

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE



People
and the
Planet

Lessons for a Sustainable Future

INTRODUCTION

Population pressures throughout the world encourage **migration**, the movement of people from one place to another. While most people might prefer to stay in their homeland, they often feel compelled to leave in search of a better quality of life somewhere else. It could be that certain things are “pushing” them to leave, or, that certain things are “pulling” them to a new location.

The push and pull factors of migration vary from place to place and some have changed over time. Push factors may include economic hardship, social or cultural discomfort (from exclusion or hatred), violence, an unhealthy environment, or a harsh climate. Pull factors may include economic opportunities, security, social or cultural comfort (by inclusion or caring communities), cultural amenities, access to resources, or a cleaner environment.

Humans have a long history of migration, and it continues today. This move can be a challenging undertaking. It might be a dangerous journey for some. Migrants might arrive in a new country only to find that they do not speak the language, aren't familiar with the cultural norms, or have difficulty accessing the things that pulled them there in the first place.

MATERIALS

- Intro Probe (provided)
- About 150 pieces of individually wrapped candy
- Masking tape
- Items to serve as push/pull factors if using the alternate procedures
- Printable world map

CONCEPTS

People throughout the world migrate to improve their quality of life.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Identify and interpret push and pull factors of migration.
- Describe possible positive and negative consequences on the origin country and destination country as a result of migration.
- Evaluate the simulation as a model for migration and identify limitations.
- Determine similarities and differences between two real-world migrations through research.

SUBJECTS

Social Studies (geography)

SKILLS

Observing, critical thinking, comparing and evaluating, researching, mapping

METHOD

Students participate in a “push/pull” simulation to identify reasons people migrate from one place to another and analyze the similarities and differences between two real-world migrations.

PART 1: THE PUSHES & PULLS OF MIGRATION PROCEDURE

1. Before class, set up for the simulation by dividing the classroom into two distinct areas, labeling one side GREEN and the other YELLOW. You may want to put masking tape down to provide a visual division. You could also add green and yellow balloons, streamers, construction paper, or any other green/yellow objects to the two areas to make the distinction clear.
2. Distribute a copy of the Intro Probe, "Why do people move from one country to another?" to each student and provide a few minutes for them to complete the checklist.
3. Ask half of the students to step into the green side, and half into the yellow side. Then explain the following rules:

"This line is the boundary defining the GREEN section and the YELLOW section. One by one, I am going to distribute candy to students in the green section. Eventually you may eat your candy, but please refrain from doing so until I say it is time. If any person is caught grabbing pieces from another person or throwing the pieces, they will face a penalty. Any student may choose not to accept their allocated candy. Of course, general respect is expected from everyone."

4. Circulate around the green section and distribute candies one at a time. Be clear that you will not give candy to anyone in the yellow section. The object is to communicate that they are receiving candy based not on who they are, but where they are.

There may be questions or objections to the procedure. If needed, calmly explain that the *nature of the activity is to distribute the items unevenly*. People in the green section receive candy; people in the yellow do not.

If students on the yellow side ask for candy, tell them that you cannot give them any because they are not on the green side. Do not discourage students from sharing across the border, as long as they do not throw the candy. Also do not discourage students from moving across the border. Distribute candy to any student who moves to the green side once they have settled in a fixed spot.

The expected result is that, by the end of the activity, some students will have moved from the yellow side to the green side.

5. Transition to the Discussion Questions. Then have each student revisit their Probe and make changes to their initial selections based on what they've learned. For any changes, ask them to write 1-2 sentences on how their thinking has changed.

Note: The answers to the Bonus Questions on the probe are **immigration** and **emigration**



ALTERNATE PROCEDURES

The basic procedure above only includes candy, a resource, as a pull factor. It also assumes that everyone in a particular area receives that resource. To expand the simulation, you may choose to incorporate any/all of the following:

If you want students to consider...

1. Resources aren't the only reason people migrate.
 - a. Require students in the yellow section to do jumping jacks (harsh conditions).
2. Just because a destination country has resources, doesn't mean newly arrived people will be able to access those resources.
 - a. New people to the green section won't immediately receive candy. Have a jar with 20 poker chips – 4 blue and 16 white. When a student enters the green section, they pick a chip (with closed eyes) and only receive a piece of candy if the chip is blue.
3. There are many destination options, each with unique qualities.
 - a. Divide the room into three or four sections with different push/pull factors in each.

Green section	Students starting in this section receive candy. New students that move in draw a poker chip (per the rule above) as a determinant of receiving candy.
Yellow section	Students must do jumping jacks while in the section.
Blue section	All students in the section get candy but they all must abide by a list of strict rules. (Sample rules: cannot make eye contact, can only use their left hand to eat their candy, etc.)
Pink section	Put something in the section that makes it unpleasant such as open bottles of vinegar or cut raw onions (deteriorating environment).

4. Migrating from one country to another is not always easy.
 - a. Make it difficult for students to move between sections. For instance, line up chairs between the regions or corner regions off with yarn boundaries they must pass over/under. You might then require students to hop from section to the other. Or, you could only allow students a set amount of time or steps to move between sections.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think this simulation was designed to demonstrate?

People migrating from one country to a different country and the reasons for their migration.

2. In the real world, what do the different sections represent?

Different countries.

3. In the real world, what might the pieces of candy represent?

A desired resource that draws (or pulls) people to a country.

