

# **Learning Guide**

## ***“The Golden Door”***

**By**

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Additional materials in this learning guide were supplied by Norman Berman and Deborah Weiner Soule.

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## Overview – “The Golden Door”

Since the earliest settlers sought refuge in the New World, America has been a nation of immigrants. Propelled by the desire to create a better life for themselves and their children, reap the rewards of land ownership, or freely practice their religion, millions of immigrants have flooded our shores intent on improving their lot in life. Certainly the issues that confront our nation today, such as establishing immigration quotas and controlling illegal immigration, are not new; nor is the controversy about how immigrants assimilate into American culture without relinquishing their unique heritages. These struggles have a long history in our nation, requiring those at all levels of society – families, schools, communities, and government – to work together to build a nation of compassionate and tolerant citizens.

**In Good Company’s** school-based show, “The Golden Door,” provides a snapshot of life in a Boston neighborhood that is home to first, second and third generation immigrants from several different countries. The time period of the show is today; the setting is an Armenian grocery store that is about to close because of a lack of customers. Who are the people in this neighborhood? What are their stories? What are their hopes and dreams? What did they leave behind? What do they learn about each other and themselves? How do they change their attitudes after interacting with their neighbors who come from countries and cultures different from their own?

Without question, your students will enjoy “The Golden Door.” Through the story, songs, and a mix of colorful characters, they will gain a greater appreciation for the challenges faced by immigrants who leave their homes in search of a better life. However, your students’ enjoyment and understanding will be enhanced by the lessons we have provided to supplement – both before and after – the performance. These three lesson plans, plus additional learning guides and discussion prompts, help teachers frame the experience of attending *The Golden Door* by exploring such questions as:

- ▶ Who is an immigrant?
- ▶ Why do people emigrate to other countries?
- ▶ How does real immigrant life compare with people’s vision of what it would be like in this country?
- ▶ How do immigrants assimilate into American culture without relinquishing their unique heritages?
- ▶ How can we best learn about people who come from countries and cultures that are different from ours?
- ▶ What assumptions can some people make about those who come from a country or a culture that is different from theirs?
- ▶ What are the best ways to correct assumptions and break down stereotypes?

## Synopsis

### *“The Golden Door”*

#### The Characters:

**Ani Gregorian**, a third generation Armenian-American, owner of The Golden Door

**Marco Napoli**, Italian-American, Ani’s husband

**Johnny Pellegrini**, an Italian-Jewish plumber, Marco’s childhood friend

**Marisol**, Mexican, the receptionist at the Salsa dance studio down the street from Ani’s store

**Lourdes**, Mexican, Marisol’s friend

**Hsiao Ling**, Chinese-American, an elementary school music teacher

**Dani**, Irish-American, an entrepreneur who is starting the business, “Danny Boy Tours”

**Aaron Morgenstern**, an American Jewish Real Estate buyer

**Fiona Morgenstern**, an American Jewish Real Estate buyer with her brother Aaron

**Deirdre O’Donnell**, an Irish-American Real Estate broker

#### About the story:

*The Golden Door* is set in an Armenian grocery store in a transitional Boston neighborhood. Ani Gregorian runs the failing store with her husband, Marco Napoli. Over Memorial Day weekend, they discover a serious plumbing problem in their basement, which brings in Marco’s childhood friend, plumber Johnny Pellegrini. Johnny and Marco remember their childhood, spent in a Roman Catholic school, where they sang Italian songs – but Johnny also remembers his grandmother, who taught him Yiddish.

