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| **COMING TO AMERICA** |

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| **QUIZ** |

<http://www.ellisisland.org/quizzes/quiz_a.asp>

Imagine you want to immigrate to the USA. Try to answer the following questions used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

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| |  | | --- | | **1. What ocean is on the West Coast of the U.S.?** | | Atlantic | | Pacific | | Indian | | Arctic | |
| http://www.ellisisland.org/images/c.gif |
| |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  | |  | | **2. What was the 50th state to be added to the United States?** | | Hawaii | | Alaska | | Delaware | | California | |  | |  | | http://www.ellisisland.org/images/c.gif | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | | http://www.ellisisland.org/images/c.gif | | **3. Why are there 100 Senators in the United States Senate?** | | Because the House of Lords on which the Senate is modeled has 100 members | | Because it must have half the number of the Representatives | | Each state elects 2 Senators | | Tradition | | http://www.ellisisland.org/images/c.gif | | **4. What are the colors of the American flag?** | | Red, white, and blue | | Red, white, and black | | Red and white | | Red and blue | | http://www.ellisisland.org/images/c.gif | | **5. Who has power to declare war?** | | Congress | | The President | | The Cabinet | | The Supreme Court | | http://www.ellisisland.org/images/c.gif | | **6. How many stars are there on the American flag?** | | 51 | | 52 | | 100 | | 50 | | http://www.ellisisland.org/images/c.gif | | **7. Who is the Vice President of the United States today?** | | Barack Obama | | Joe Biden | | Richard Cheney | | Al Gore | | http://www.ellisisland.org/images/c.gif | | **8. In what month is the new President inaugurated?** | | July | | November | | January | | June | | http://www.ellisisland.org/images/c.gif | | **9. What is the name of the ship that brought the Pilgrims to America?** | | The Santa Maria | | The Bill of Rights | | The Mayflower | | The Nina | | http://www.ellisisland.org/images/c.gif | | **10. What do we celebrate on the 4th of July?** | | Independence Day | | Veteran's Day | | Thanksgiving | | Washington's Birthday | | http://www.ellisisland.org/images/c.gif | | **11. What is the minimum voting age in the United States?** | | 21 | | 16 | | 35 | | 18 | | http://www.ellisisland.org/images/c.gif | | **12. Who was the first President of the United States?** | | Abraham Lincoln | | Thomas Jefferson | | George Washington | | Patrick Henry | | http://www.ellisisland.org/images/c.gif | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | | http://www.ellisisland.org/images/c.gif | | **13. Why did the Pilgrims come to America?** | | To gain religious freedom | | To escape the Revolutionary War | | In search of gold | | To meet the American Indians/Native Americans | | http://www.ellisisland.org/images/c.gif | | **14. What is the highest court in the United States?** | | The President | | The Congress | | District Court | | The Supreme Court | | http://www.ellisisland.org/images/c.gif | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | | http://www.ellisisland.org/images/c.gif | | **15. Independence Day celebrates independence from whom?** | | Great Britain | | France | | Spain | | Canada | |

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| **TEXTS** |

**Text 1: Guatemala: A Tale of Two Villages**  
*U.S. immigration raid leaves lasting mark*  
   
*By Greg Brosnan and Jennifer Szymaszek  
July 30, 2009*

1. **Reading**

 By the time Willian Toj reached El Rosario, news of his arrival had spread and most of the Guatemalan village had gathered to welcome him back in gloomy silence.

Friends and relatives comforted him as he returned to his shack with his family in tow. Like Toj, others from El Rosario had left the village to find work in the United States. Many were supporting entire families by wiring money home from one small town in the American Midwest. They too would soon be deported, penniless and laden with debt.

On May 12, 2008 U.S. Federal agents arrested nearly 400 undocumented workers in a raid on Agriprocessors Inc., the country's largest kosher meatpacking plant in Postville, a small farming town in northeastern Iowa.

It was one of the largest single roundups in U.S. immigration history and dramatic images flashed across the nation as workers were led out in chains. The plant's management was jailed on charges ranging from harboring illegal workers to bank fraud.

