

**Student Activity 5**  
**What is Online Civil Discussion?**

**Discussion Starters**  
**Coming to America: Immigration, Law, & American Identity**

**Please Note:** The way we discuss the issue of immigration that occurs through extra-legal channels with students may affect or influence their responses to our topic. We will want to be sensitive to language and perhaps explore the power of language to convey subliminal messages in policy debates throughout the summit. The discussion starters below use the term “illegal immigrants.” Some scholars and legal experts insist on using the term “undocumented immigrants,” arguing that the terms “illegal” is prejudicial. In your class discussion, you may want to ask students if they believe they would have answered the questions differently if different terms had been used. You may want to use different terms (extra legal channels, bypassing legal channels, undocumented immigrant, and so on). Perhaps brainstorm a list of word choices with students and discuss students’ associations or assumptions that they bring to their understanding of a topic with particular word choices. Modify the survey if you wish.

**Discussion Starters:**

**Legal immigration should be increased.**

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Why or why not? (Remember to explain why.)

**Illegal immigrants hurt American workers.**

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Why or why not? (Remember to explain why.)

**There is far more illegal than legal immigration into the United States.**

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Why or why not? (Remember to explain why.)

**Every immigrant coming into the United States should show a proficiency in English.**

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Why or why not? (Remember to explain why.)

**Illegal immigrants take jobs others do not want for pay others will not take.**

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Why or why not? (Remember to explain why.)

**Immigrants should be encouraged to become United States citizens.**

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Why or why not? (Remember to explain why.)

**We need better security at U.S. borders to deter illegal immigration.**

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Why or why not? (Remember to explain why.)

**Illegal immigrants and their families should not be able to attend public schools at the expense of U.S. taxpayers.**

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Why or why not? (Remember to explain why.)

**Illegal immigrants forfeit their rights to “life, liberty & the pursuit of happiness” because they are not complying with the federal laws that guarantee those rights.**

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Why or why not? (Remember to explain why.)

**Employers should be penalized for hiring illegal immigrants.**

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Why or why not? (Remember to explain why.)

**All illegal immigrants currently in the United States should be allowed to apply for legal residency.**

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Why or why not? (Remember to explain why.)

**Illegal immigration is a very big problem for this country.**

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Why or why not? (Remember to explain why.)

**Children born in the U.S. whose parents are illegal immigrants should not automatically be granted U.S. citizenship.**

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Why or why not? (Remember to explain why.)

**Landlords should be punished for renting to illegal immigrants.**

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Why or why not? (Remember to explain why.)

**Illegal immigrants should be allowed to obtain drivers' licenses.**

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Why or why not? (Remember to explain why.)

**Immigrants should have access to basic healthcare—even if they are here illegally.**

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Why or why not? (Remember to explain why.)