Marisol arrives in the store along with her friend, Lourdes, and their children. They’ve come in to shop for beans and rice -- but they bring with them a sense of the changing cultural makeup of the community where the store is located. Another visitor to the store is Hsiao Ling, who wants to help her granddaughter with a school assignment focused on other cultures. Ani assumes Ling is a teacher of Chinese, and Ling and Ani talk about their cultures and the assumptions people make about where they came from and who they are. Then another visitor, Dani, arrives. Dani has decided that she can operate a company that shows people what the old Irish neighborhoods of Boston look like now. Finally, Fiona and Aaron Morgenstern arrive, looking to buy the building where The Golden Door is located. Ani, alarmed, argues that the store is not for sale, even though it has plumbing problems and little business. The people in the store remind Ani that times change and that The Golden Door must too, if it is to survive. The Morgensterns, hearing the history of the store, decide that it is just the sort of business they would like to support, and so they decide to invest in the store rather than buy the building.

Together, the characters celebrate the survival of The Golden Door and dance together in joy, with an eye toward a future in which all cultures work and live together.

## Who is an Immigrant?

Throughout history, most people have settled and lived where they were born. But there have always been people who move from place to place, usually in search of a new start or better life.

Early hunters walked their families over difficult mountain ranges and across rivers to follow animal herds. Ancient sailors built boats to bring their tribes to faraway islands. Farmers in overcrowded lands went looking for open space and fertile soil on the other side of the globe. When we talk about these movements of people long ago, we call it *migration*.

The modern world is a little different because we have borders between countries. People still move from one country to another. This is called *immigration*.

If you live in the United States and are not completely Native American, you or someone in your family is (or was) an immigrant.

Immigration has always been a large part of America's national identity. We often refer to America as the “Melting Pot” because people come here from so many different places around the world.

Maybe it was several generations ago that your family emigrated to the U.S., but for many families, this story is unfolding right now.

## Why Do People Emigrate to Other Countries?

If you and your family love your home, your community and your country, it is hard to imagine picking up and moving to somewhere far away and totally different. But many people and families move from one country to another for many reasons. Here are a few of those reasons:

**To join relatives and reunite families.** So much of who we are comes from the country we're from. But family bonds are strong, and the pain of having a loved one live far away can be enough to make people start over in a new place. If your sister, your dad or your child moves away, you might want to move too.

**To find work.** This is one of the biggest reasons people become immigrants: they're simply looking for a place where they can work hard, earn money and support themselves and their families.

**To escape war.** People who emigrate to escape war are called refugees because they're seeking a refuge (a safe place) from the conflict.

**To escape famine or other natural disasters.** Drought (when there's not enough rain for crops) can lead to famine and starvation, disease can spread and become a plague, and earthquakes, floods and hurricanes can devastate whole nations. In the 1800's many Irish people came to America because of the potato famine. When natural catastrophes hit, many people have no choice but to find a new place to live.

**To escape persecution.** Governments are not always fair. Sometimes, a certain group of people living in a nation will be singled out for harsh, unfair treatment. They may have certain rights taken away, or be denied freedoms, or even be physically harmed – just because of who they are. This treatment is called persecution and people who are persecuted often leave their home and move to a new place where they believe they can start a new life and be treated as equals.

**To find greater freedom.** People may feel like their home doesn't offer the same liberties (religious or political) that people in other places get to have. As long as people dream of freedom, many will be willing to move to a new country to find it.

**For their children.** Children are one of the biggest reasons people uproot themselves and move to another country. Parents always want their children to have a better life than they did.

## Connections to Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the Common Core:

Below are excerpts from

1. Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy and
2. Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Social Studies.
3. Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Arts

The program *The Golden Door* addresses the italicized and bolded descriptions of curriculum content, skills, guiding principles and student capacities.

- 1) *From* “The Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy, Grades Pre-Kindergarten to 12; Incorporating the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects; March 2011- Guiding Principles for English Language Arts and Literacy Programs in Massachusetts” (Pages 7-8)

The following principles are philosophical statements that underlie the standards and resources of this curriculum framework. They should guide the construction and evaluation of English language arts and literacy programs in schools and the broader community.