4. What are possible consequences to a country when many people are moving out of it?

Negative consequences could include the loss of people with specific skills and education, sometimes called a "brain drain," who serve important roles in society (e.g. physicians, scientists, teachers/professors, government administrators). There could also be the loss of "front-line workers" who grow and harvest food, manufacture and transport goods, care for children and the elderly, and support societies in innumerable ways. The country might also face fewer taxpayers to support community services. However, a smaller population may be able to manage resources more sustainably, alleviate unemployment, and increase the incomes of remaining workers. Emigres often send money home, improving their families' standards of living and helping the economy of the countries they've left.

5. What are possible consequences to a country when many people are moving into it?

Negative consequences could include misunderstandings between the people already in the country and newcomers, due to language and cultural differences. It could also mean more competition for limited resources such as specific jobs. A large influx of people can also create crowding and congestion in neighborhoods and schools and the need for greater social programs and infrastructure (language classes, job training, etc.) to assimilate people coming from other places. Positive consequences could include people bringing needed job skills and expertise to their destination country, cultural diversity, greater variety of small businesses (restaurants, shops), and more consumers and taxpayers to help the economy.

6. Resources are one reason people move between countries. What else might make people want to move from one country to another? (If you included any alternate procedures, ask students to think about the other items and actions within each section and what they might represent.)

People might choose to migrate because of harsh conditions (jumping jacks) ranging from crime or gang violence, war, poor schools, little access to health care, or a poor standard of living; a deteriorating natural environment (onions, vinegar) such as polluted air or water, or a lack of arable land; the absence of personal rights or freedoms (abiding by list of rules); religious persecution; or job shortages at home. Other reasons could be the promise of job opportunities, the promise of wealth, to be closer to family members who have already moved, or a safe environment in the new location.

7. A "push factor" is something that makes a person want to leave a country. Which of the answers from question #6 are push factors?

Push factors are any of the negatives in the origin country; things that are pushing people out.

8. A "pull factor" is something that makes a person want to live in a new country. It pulls them into the country. Which of the answers from question #6 are pull factors?

Pull factors are any of the positives in the destination; things that are pulling people in.

9. What challenges might people face when moving from one country to another? (You can reference the physical obstacle from the simulation if you included that alternate.)

The journey from one country to another might be dangerous or with very harsh conditions, especially if the people are trying to get into a location without permission/legal status. But even with an easy journey, it might not be easy to adjust to the new country if someone does not speak the language, isn't familiar with social norms, if job qualifications don't transfer, etc.

10. How well did this simulation serve as a model for migration? Are there limitations to this model? Explain your answers.

Answers will vary. Students may mention that there are additional factors which impact migration that are not illustrated with this model (e.g. family or loved ones being in an area) or that having the desire to migrate somewhere else doesn't necessarily mean you will be able to (e.g. there may be restrictions, you may not be able to make the journey).

11. Some of the push factors of migration are related to "population pressures." What do you think this term means and how is it related to migration?

The term refers to any pressures (typically negative) that are exacerbated by an increasing population. These might include crowding, high unemployment, civil unrest, and inadequate resources to meet people's basic needs.

PART 2: STORIES OF MIGRATION

PROCEDURE

1. Instruct students to complete a mini-research project to compare and contrast two different human migrations happening currently or sometime in the past (as noted). They should pay specific attention to the push and pull factors at play in each case. Some possible migrations include:

- Mexico to the U.S.
- Bangladesh to India
- Syria to Europe
- Eastern European Jews to the U.S. in the early 20th century
- Libya to Europe
- China to Hong Kong
- Ireland to the U.S. and Canada in the 19th century

2. Focusing on the two migrations they researched, have your students do one of the following:

- a. Write a three-paragraph paper on the two migrations. Use the following questions to provide focus and structure:

Paragraph 1: For each migration case, what country did people migrate from, what country was their destination, and when did the migration happen?

Paragraph 2: What push/pull factors did the two migrations have in common?

Paragraph 3: What unique push/pull factors were at play in each migration?

b. Create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the two migrations. Students should be sure to include: origin countries, destination countries, dates of the migration, push factors, and pull factors.

3. Provide a world map to each student and instruct them to:
 - a. Color and label the origin countries in blue.
 - b. Color and label the destination countries in orange.
 - c. Draw an arrow from each origin country to the appropriate destination country!

You can find blank, political world maps here: <https://www.outline-world-map.com/political-white-world-map-b6a>

ASSESSMENT

Students complete an exit ticket where they write the following:

1. two push factors of migration
2. two pull factors of migration
3. one question you still have about migration

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Have students interview someone who moved from another state or country. Explore that person's reasons for moving. Where are family members now? What was good about the move? What was most difficult? How does that person view migration?
2. Invite a few guests into the classroom who can tell their migration stories, discuss their views and field questions from students.
3. Share personal stories from people who have migrated. There are several resources online offering personal migration stories. Two websites are:
 - [Meet Young Immigrants](#), from Scholastic. Students can read short first-person stories of children who have moved to the U.S. from other countries. Vandi and Gabriella are both middle school students.
 - [Five migrant stories from Greece: The pull of Europe](#), from the BBC. These videos are of adults and many left their home countries because of war or violence.

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

INTRO PROBE

Name: _____ Date: _____

Consider the question: **Why do people move from one country to another?** Put a check mark next to the items below that you think would cause a person to move from their home country to a different country.

_____ Home country has polluted water

_____ Destination country is prone to hurricanes

_____ Home country doesn't have the latest fashions

_____ Destination country has better schools

_____ Family/friends are located in the destination country

_____ Home country's government is changing

_____ Destination country has more individual freedoms

_____ Photos of the destination country in a magazine show a fun place to visit

_____ Home country has increasing job opportunities

_____ Home country has been experiencing increased violence in recent years

What is the term for people moving from one location to another? _____

BONUS

What is the term for people moving into a country?

What is the term for people moving out of a country?
