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# SHOULD THERE BE AMNESTY FOR UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS?

Word Generation - Unit 2.20

## Focus Words

amnesty | undocumented | orient | exclude | compound



## WEEKLY PASSAGE

From the time he came to the United States as a child, Marcos studied hard while his parents worked long hours. Now he is a top student in his high school class. But he may not be able to go to college because the government won't give him the same help it gives to other students. There are jobs that he will not be allowed to take, even though he could do the work. And he won't be allowed to get his driver's license. Marcos is an **undocumented** immigrant, someone who doesn't have papers that prove he has the right to live in America. The laws and programs that help many people in America **exclude** Marcos and his family.

Some people say Marcos' family broke the law when they entered the country. Therefore they should not have the rights of legal immigrants. Others say it's unfair that our laws exclude hardworking people. They think America is a place where everyone should have equal rights. Some want the government to give undocumented immigrants **amnesty**, so that they can become legal. The U.S. passed a law like this once before. It let immigrants who had been in America from 1982 to 1986 get legal documents. Many argue that the U.S. should pass a new amnesty law to help people like Marcos and his family.

Other people say there should not be amnesty for undocumented immigrants. They say we should **orient** our immigration laws toward protecting those who went through the proper channels, not those who "jumped the line." As it is, they say, we don't have enough jobs to go

around, or enough money to pay for everyone's education. Giving amnesty to undocumented immigrants will only **compound** the problem.

What do you say? Should there be amnesty for undocumented immigrants?

# Should there be amnesty for undocumented immigrants?

## FOCUS WORDS OF THE WEEK

**amnesty** : (noun) forgiveness

FORMS:

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EXAMPLES OF USE:

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NOTES:

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**undocumented** : (adjective) without legal papers

FORMS:

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EXAMPLES OF USE:

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NOTES:

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**orient** : (verb) to adjust, to align

FORMS:

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EXAMPLES OF USE:

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NOTES:

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**exclude** : (verb) to leave out

FORMS:

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EXAMPLES OF USE:

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NOTES:

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**compound** : (verb) to add to

FORMS:

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EXAMPLES OF USE:

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NOTES:

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# Should there be amnesty for undocumented immigrants?

## PROBLEM OF THE WEEK

Immigrants must adapt to a strange new culture. **Undocumented** immigrants face a **compound** problem: they must adapt without revealing that they entered the country illegally. This means that undocumented immigrants are **excluded** from opportunities that help other immigrants **orient** themselves in the United States. An **amnesty** could give back these opportunities. But how many undocumented immigrants are there?

**Option 1:** According to the Department of Homeland Security, the **undocumented** immigrant population was 11.6 million in 2008. It dropped to 10.8 million in 2009. What happened to the population of **undocumented** immigrants between 2008 and 2009?

- A) it decreased by about 4.3%
- B) it decreased by about 5.1%
- C) it decreased by about 6.8%
- D) it increased by about 7.9%

**Option 2:** In 2008, the number of **undocumented** Mexican immigrants in the U.S. was 6.65 million. The year before, in 2007, the number of **undocumented** Mexican immigrants had been 380,000 higher. Describe the decrease from 2007 to 2008 as a percentage.

**Math Discussion Question:** When asked to explain the decrease in **undocumented** immigrants in 2009, officials gave a **compound** answer. They said it was partly due to increased border security, and partly due to the slow U.S. economy. The slow economy caused many people, including immigrants, to lose their jobs. Some people want to keep lowering the number of **undocumented** immigrants by **excluding** them from the workforce. People who support this idea say that instead of considering **amnesty**, we should punish employers who hire **undocumented** workers. Is this a good solution? Why or why not?

# Should there be amnesty for undocumented immigrants?



## THINKING SCIENTIFICALLY

Mr. Seemy's class is debating immigration **amnesty**. Cesar and his family are **undocumented** immigrants. Cesar has the highest GPA in the class.

"I can't afford college," says Cesar. "College grants and loans are **oriented** toward American citizens. People like me get **excluded**. What kind of career can I have? I don't have papers. Having no college education will **compound** my problems. I'll probably get stuck in a low-paying job. With amnesty, I can get a better education and a better job."

"You're assuming an amnesty would lead to a better job," says Takemi. "You can't predict the future."

"We can't predict the future with certainty, but we *can* look at what happened in the past," says Mr. Seemy. "Let's investigate!"

→ Cesar and Takemi find the following study and share it with the class.

### Question:

Do immigration amnesties lead to better jobs for undocumented immigrants?

### Hypothesis:

The immigration amnesty of 1986 resulted in better jobs for at least 30% of undocumented immigrants.

### Subjects:

- ▶ 10 immigrants who became legal during the 1986 amnesty

### Procedure:

1. Interview subjects.
  - Ask about jobs held before the amnesty.
  - Ask about jobs held after the amnesty.
2. Analyze the subjects' answers to find out how many got better jobs after the amnesty, and how many maintained similar jobs despite the amnesty.

### Data:

	Got Better Jobs	Got Similar Jobs
After 1986 Amnesty	5	5

Is the hypothesis supported or not by the data?

Most people would say the sample size of this study is too small. Why?

How would you make this a better experiment?

# Should there be amnesty for undocumented immigrants?



## DEBATING THE ISSUE

### Get ready...

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

**A** Undocumented immigrants should not receive amnesty. They are here illegally and should be forced to leave.

**B** Immigrants should receive amnesty. They work hard for what they have and contribute to the U.S.

**C** Undocumented adults should be denied amnesty but those who were brought here before the age of 8 are not to blame and should receive amnesty.

**D** Undocumented immigrants do not deserve amnesty but they are crucial to the economy and should not be sent away.

**E** \_\_\_\_\_  
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### Get set...

Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:

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# GO!

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

*I believe that...*

*I agree with you, but...*

*You make a good point, but have you considered...*

*Can you show me evidence in the text that...*