### Guiding Principle 3

***An effective English language arts and literacy curriculum draws on informational texts and multimedia in order to build academic vocabulary and strong content knowledge.***

In all of their classes, including history/social science, science and technology/engineering, arts, comprehensive health, foreign language, and vocational and technical subjects, students should encounter many examples of informational and media texts aligned to the grade or course curriculum. ***This kind of reading, listening, and viewing is the key to building a rich academic vocabulary and increasing knowledge about the world.*** Each kind of print or media text has its unique characteristics, and proficient students apply the critical techniques learned in the study of exposition to the evaluation of multimedia, television, radio, film/video, and websites. School librarians play a key role in finding books and other media to match students’ interests, and in suggesting further resources in public libraries.

### Guiding Principle 9

***An effective English language arts and literacy curriculum nurtures students’ sense of their common ground as present or future American citizens and prepares them to participate responsibly in our schools and in civic life.***

***Teachers instruct an increasingly diverse group of students in their classrooms each year. Students may come from any country or continent in the world. Taking advantage of this diversity, teachers guide discussions about the extraordinary variety of beliefs and traditions around the world. At the same time, they provide students with common ground through discussion of significant works in American cultural history to help prepare them to become self-governing citizens of the United States of America. An effective English language arts and literacy curriculum, while encouraging respect for differences in home backgrounds, can serve as a unifying force in schools and society.***



*From “Students who are College and Career Ready in Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Language” (page 9)*

The descriptions that follow are not standards themselves but instead offer a portrait of students who meet the standards set out in this document. As students advance through the grades and master the standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language, they are able to exhibit with increasing fullness and regularity these capacities of the literate individual.

### **They come to understand other perspectives and cultures.**

Students appreciate that the twenty-first-century classroom and workplace are settings in which people from often widely divergent cultures and who represent diverse experiences and perspectives must learn and work together. Students actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures through reading and listening, and they are able to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds. They evaluate other points of view critically and constructively. Through reading great classic and contemporary works of literature representative of a variety of periods, cultures, and worldviews, students can vicariously inhabit worlds and have experiences much different than their own.

2.) *From Overview of Scope and Sequence – From Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Social Studies, 2003 (Note: this is the most recent version):*

#### Grade 2

Second graders learn world and United States history, geography, economics, and government ***by studying more about who Americans are and where they came from. They explore their own family’s history and learn about distinctive achievements, customs, events, places, or landmarks from long ago and from around the world. The chief purpose of the grade 2 curriculum is to help students understand that American citizenship embraces all kinds of people, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and national origin. American students come from all countries and continents in the world.*** A history and social science curriculum should help students acquire a common understanding of American history, its political principles, and its system of government in order to prepare them for responsible participation in our schools and civic life.

#### Grade 4

In grade 4, students study the geography and people of the United States today. Students learn geography by addressing standards that emphasize political and physical geography and embed five major concepts: location, place, human interaction with the environment, movement, and regions. In addition, they learn about the ***geography and people of contemporary Mexico*** and Canada. Teachers may choose to teach the standards on the geography and ***social characteristics of the nations in Central America and the Caribbean Islands***. Teachers may also choose to have students study in the first half of the school year one early civilization. We recommend ***China*** because it is not taught in grade 7 and can be easily connected to the English language arts curriculum through ***its myths, legends, and folktales***.

From “The Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework, Pre-K-12 Standard 1: Music Singing (page 42), November 1999

***1.3: By the end of grade 4, students will sing from memory a variety of songs representing genres and styles from diverse cultures and historical periods.***

From “the Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework, Pre-K-12 Standard 2: Theater, Acting (page 58), November, 1999

***1.3: By the end of grade four, students will pretend to be someone else, creating a character based on stories or through improvisation, using properties (props), costumes, and imagery.***

## “The Golden Door” Lesson 1 – Pre-performance

### 1. Major Concepts:

- Defining the meaning of immigration and immigrant
- Understanding immigrants’ expectations of settling in a new world

### 2. Resources and Materials:

- *The New Colossus* by Emma Lazarus
- Armenian Grocery Store, c. 1910 (image)
- Wood engraving of the Statue of Liberty from *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, July 2, 1887
- Chart paper/markers

### 3. Student Learning Objectives:

- Students will demonstrate understanding of the terms “immigration” and “immigrant.”
- Students will be able to analyze artifacts (poem, poster, frontispiece, engraving) to hypothesize about immigrants’ expectations of settling in a new world.
- Students will demonstrate understanding of some of the immigrants’ expectations of settling in a new world.

