

How to best use these materials to support the Social Studies TEKS for Grade 5?

The two activities in this issue which are most useful for grade 5 are the **Create an “Institute of Student Cultures” Exhibit Activity** and the link to the ITC site called “New Texans,” which contains interviews with individuals who recently became naturalized American citizens in Texas and includes a sample citizenship test.

When each child researches one ancestor family, the class together will wind up with a whole community of immigrant stories from various periods. (Some fifth grade teachers may wish to change the assignment to “the first of your ancestors to immigrate to America,” though the net effect of variety will be much the same either way.) From the array of family stories, students may come to deeper understandings of settlement and land use patterns, clusters of settlement, distribution of cities, and geographic factors that influence patterns of settlement and distribution of population past and present (5.8 A, B, C, D). They will discover various ways in which people have adapted to and modified their environment and reasons for those adaptations and modifications (5.9 A, B). They will observe how the free enterprise system affected individual families and recognize how it works (5.12 B, C). They can analyze how people earned their living in the past and identify geographic factors which influenced the location of economic activities and consider in a personal way the effects of immigration, migration, and limited resources on economic development and growth (5.14 A, B, C). Many will see and understand very clearly through their inherited family values the impact of American ideas about progress and equality of opportunity. The completed “exhibit” will help students identify the similarities and differences within and among selected racial, ethnic, and religious groups, describe their customs, celebrations, and traditions, and summarize their contributions (5.23 A, B, C). Students are encouraged to use a search engine to learn more about their lands and cultures of origin (5.25) to create written and visual material for an exhibit (5.26 A, B, C, D, E). In so doing the student must both gather information and cull or edit information (5.27 A, B).

Viewing (and hearing!) brief comments from the “New Texans,” relatively new immigrants (naturalized in the 1990s) will bring some of the student experiences up to date!

Use the 100 typical questions from the Immigration and Naturalization Literacy Test—just for fun!—to consider the kinds of information which new citizens are required to know and understand. Do many who are citizens by birth know such things? The test includes questions about patriotic symbols, American traditions and heroes, and government (Varied items in the Citizenship strand).