

The  
Dream  
is NOW

# Facilitator Guide

*The Dream is Now*

*The Dream Is Now* is an effort of concerned citizens who believe we need to fix America's broken immigration system, giving undocumented youth and their families the chance to earn their citizenship. We support common sense immigration reform that includes the principles of the DREAM Act. Learn more at [www.thedreamisnow.org](http://www.thedreamisnow.org).

common sense<sup>®</sup>  
media

Common Sense Media is dedicated to improving the lives of kids and families by providing the trustworthy information, education, and independent voice they need to thrive in a world of media and technology. Visit us at [www.common sense.org](http://www.common sense.org).

# Dear Educators:

These materials are designed to encourage a dialogue between your students about the *The Dream Is Now*, a 30-minute documentary film directed by Davis Guggenheim (*An Inconvenient Truth*, *Waiting for "Superman"*). *The Dream Is Now* tells the stories of young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children and highlights the challenges they face as a result of their immigration status. These personal narratives are interwoven with the story of the movement to reform America's immigration laws through both passage of the DREAM Act and broader reform measures.



Included in this Facilitator Guide:

- **Discussion Questions & Student Handout** – Use this resource to walk students through the half-hour documentary, pausing to ask questions and reflect on the film's messages.
- **The Road to Immigration Reform: A Timeline** – Hand out copies of the timeline to give students a historical context for immigration reform in the United States.
- **What's Your Story?** – Distribute the culminating activity handout to give students an opportunity to tell their own personal story or to add their voice to the issue.
- **Core Curricular Ties for Teachers** – Refer to these subject-specific tips for aligning the issue of immigration reform to your classroom's specific subject area.



## Common Sense Media says

Strong, emotional documentary supports immigration reform.

AGE 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 17 ?

QUALITY ★★★★★ ?

Find out more from Common Sense Media about *The Dream Is Now*: <http://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/the-dream-is-now>

# Discussion Questions

## Preparing for the viewing:

- Preview the documentary in its entirety. Make sure to optimize your Internet browser for embedded YouTube streaming: [www.thedreamisnow.org/documentary](http://www.thedreamisnow.org/documentary)
- Note where each of the three suggested sections outlined in these discussion questions end (12:41, 22:54, 29:22), and prepare to pause at these points in the documentary. Consider using some of these suggested editing tools, which allow you to mark certain points in videos: [www.freetech4teachers.com/2011/09/12-useful-youtube-accessories-for.html#.UL-ghqXqd8x](http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2011/09/12-useful-youtube-accessories-for.html#.UL-ghqXqd8x)
- Review the discussion questions and possible responses, modifying as needed.

## Before viewing the film:

- Distribute copies of the **Road to Immigration Reform: A Timeline** so that students have some historical context to reference during the film.
- Establish ground rules for a respectful and meaningful dialogue. Your goal is to create a safe space for conversation. (What boundaries can we set for ourselves so that everyone feels like they can share their perspective honestly and openly? What can we do to make sure that everyone feels comfortable participating?)
- Consider emphasizing the different support systems and counseling resources available at your school or institution.

## During the viewing and discussion:

- Have students take notes during the film as needed, using the **Student Graphic Organizer**. Alternatively, you may conclude each film segment with a brief written reflection time to help students gather their thoughts.
- At the end of each section, use the following discussion questions to facilitate a classroom discussion.
- Try to equalize participation in the discussion as much as possible, and reiterate ground rules as needed.

## After the viewing:

- Distribute the **What's Your Story?** handout. Students are encouraged to share their stories on [www.thedreamisnow.org/stories](http://www.thedreamisnow.org/stories).
- Consider using the **Core Curricular Tips for Teachers** to follow up on the conversation in subject-specific classrooms.



**This film raises issues that may strike a chord with students in different ways, and we encourage you to acknowledge the film's politically controversial content before screening it. All points of view, respectfully presented, are welcome and encouraged. The personal stories shared in the film – including one about a teen suicide – may be tough for sensitive viewers to handle. Do keep an eye out for students who are having a difficult time with the subject matter, and follow up with them privately to provide your support.**

At the end of each section, use the discussion questions below to facilitate a classroom conversation.