### 4. Procedure:

- a. Write the words “immigration” and “immigrant” on the chart paper, and ask students what, if anything, they know about their meaning.
- b. Guide students to understand that immigration means moving from one country to another for the purpose of settling there permanently and an immigrant is someone who does that.
- c. Read aloud the Emma Lazarus poem, *The New Colossus*.
- d. Guide students in a discussion about the sentiment of the poem. Discussion focus:
  - If the Statue of Liberty were a real person, how would you describe her attitude toward newly arriving immigrants? What do you imagine these immigrants were feeling as they approached America?
- e. Distribute copies of the photograph of the Armenian Grocery Store.
- f. In small groups, students discuss the impressions given by the image. Discussion question:
  - What expectations would immigrants have had about their new lives in America?
- g. Small groups share reactions.

### 5. Assessment:

- a. Small groups each report out to the whole class three agreed upon ideas from their discussion of the artifacts.
- b. All-class discussion following viewing of *The Golden Door*: Although the artifacts (poem, engraving, photograph) used in this lesson were from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, current immigrants to America also have hopes, expectations, fears, and other feelings about living in America. What were some of the hopes, expectations, fears and other feelings of the characters in *The Golden Door*?

### 6. Extension:

- a. Not at this time

## The New Colossus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.  
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she  
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me.  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.”

—Emma Lazarus, 1883  
*The Poems of Emma Lazarus, Vol.1 (1889)*  
Lesson 1 - 3

**Wood Engraving from  
*Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*  
July 2, 1887**



Source: Library of Congress  
Lesson 1 – 4

**An Armenian Grocery Store  
(Similar to the one Ani's grandparents started)  
Early 20th century**



Serunian's Grocery Store  
Portland, ME – about 1910  
(courtesy Armenian Cultural Association of Maine)  
Lesson 1 - 5

## “The Golden Door” Lesson 2a – Pre-performance

### 1. Major Concepts:

- Defining the meaning of the words “assume” and “assumption”
- Understanding that assumptions are not facts, that they can be true or false, and that they can be problematic.

### 2. Resources and Materials: Chalkboard, white board or chart paper.

### 3. Student Learning Objectives:

Students will demonstrate understanding of the words “assume” and “assumption” by citing examples of assumptions that people make (perhaps including personal examples).

### 4. Procedure:

- a. Write the words **assume** and **assumption** on the board and ask students if they know what these words mean. Collect ideas and examples.
- b. Write the definitions beside the words:  
Assume: To accept that something is true.  
Assumption: Supposing that something is true.
- c. Give students examples of assumptions that people have been known to make, e.g.,
  1. Because Jose is tall (6’8”), people assume that he likes to play basketball and is good at it.
  2. Because Kalpana’s mother and father are both teachers, people assume that she will become a teacher.
- d. Briefly discuss assumptions by asking the students questions. Are assumptions always true? Are they always false? Why do people make assumptions? What can be problematic about making assumptions?
- e. Has anyone ever made an assumption about you that wasn’t true? Explain. How did you feel?
- f. In the program, “The Golden Door,” most of the characters don’t know each other at the start of the story, but some of them make assumptions about each other. Watch and listen during the performance to discover who is making assumptions about others and what those assumptions are.

### 5. Assessment:

Not at this time.

### 6. Extension:

Not at this time.



