on page 68.

## Rural–Urban Migration in Brazil

Brazil is one of many Latin American countries that has faced a trend of rural–urban migration. People in the countryside are poor, and move to try to find a better life in Brazil’s cities. But they often lack the skills to get good jobs, and are forced to live in *favelas* (shantytowns). Read the following and think about why people from rural areas would choose to stay or go to the big cities.

I am 12 years old and I live in Rio de Janeiro, a city of about 6 million people. My family moved here a year ago from our small farm in the Northeast—after years of drought, we had no choice but to leave our land because we didn’t have enough food to eat. Nothing would grow, and we had to kill our cows and chickens before they died of hunger. Now we live in a favela, an overcrowded, dirty city slum on a steep hill.

When we got here, my father collected spare pieces of metal, cardboard, and anything else he could find to build a house. We built our house on a piece of land where no one else was living, but we don’t own the land and our house could wash away during a heavy rainstorm. We don’t have electricity or running water. After we moved, my little brother got very sick from drinking dirty water.

My parents can’t find jobs because they don’t have a lot of skills. My father spends his days picking plastic, newspapers, and aluminum cans out of dumpsters to recycle them for a little bit of money. My mother is a washerwoman: she makes a few dollars a week washing other people’s laundry. She works 12 hours every day, and her arms always hurt from having to scrub everything by hand.

We haven’t eaten meat since moving to the city, but at least we have some food every day...and sometimes mom buys some bones to make a tasty soup. My parents’ earn enough money to buy us rice and beans, but they aren’t able to save money to build a better house or to send us to school. My brothers and I have started to help my father collect recycling. I wish I could go to school with my friends at home, but this is our life now...

I’m a 13-year old who lives in the countryside of the state of Ceará, one of Brazil’s poorest states. Years ago, my family began practicing aviculture on our family farm—we raise chickens. But the droughts made it hard to keep the chickens alive and without the chickens, we didn’t earn enough money. Also, two big corporations bought up a lot of land in the area—they own more than half of the land in our county—and we ended up having to sell them our land in order to get money to survive. Now my parents can’t find work because there aren’t any jobs and we don’t even have our own land to grow food.

My parents are thinking about moving to the city in order to find stable work. Lots of my aunts and uncles have already left and they say they are making much better wages. There are more jobs in the city and you can always find something if you’re hardworking. They also say that they’ve been able to find good housing and that it’s easier to live in the city—everything is close: schools, hospitals, shopping. They feel less isolated than they did here in the country.

Since last year, my mother has been sick and it is hard to get her to the doctor. The closest hospital is more than two hours away. It would be good to be in the city, where she can get the help she needs. My father read in the newspaper that people who live in the city live longer than those who live in rural areas: health care and nutrition are much better.

I’m a little afraid of life in the big city—of all those people and the fast-paced life—but I hope that my family can make a better life than we have here.

**Aviculture:** the industry of raising birds.

**Shantytown:** a poor area of a city where people live in shacks and huts. Brazil’s shantytowns are called favelas, and the people who live in them are called favelados.

## T-CHART: BRAZIL

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

**Assignment:** Read the passages on *Rural–Urban Migration in Brazil*. Then complete the chart below, listing reasons why people from the countryside might want to migrate to the city in the left column, and reasons why people from the countryside might not want to migrate to the city in the right column.

Make as many points as you need for each side. The first three are already labeled for you.

Reasons to move to the city	Reasons to stay in the countryside
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Which side do you agree with? Cite examples from the text to support your answer:



# Essay Grading Rubric

## Essay : Understanding Migration

Teacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	4 - Above Standards	3 - Meets Standards	2 - Approaching Standards	1 - Below Standards	Score
Focus or Thesis Statement	The thesis statement names the topic of the essay and outlines the main points to be discussed.	The thesis statement names the topic of the essay.	The thesis statement outlines some or all of the main points to be discussed but does not name the topic.	The thesis statement does not name the topic AND does not preview what will be discussed.	
Evidence and Examples	All of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Most of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	At least one of the pieces of evidence and examples is relevant and has an explanation that shows how that piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Evidence and examples are NOT relevant AND/OR are not explained.	
Accuracy	All supportive facts and statistics are reported accurately.	Almost all supportive facts and statistics are reported accurately.	Most supportive facts and statistics are reported accurately.	Most supportive facts and statistics were inaccurately reported.	
Closing paragraph	The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader solidly understanding the writer's position. Effective restatement of the position statement begins the closing paragraph.	The conclusion is recognizable. The author's position is restated within the first two sentences of the closing paragraph.	The author's position is restated within the closing paragraph, but not near the beginning.	There is no conclusion - the paper just ends.	
Grammar & Spelling	Author makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	

# About Hemispheres

Hemispheres, the international outreach consortium at the University of Texas at Austin, utilizes University resources to promote and assist with world studies for K-12 and postsecondary schools, businesses, community groups, and the general public.

Hemispheres is coordinated by five independent units that receive funding from multiple sources, including the Title VI International Area Studies Program of the US Department of Education:

Center for European Studies  
Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies  
Center for Middle Eastern Studies  
Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies  
South Asia Institute

Under the aegis of our Title VI mission, we are able to provide quality, free and low-cost resources that enhance understanding of diverse world regions to K-12 and post-secondary educators, business, the media, and civic and community groups.

For more information, visit the Hemispheres website at:  
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