## Section 1

**Start time: 00:00**

**End time: 12:41** (Ends with Glenn Beck saying, "It's legislation that would have allowed millions of illegal immigrants to get away with staying here in the United States legally. We the people said, uh I believe it was, 'No way, Jose!'")

Key vocabulary

- **citizen:** a member of a government-led community who has rights and responsibilities
- **amnesty:** a pardon, or act of forgiveness, for past offenses, especially to a class of persons as a whole
- **undocumented:** not having the documents necessary to legally live or work in a foreign country
- **Social Security number:** a 9-digit number given to a United States citizen that is unique to him or her; is often used for tax, employee, patient, student, and credit records

### Questions

What is the DREAM Act? What would it offer? To whom does it apply?

### Possible Discussion Points

*Guide students to understand that the DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) would offer a path to American citizenship for undocumented immigrant youth via higher education or military participation. The DREAM Act was a stand-alone piece of legislation for many years, but it's now part of a broader bill to reform our immigration system.*

Source: [www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/DREAM-Act-WhiteHouse-FactSheet.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/DREAM-Act-WhiteHouse-FactSheet.pdf)

This film features four young adults: Ola, Erika, Alejandro, and Jose. What do we know about them so far? What are their stories?

***Ola:** When Ola was 5 years old, her family emigrated from Albania, seeking political asylum. Her mother started and runs her own bakery in Michigan. Ola dreams of attending the University of Michigan so that one day she can go to medical school and become a surgical oncologist. She and her family were living in the United States legally, but due to a clerical error, they lost their status. While their case was being appealed they had to check in with immigration every six months.*

***Erika:** Erika came to the United States from Mexico when she was 11 years old. She was secretary of the Achiever's Club in high school and graduated at the top of her class. She received an academic scholarship to attend Arizona State University. But she lost the scholarship while attending ASU due to the passing of Proposition 300 (see below). She became actively involved in grassroots efforts to pass the DREAM Act.*

***Alejandro:** Alejandro attended a public high school in Chicago that was founded on the principles of the Marine Corps. He participated in a very successful drill team and dreams of becoming a Marine. He was named City Corps Staff Commander for the entire city of Chicago, chosen out of 11,000 students citywide. When he was a sophomore in high school, Alejandro realized that he would not be able to enlist in the military after graduation. He was taking Driver's Ed and realized that if he couldn't even get a State ID, he wouldn't be able to join the Marines, either.*

***Jose:** Jose was a top math scholar, attended Arizona State University on a full scholarship, and graduated in 2011. Even though there was a shortage of engineers in the state of Arizona when he graduated, he couldn't apply for the same jobs his classmates were seeking because he was undocumented. Now he works in construction and can't help but wonder whether he's wasting his degree.*

## Questions

## Possible Discussion Points

The documentary mentioned the passing of Proposition 300 in Arizona. What effect does this proposition have on undocumented college students in Arizona?

*Prop 300 requires undocumented university students in Arizona to pay out-of-state tuition rates. It also bars such students from state aid. Many undocumented students, like Erika, were placed in financial jeopardy when this bill passed; they no longer could afford to go to college.*

One argument in favor of the DREAM Act is that it would expand the number of youth eligible for military service. What do you think about this argument?

*Sample student responses:*

- *The military is missing out on very talented members who are willing and able to serve.*
- *I think it's unfair that people like Alejandro aren't able to enlist. He was named City Corps Staff Commander for the city of Chicago, and he can't even join the Marine Corps.*
- *I would worry that some young people would enlist just so they could become a citizen, putting their life at risk.*

The DREAM Act was put up for a vote in 2010. What ended up happening?

*The House of Representatives voted to pass the bill. But it stopped short in the Senate, receiving 54 of the 60 votes needed to become law.*

Why was it so bold for young undocumented Dreamers to declare their status and identify themselves publicly in support of the act?

*They or their family members could face deportation.*

What might be at stake if young people begin to doubt that working hard and playing by the rules will actually pay off?

*Sample student responses:*

- *Kids may not work as hard in school because they don't see a point.*
- *Young people's emotional well-being may be at stake. It can be stressful and upsetting to work hard and not see any results.*
- *If people don't trust that rules are there for a reason – and expect people to follow them – then a lot of political, economic, and social issues could arise.*
- *Younger generations may start to resent older generations.*

## Section 2

**Start time: 12:41**

**End time: 22:54** (Ends with the narrator, Guggenheim, saying, “But this ‘other’ has become us. And they’ve always made us better.”)