*To be used with Lesson 2*  
**Assumptions Made by Characters in “The Golden Door”**

1. Ani assumes kids will take food and candy from her.
2. Ani assumes that everyone will like Armenian food.
3. Marco assumes that Italians fit in everywhere and that more recent immigrant groups “will never fit in.”
4. Marco assumes that Marisol and Lourdes are not interested in or trying to learn to speak and understand English.
5. Marco assumes that because Marisol speaks Spanish, she doesn't understand English.
6. Ani assumes that Ling teaches Chinese because she is Chinese.
7. Ling assumes that her culture's story of suffering in the immigration process is more important, or more painful, than those of other people or cultures.
8. Marco assumes Marisol and Lourdes will understand his speaking English if he speaks loudly and slowly.
9. Marco assumes Chinese immigrants can get whatever they need and want from Chinatown.
10. Marco assumes that if one is from another country/speaks another language, he/she will have an accent speaking English.
11. Dani assumes that people will be interested in touring a formerly Irish neighborhood that is now mostly Dominican and Mexican.
12. Ani assumes that the real estate broker and her clients won't understand how important The Golden Door is to her, her identity, and the neighborhood.
13. Fiona assumes The Golden Door refers to a Chinese restaurant.



**“The Golden Door”  
Lesson 2b – Post-Performance**

**1. Major Concepts:**

- Identifying assumptions made by characters in “The Golden Door” and explaining why making assumptions can cause problems.
- Identifying the way that some of the characters in “The Golden Door” changed their attitudes by the end of the story.

**2. Resources and Materials:**

For teachers: A list of assumptions made by characters in “The Golden Door”

**3. Student Learning Objectives:**

- Students will be able to identify assumptions made by characters in “The Golden Door” and explain the reasons these assumptions cause problems.
- Students will demonstrate understanding of ways the characters changed their attitudes by the end of the story.

**4. Procedure:**

a. In small groups, ask students to record on chart paper the character’s name and an assumption that he or she made in “The Golden Door.” Record the reason(s) the assumption could cause problems. Set up the chart paper ahead of time with:

Character’s name	Assumption	Why a Problem?

- b. Teacher designates a discussion leader, note taker, and spokesperson to complete the small-group task described above.
- c. Post completed charts and direct students to walk around the room to read other groups’ ideas.
- d. All-class discussion of responses.
- e. Continue all-class discussion of ways the characters changed their attitudes by the end of the story.
- f. Individual quick-write: Think about “The Golden Door.” How were the characters able to correct their assumptions about people they didn’t know and then change their attitudes?

**5. Assessment:**

- a. Not at this time.

**6. Extension:**

- a. Not at this time.

## “The Golden Door” Lesson 3 - “Nobody’s Just One Thing”

### 1. Major Concepts

Understanding that everyone has multiple pieces to his or her identity, including background/heritage, roles in the family, and roles in the outside world.

### 2. Resources and Materials:

Graphic Organizer for students to use to map their identities.

### 3. Student Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to name the various pieces of their identities and list/show these on a graphic organizer.

### 4. Procedure:

- a. Read to the students the part of the conversation in *The Golden Door* in which Johnny says, “Nobody’s just one thing.”

Ani: If we’re not an Armenian store, we lose our identity.

Marco: Maybe we gotta make a new one.

Ani: If I’m not Armenian, who am I?

Marisol: Americana.

Marco: Well, she’s right, isn’t she? You’re not just one thing.

Marisol: (In English.) Like my children. They were born here.

Johnny: Nobody’s just one thing.

- b. Ask students: “What do Marco and Johnny mean when they say, ‘You’re not just one thing?’” In this case Marco and Johnny could mean that Ani was both Armenian in heritage/background and American in citizenship.

- c. Remind students that so many people living in America have mixed backgrounds. Ask them to take one minute and jot down their own backgrounds. Turn and share those responses with a partner.

- d. Tell students that people have many pieces to their identities. You may want to use yourself as an example, (your heritage/background) as well as teacher, daughter, wife, mother, singer, runner, friend). Ask students to name the parts of Johnny’s identity that they know (Italian, Jewish, a plumber, a father, a singer).

