

# **“The Book of Unknown Americans” Lesson Plan**

## **Overview & Purpose**

To draw connections with students through the characters and storyline of “The Book of Unknown Americans.” As well as, to bring relevance to real-life events that happen daily in everyday life.

## **Common Core Standards**

### 9th & 10th Grades

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3  
Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3  
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using an effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6

Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

## **Objectives**

1. Students will be able to analyze current events related to immigration
2. Students will be able to identify the significance of setting
3. Students will be able to write their own cultural narratives
4. Students will be able to draw connections between characters

## **Activities & Tasks**

- Creating character maps/family trees - to add an aspect of technology, have your students create their family tree in excel. Alternatively, they could make a poster or a drawing.
- Researching about the countries the families originate from.
  - Have the students research the culture, the food, music, traditions, as well as the events taking place in each country at the time of the novel.
- “I am from” poems/positive identity activities
- Photo project: images from the border/relating them to the novel
- Class discussions/ small group workshops → “jigsaw” groups

## **Summarizing Strategy (Closure)**

Discussion about how the situations of all the characters impacted the way the story played out. See the link in “additional resources” to some discussion questions.

## **Teaching Strategies**

- Engage students in question and answer
- Provide opportunities for exploration
- Provide opportunities for discussion

## **Resources & Materials**

“The Book of Unknown Americans”

## **Relevance**

- Students will discuss why immigration stories matter, along with the obstacles that many immigrants are facing as a result of the border crisis and the White House administration. Students will use characters/events from the novel to compare/contrast
- Students will be able to identify the settings in the novel and what role each place plays in furthering the plot (e.g. Mexico, the apartment complex, school, the car, etc.) Students will also learn about the geography of Delaware and how it contributes to the socioeconomic factors mentioned in the novel. Each town has sections that are “designated” to certain groups of people. Students will explore and discuss how this impacts their lives and the lives of others in different socioeconomic classes, cultures, immigration statuses, etc.
- Students will be able to construct their own cultural narratives. This is relevant because all students have backstories (even if they don’t know exactly where they’re from, they come from somewhere outside of school - this could be a community, culture, religion, family history, etc.)