Key vocabulary

- **presidential memorandum:** a type of order issued by the president of the United States to manage and govern the actions, practices, and policies of the executive branch
- **DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals):** a presidential memorandum, signed in 2012, that directed the federal government to focus its immigration enforcement efforts on criminals and other high-risk immigrants. DACA allows the government to defer for two years the removal action (deportation) of certain people who came to the United States as children.
- **deportation:** the expulsion or formal removal of a person(s) from a country

### Questions

Though the DREAM Act didn’t pass in Congress in 2011, President Obama was able to enforce the DACA memorandum. What was it? How did the memorandum come about?

### Notes/Response

*Dreamers and attorneys worked together to make a case for deferred action after the DREAM Act failed to pass in Congress. While the president of the United States does not have legal authority to grant lawful status, he can grant what’s known as “deferred action.” The DACA — or the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals — memorandum gives Dreamers who qualify temporary protection from deportation.*

Source: [www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.eb1d4c2a3e5b9ac89243c6a7543f6d1a/?vgnnextoid=f2ef2f19470f7310VgnVCM10000082ca60aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=f2ef2f19470f7310VgnVCM10000082ca60aRCRD](http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.eb1d4c2a3e5b9ac89243c6a7543f6d1a/?vgnnextoid=f2ef2f19470f7310VgnVCM10000082ca60aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=f2ef2f19470f7310VgnVCM10000082ca60aRCRD)

Why did the political landscape seem to shift in favor of immigration reform after President Obama’s re-election?

*When the Latino vote proved decisive in President Obama’s reelection, the political landscape began to shift. Representatives from both parties began to support immigration reform.*

Some people are in favor of the DREAM Act for economic reasons. What reasons did the documentary point out? How would you support or rebut these reasons?

*According to the documentary, the DREAM Act would add \$329 billion to our economy in additional taxes and spending. Proponents argue that the bill would add more than 1 million jobs to America’s economy. Some critics worry that passing the DREAM Act will increase job competition for unemployed, native United States workers.*

Source: Center for American Progress

What do you think of this quote by the film’s narrator?

“Pick a moment in history, and you can always find an ‘invading race’ — the Chinese, the Jews, the Irish, the Italians ... there was always a new ‘other’ we were told to fear. And consistent throughout the struggle is a battle between our very worst instincts and our very best. But this ‘other’ has become us. And they’ve always made us better.”

*Sample student responses:*

- *America’s not a melting pot — it’s more like a salad bowl or mosaic. Its diversity defines it.*
- *I think that the past can and should help inform the way we approach issues today.*
- *I think that it’s easier to critique historical events than it is for us to evaluate current-day issues with the same level of insight.*
- *I like the line about the struggle between our very worst and best instincts. Is this just about fearing the unknown? About protecting what’s familiar?*
- *I believe we should help immigrants learn English and become more “Americanized.”*

## Section 3

**Start time: 22:54**

**End time: 29:22** (Ends with the narrator, Guggenheim, saying, “Join us. Let’s write their ending together. Sign the petition. Let’s fix our broken immigration system. The dreamisnow.org.”)

Key vocabulary

- **social media:** forms of online communication that allow users to participate in online communities and share information, ideas, messages, and other media content
- **mobilize:** to bring people together to take action or for a political objective

### Questions

### Notes/Response

What do you think would have happened if Erika hadn’t posted the YouTube video? Do you think that the bus would have returned with her mother?

*Without social media, it would have been very difficult for Erika to save her mother from being deported. Within hours of posting her YouTube video, thousands of people called immigration headquarters on Erika’s behalf to demand her mother’s release, and 18,000 people signed her petition. Without social media, she wouldn’t have been able to garner as much support in such a short period of time.*

What are the benefits of using social media to champion or support a cause? What are the drawbacks?