- e. Ask students to list all of the aspects of their identities and then to use the graphic organizer to “map these out.”

- f. Have the students share their “maps” in small groups. Sharing may give them additional ideas to add to their maps.

**5. Assessment:**

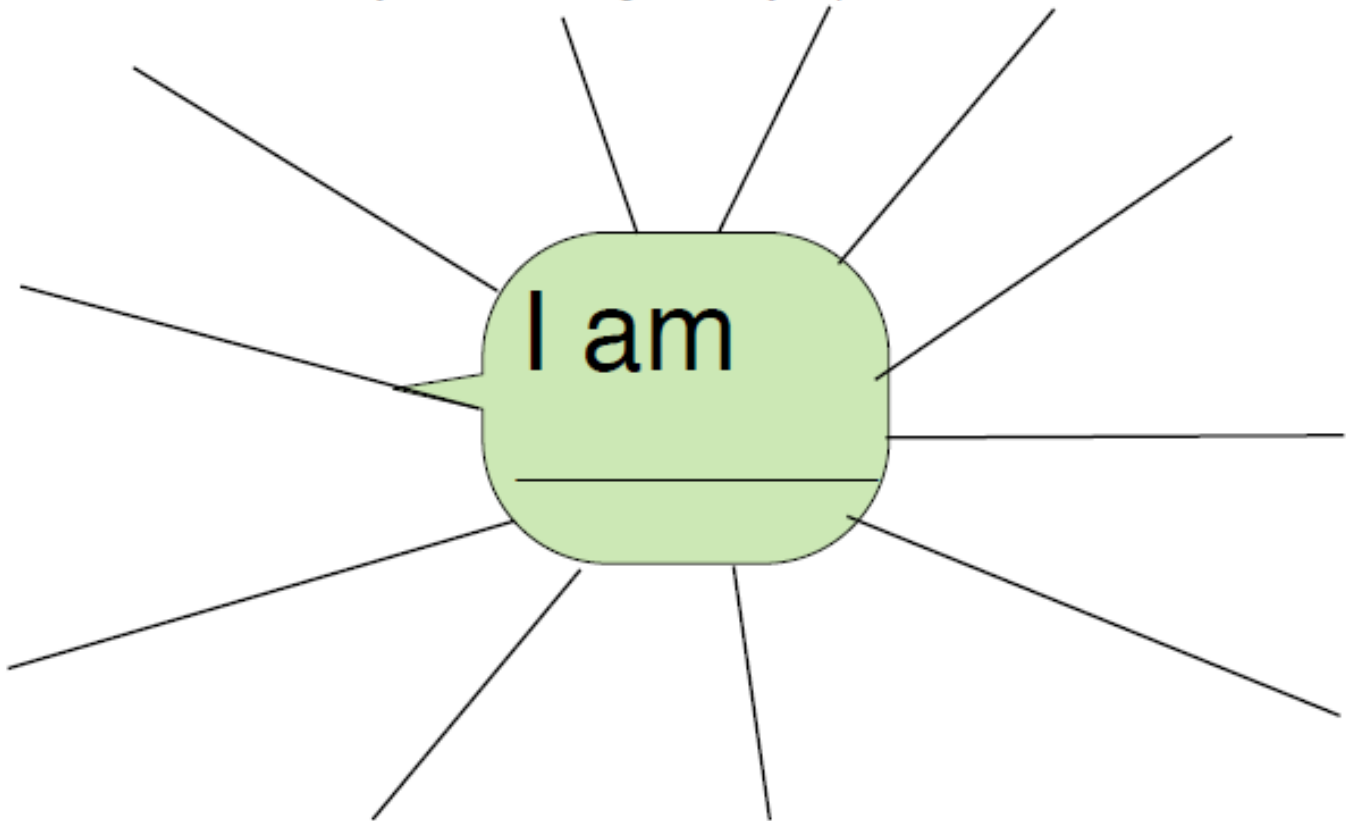
- a. Students create identity maps of themselves showing that “No one is just one thing.”

