Argument   Rhet Dragons Student Writing Samples

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The Case for Less Immigration Restrictions in the United States (2019-2020)

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Recommended Citation

"The Case for Less Immigration Restrictions in the United States," Elle O'Leary Kelleher (argument example)

Questions to Consider For Discussion and Reflection

As you read Kelleher's "The Case for Less Immigration Restrictions in the United States", you may want to consider the following:

- The introduction of Kelleher's essay characterizes two perspectives on the issue of immigration. How does Kelleher's use of historical ideas, anxieties, and national attitudes give her audience different ways to consider the issue of immigration, and how do these ways help her essay achieve its purpose as the essay proceeds?
- Does the essay respectfully present the counterargument? And does the presentation of the counterargument ultimately make the essay more persuasive?
- This essay's body paragraphs present aspects of immigrants (their relationship to the economy, their representation in popular culture, their involvement in criminal activity) and then juxtapose those aspects with evidence from both popular culture and academic sources. Do these body paragraphs sufficiently address the counterargument the introduction presents? Does Kelleher place the evidence into the context of her own argument effectively?
- The conclusion of Kelleher's essay returns to the relationship between America and immigrants by mentioning how "Immigrants represent many anxieties in the American subconscious" but then describing what "the immigrant really embodies". Does this conclusion make a stronger or weaker claim than the thesis statement in the introduction?
- Does the conclusion explicitly identify or merely imply a connection between the introduction's assertion that America is "historically a land of immigrants" and its claim that "the immigrant embodies many typical 'American values'"? Do you think the strategy the writer uses creates the best, most convincing effect?

The Case for Less Immigration Restrictions in the United States by Elle O'Leary Kelleher

Mass migrations of people into the United States of America is not a modern phenomenon. The United States as we know it is a country built on the backs of immigrants; whether those were colonisers coming from the Old World in search of new wealth or starving refugees looking for a new life in the land of freedom and opportunity, America has historically been a land of immigrants. However, modern political discourse has brought the issue of immigration to the forefront of the American cultural zeitgeist. Images of the immigrant as a bogeyman, bringing with him terrorism, drugs and a drain on the American social welfare system permeates American mass media, spurred on by an aggressively anti-monocultural strain that exists in American entertainment and informational broadcasting. The current president of the United States was largely elected because of his tough anti-immigrant stance. It would appear as though

the American tolerance for immigrants is at an all-time low. In this essay, I will be arguing against this "build a wall" mentality, and putting forward the case in favour of having lower restrictions on immigration to America. I will be arguing that the benefits of immigrants to the economy and society of the receiving country far outweigh the disadvantages, using academic surveys conducted in both the U.S and Europe. Over the course of this essay, I will be using the Merriam-Webster definition of immigrant as "a person who comes to a country to take up permanent residence". Refugees, while not the central focus of this essay, will be referenced, and I will be using the United Nations High Commission for Refugees definition of a refugee as "someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence."

Immigrants fuel innovation and entrepreneurship. They begin, for the most part, as outsiders who have to learn to quickly adapt to an entirely new culture. Facing hardships causes them to develop the calculated risk-taking skills we associate with successful business owners, and this is backed up with evidence. "The Kaufman Index of Entrepreneurship" found that in 2016 in the U.S, almost 30% of entrepreneurs were immigrants. The Index also reported that immigrants were twice as likely to set up their own businesses than native-born Americans. In 2016, 40.2% of all Fortune 500 companies had at least one founder who was an immigrant, or born to immigrants. This entrepreneurship should lead anyone who analyses the evidence to believe that immigrants actually provide a large boost to the economy by producing goods and creating job opportunities. One of the greatest arguments against immigration to the U.S, however, rests on the opposite of this sentiment being true.

Donald Trump's adamant stance on keeping immigration rates to the United States low comes from, he says, a desire to protect American jobs and taxpayers. Although some, like the Trump Administration, argue that immigration reduces job opportunities for Americans, and puts a burden on the U.S taxpayer who now has to pay for social assistance, this claim is questionable at best. "Productive or Counter-Productive? European Labor Market Institutions and the Effect of Immigrants on EU Natives", a paper researched by Joshua Angrist and Adriana Kugler, both professors of economics, for the National Bureau of Economic Research, studied the effects of immigrant flow, including refugee resettlement, on the employment of "natives" in western Europe, and it found that the displacement affect, if it even effects natives at all, is barely negligible. The paper found that, for the most part, when immigrants are looking for work, they're mostly competing with other immigrants for jobs in areas which are experiencing growth, or jobs in the primary and tertiary economic system. While some might fear that this would have a negative impact on job opportunities and wages for unskilled American workers, research actually suggests the opposite. "The Elusive Search for Negative Wage Impacts of Immigration", a research paper by Canadian professor of economics David Card argues that American wages have stagnated because of changes in technology and industrial institutions, as opposed to immigration, with the "effect on average wages is approximately zero" (Card 211). Why then, is the American public not outraged at the idea of new technology in the workplace, or industrial changes?

A stereotype permeates in American media of the immigrant as a criminal. Since James Cagney played an Irish-American gangster in "The Public Enemy" in 1931, right up to the way in which Latina women are depicted as particularly dangerous in Netflix original "Orange is the New Black", which debuted as recently as 2013, and has generated controversy for its negative portrayal of Dominican culture, the American public has consistently been led to believe that

whatever culture the majority of immigrants into America are coming from is brutal and prone to crime. "Immigration and Crime", an article by Hastings H. Hart which was published in the American Journal of Sociology, dispels this myth repeatedly throughout history. It has been a longstanding myth, unsupported by facts. It wasn't true then, and it isn't true now.

In fact, the relationship between immigration and crime is actually yet another benefit to the receiving country. Recent studies have actually found that legal immigrants and their offspring are statistically less likely to commit violent crime than their native counterparts. An article titled "Urban Crime Rates and the Changing Face of Immigration: Evidence Across Four Decades", published in the Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice, compared the immigration rates and crime rates across 200 urban areas over several decades. The study found that most of these areas experienced a drop in their crime at an almost equal ratio to a rise in the number of immigrants, with almost 70% of these areas seeing a drop in crime. Immigrants are also significantly less likely to commit violent crime – rape, battery and assault – than their indigenous peers. Skeptics may argue that these statistics only account for legal immigrants in the U.S, and it is extremely difficult to find statistics relating to illegal immigrants and crime that aren't tainted by political ideology, both in favour of and against illegal immigrants being more likely to commit crime. The American public is at risk from violence and violent individuals, regardless of whether they were born in or outside of America. There is no extra risk associated with someone being born outside of America.

Immigrants represent many anxieties in the American subconscious; a loss of patriotic identity, a weakening of national sovereignty and fears surrounding terror and crime. However, in a sense, the immigrant really embodies many typical "American values"; hardworking, ambitious people willing to take risks in order to secure self-determination, and for these reasons, the benefits of immigration far outweigh any perceived negative factors.

<div align="center">Works Cited</div>

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Hart, Hastings. H. "Immigration and Crime", *The American Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 2, January 1896, Pages 369-377.

Orange is the New Black. Written by Lauren Morelli. 2013. *Netflix.*

The Public Enemy. Directed by William A. Wellman. Warner Brothers. 1931.