*Consider drawing or projecting a T-chart for students to see. Sample responses:*

*Benefits:*

- *Word can spread like wildfire online. You can reach far more people in just a short period of time.*
- *You can easily network with people who are also committed to the same cause.*
- *You can easily organize in-person events, like rallies or fundraisers, to help support your cause.*

*Drawbacks:*

- *People may be more likely to engage in “slacktivism” (feel-good Internet campaigns that have little actual impact) than true activism.*
- *You can open yourself to a lot of criticism and backlash. There are a lot of “haters” online.*
- *There’s always a chance that your cause won’t take off. It’s not easy to predict what will go viral online and when.*

What’s the status of the DREAM provisions right now? How is Congress currently addressing these issues?

*The Senate recently passed S. 744, a bipartisan immigration bill, that includes a path to citizenship for Dreamers and their families. In order for this bill to become law, the House of Representatives must pass a similar piece of legislation.*

What are your overall reactions to the documentary? Do you think it was effective at addressing the issue? If so, how? What did you like or not like?

*Answers will vary*

What is something that you learned from this film that you would like to share with others?

*Answers will vary*



# The Road to Immigration Reform

## A Timeline

### ● The Long Road to Immigration Reform

### ● The DREAM Act

#### ● 1986

Congress passes the last major overhaul of America's immigration laws, providing a path to legalization for approximately 3 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States. For the first time, it also becomes illegal to hire undocumented immigrants.

#### ● 1996

Congress makes it more difficult for undocumented immigrants to access any path to legal status by passing a law that, in addition to other restrictions, requires undocumented immigrants to leave the United States for up to 10 years before they can legally return to the United States.

#### ● 2001

The DREAM Act is first introduced to the Senate but dies quickly in committee and does not return to the floor for a vote.

#### ● 2002

The Department of Homeland Security is created, and billions of dollars are spent on border and airport security.

#### ● 2003

Senate Judiciary Committee approves the DREAM Act by a bipartisan vote of 16 to 3.

#### ● 2006

President George W. Bush calls for comprehensive immigration reform. The Senate passes a major overhaul of our immigration laws, which include the DREAM Act, by a vote of 62 to 36. The House of Representatives does not agree to the reforms.

#### ● 2007

The Senate tries again to pass a comprehensive immigration reform package that includes the DREAM Act provisions. The effort fails to make it out of the Senate. Despite majority support, the DREAM Act falls eight votes short of the 60 votes needed to stop the Senate filibuster of the bill.

#### ● 2009

The DREAM Act is reintroduced to both chambers of Congress.

#### ● 2010

The DREAM Act passes in the House of Representatives but falls short on the Senate floor – five votes shy from becoming a law.

#### ● 2012

Congress spends \$18 billion on immigration enforcement at the border and inside the United States.

#### ● 2012

The DACA memorandum is issued, giving Dreamers who qualify temporary protection from deportation.

#### ● ● 2013

Bipartisan Gang of Eight Senators introduces immigration reform bill S. 744, which includes the DREAM Act provisions and a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. The bill creates a long road to citizenship, in which undocumented immigrants would have to pay large fines and fees, pay any back taxes and be regularly employed for 10 years before they can get Lawful Permanent Resident status (green card). Students who came to the United States before the age of 16, graduated from high school, and completed two years of college would be able to get Lawful Permanent Resident (green card) status after five years. Those serving honorably in the military would be able to apply for citizenship after one year.

1990

2000

2010

For more information on immigration reform and the DREAM Act, visit: [www.thedreamisnow.org/about#faq](http://www.thedreamisnow.org/about#faq)



# Student Graphic Organizer

Use this table to keep track of your thoughts as you watch *The Dream Is Now*.

## Section 1

**Start time: 00:00**

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Key vocabulary

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Questions	Notes/Response
What is the DREAM Act? What would it offer? To whom does it apply?	
This film features four young adults: Ola, Erika, Alejandro, and Jose. What do we know about them thus far? What are their stories?	
The documentary mentioned the passing of Proposition 300 in Arizona. What effect does this proposition have on undocumented college students in Arizona?	
One argument in favor of the DREAM Act is that it would expand the number of youth eligible for military service. What do you think about this argument?	
The DREAM Act was put up for a vote in 2010. What ended up happening?	
Why was it so bold for young undocumented Dreamers to declare their status and identify themselves publicly in support of the act?	
What might be at stake if young people begin to doubt that working hard and playing by the rules will actually pay off?	