**6. Extension:**

- a. You may want to have students add illustrations or symbols to their maps and create a bulletin board display.

*Tool for Lesson 3*  
**Identity Map**

Lesson 3 - "Nobody's Just One Thing" Identity Map



Think of who you are in your family (sister, cousin, nephew, etc), who you are at school (reader, scientist, etc), who you are in your community (scout, soccer player, etc), who you are culturally (your heritage), and write each piece of your identity on the lines of the map. Who you are is your identity. Look at your identity and see all the pieces that make you uniquely YOU!

*Tool for Lesson 3*  
**Identity Map: Who is Johnny?**

Lesson 3: "Nobody's Just One Thing" Who Is Johnny?

Write down all the things you can recall about the character Johnny and discover if he is just one thing or not.

Johnny is.....



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*(compiled November, 2013)*

## **Immigration Facts and Figures**

1. Today, about 12.5% of the U.S. population was born in another country.
2. Nearly 31% of the foreign born population in the U.S. is Mexican. 27% come from Asia with Chinese, Indians and Filipinos each accounting for about 5% of the total immigrant population. 23 % come from Central America, South America and the Caribbean.
3. More than 1 million immigrants became Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) of the United States in 2012.
4. Of these new U.S. residents, 14% came from Mexico, 8% from China, and 6.5% from India.
5. Including orphans, nearly 8% of all new LPRs in 2012 were children with immediate relatives as current citizens in the U.S.
6. Just over 33% of immigrants in 2012 were under the age of 25.
7. In the U.S., five states have become minority-majority, which means that less than half of the population of that state is non-Hispanic white and the minorities combined have become the majority.
8. No country in the world has an immigrant population as large and diverse as the United States.

### **Sources:**

1. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/acs-19.pdf>
2. <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2013/01/29/statistical-portrait-of-the-foreign-born-population-in-the-united-states-2011/#> (Mexican); <http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/acsbr11-06.pdf> (Asian); <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/acsbr10-15.pdf> (Central America/South America/Caribbean)
3. [http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois\\_lpr\\_fr\\_2012\\_2.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois_lpr_fr_2012_2.pdf)
4. [http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois\\_lpr\\_fr\\_2012\\_2.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois_lpr_fr_2012_2.pdf)
5. [http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois\\_lpr\\_fr\\_2012\\_2.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois_lpr_fr_2012_2.pdf)
6. [http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois\\_lpr\\_fr\\_2012\\_2.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois_lpr_fr_2012_2.pdf)

## **Discussion Questions about Immigration**

If you know about your family's immigration history, try to find out:

1. When your family came to this country.
2. Where your ancestors come from.
3. How and why you, or your ancestors, moved here.
4. If your family has anything they brought with them.
5. What their struggles were or how they got settled.

Or:

6. Ask someone in your adopted family to tell you about the family's history.
7. Ask a friend or neighbor to tell you his or her family's story using these questions.

For all:

8. Does the country that immigrants come from affect what you think about them?
9. Would you ever consider moving your family to another country? Why or why not?

## **Discussion Questions about "The Golden Door"**

- a. Why were Ani and Marco selling the store?
- b. Why was Ani against selling the store?
- c. Why was the store called "The Golden Door?"
- d. Johnny sings Italian and Yiddish\* songs – which is he – Italian or Jewish?
- e. How does Marco feel about immigrants?

- f. Does Marco change his attitude during the show? If so, why?
- g. Why is the new investor (Aaron) willing to keep “The Golden Door” open?
- h. Why does Johnny sing the song “Long Live Columbus?”
- i. Why does Ling not like Chinatown?
- j. What does “Des Colores” have to do with immigration?
- k. What were the different cultural groups that lived in the neighborhood near “The Golden Door?”
- l. Who lived there first? Who came most recently?

*\*The language of Eastern European Jews*