## Section 2

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What do you think of this quote by the film’s narrator?

*“Pick a moment in history and you can always find an ‘invading race’ – the Chinese, the Jews, the Irish, the Italians ... there was always a new ‘other’ we were told to fear. And consistent throughout the struggle is a battle between our very worst instincts and our very best. But this ‘other’ has become us. And they’ve always made us better.”*

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- **social media:** forms of online communication that allow users to participate in online communities and share information, ideas, messages, and other media content
- **mobilize:** to bring people together to take action or for a political objective

#### Questions

#### Notes/Response

What do you think would have happened if Erika hadn’t posted the YouTube video? Do you think that the bus would have returned with her mother?

What are the benefits of using social media to champion or support a cause? What are the drawbacks?

What is the status of the DREAM provisions right now? How is Congress currently addressing these issues?

What are your overall reactions to the documentary? Do you think it was effective at addressing the issue? If so, how? What did you like or not like?

What is something that you learned from this film that you would like to share with others?



# What's Your Story?

Dreamers and supporters across America are coming together to share pictures, videos, art, poems, and essays in response to *The Dream Is Now*. Will you join?

Visit [www.thedreamisnow/take-action](http://www.thedreamisnow/take-action) to share your own creative work.

Story Starters:

- What is your personal immigration story?
- What is your family's story about coming to America?
- What do you think about immigration reform?
- What did you think about *The Dream Is Now*?

For more inspiration, check out the dreams that others already have posted at [www.thedreamisnow.org/stories](http://www.thedreamisnow.org/stories).

Check out these FREE digital tools to produce your own original piece of media:

## Video editing:

- Animoto
- Masher

## Photo editing:

- Aviary
- Photobucket

## Multimedia tools:

- PowerPoint
- VoiceThread
- ExplainEverything
- Smilebox
- Make Belief Comix
- Prezi

# Core Curricular Ties for Teachers



Want to incorporate *The Dream Is Now* into your teaching plans? Use the activities below for inspiration.



## ENGLISH TEACHERS

**Explore an immigrant's dream.** Have students begin by reading Emma Lazarus' "The New Colossus." What language and imagery does she use to bring the Statue of Liberty to life? How does this poem portray the experience of arriving at Ellis Island as an immigrant in the late 19th century? Then read Langston Hughes' poem "Harlem," and have students compare the two. How does Hughes' figurative language evoke immigrants' unrealized hopes and dreams? How is this poem, if at all, still relevant to what today's Dreamers are facing?



## HISTORY TEACHERS

**Analyze the legislative process.** Have students watch *Schoolhouse Rock's* animated short, "How a Bill Becomes a Law" (found on *YouTube* and *SchoolTube*). Then have students create a graphic showing the traditional legislative process, using a free media creation tool like *Piktochart* ([www.picktochart.com](http://www.picktochart.com)). Using the Road to Immigration Reform: A Timeline, compare the DREAM Act's legislative journey to the typical course of a bill becoming a law.



## MATH TEACHERS

**Study the statistics.** Have students watch *Terence's Chalkboard Talk* (1:45 min), found on the documentary's site ([www.thedreamisnow.org/](http://www.thedreamisnow.org/) documentary). You may want to review the vocabulary terms found in the Discussion Guide and introduce the term "tax revenue": government income from taxation. Have students discuss the economic implications of allowing Dreamers to become American citizens. How might the proposed immigration reform bill affect potential tax revenue? How might our economy be affected if Dreamers are deported?



## SCIENCE TEACHERS

**Debate the STEM issue.** Have students read "America Desperately Needs More STEM Students. Here's How to Get Them" by Rodney C. Adkins (2012, *Forbes Magazine*), which argues that the United States has a shortage of STEM graduates and STEM-ready workers needed to fill the many jobs in this growing job sector. Compare this argument to Giovanni Peri's op-ed "The Economic Windfall of Immigration Reform," (2013, *The Wall Street Journal*), which claims that, despite the small number of STEM graduates, the availability of STEM jobs is overstated. Have students compose their own argument about whether or not there's a shortage of STEM candidates qualified for available jobs, citing evidence from these and other sources.