Meanwhile, up a winding dirt road in Guatemala, an economic disaster was unfolding.

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| http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/rough/roughimages/rc82_guat3_220x176.jpg |
| *Alejandra Zamora suffers from Alzheimer's. Her daughter Rosita stopped sending her money after she was arrested in the Postville raid. PHOTO: Jennifer Szymaszek*. |

More than 200 of those detained are thought to be from El Rosario and San Jose Calderas, two villages just a few minutes apart in Guatemala's poverty stricken western highlands. The money they were sending back to their relatives had mostly sustained both villages. Now these breadwinners were either in jail or under house arrest in Postville, and awaiting deportation.

The raid had severed an economic lifeline linking the heart of the United States to one of the poorest corners of the Western Hemisphere, with an impact that had far-reaching consequences.

But this is not just a story of the hardship felt in rural Guatemala. Postville itself also faced economic collapse after losing much of its population and its main employer in the raid -- all in the middle of the worst recession in decades.

The raid was carried out by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), a branch of [the Department of Homeland Security](http://www.dhs.gov/files/immigration.shtm).

Many [criticized the agency](http://blogs.usatoday.com/oped/2008/08/what-are-ice-ra.html) for how it handled the raid and the prosecutions that followed, and [questioned whether](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/13/opinion/13sun2.html) the government's detention and deportation policies were effective or humane. ICE responded that "While we understand that our actions have an impact on communities, the responsibility for any disruption lies squarely with the law violators," adding that it had been a highly successful raid "carried out exactly as planned."

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| *An abandoned trailer that used to house workers from the raided meatpacking plant on the edge of Postville* |

There was a Congressional review on the conduct of the Postville raid in July 2008.

When the administration changed hands, Homeland Security began reviewing all of its immigration and border security programs and policies, and has said that it would continue targeting criminal aliens and employers that flout the law. On the campaign trail Obama said that immigration sweeps were ineffective and placed all the burdens of a broken system onto immigrant families.

[Immigration policy](http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/immigration/) has been shifting more toward workplace enforcement and prosecuting those employing undocumented workers.

A month after the raid, my production partner Jennifer Szymaszek and I were in Postville, interviewing women fitted with immigration tracking anklets and facing deportation, amid the neatly trimmed lawns of small-town Iowa. They opened their doors and put us in touch with the families they had left behind. They were our connection to Guatemala, where we headed next.

We expected to find anxiety in the villages as a result of the raid, but were surprised by the extent of the impact -- in home after home we visited, people told us stories of personal tragedy and hardship stemming from the events of May 12.

But it was Toj's story that showed most acutely the risks and grim realities for illegal immigrants heading to America to work. The 30-year-old father of four had only been working at the Iowa meat plant 15 minutes when authorities arrested him. He owed $7,000 to smugglers who arranged his transit to the U.S. The chances of him paying the money back were slim and he was already in danger of losing his ramshackle home. He had hoped to send money back to treat his mother's cancer, but now he was powerless to help her.

**Video:** <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/rough/2009/07/guatemala_a_tal.html>

1. **Vocabulary**

Explain the following words/phrases in English

1. to welcome him back in gloomy silence:
2. he returned to his shack with his family in tow:
3. a kosher meatpacking plant:
4. one of the largest single roundups:
5. poverty stricken highlands:
6. to sever an economic lifeline:
7. the government’s detention policies:
8. the responsibility lies squarely with the law violators:
9. to flout the law:
10. immigration sweeps:
11. immigration tracking anklets:
12. to lose his ramshackle home:
13. **Comprehension**
14. Explain the title of the text.
15. What happened on May 12, 2008 in Postville?
16. Explain the situation of Willian Toj.
17. What are the consequences of the raid?
18. Which criticism was given to the ICE? How did the ICE react?

**Text 2: US work visa applications dry up**

*By Salim Rizvi   
New York*

1. **Reading**

**As an Indian American entrepreneur in Silicon Valley, Venkatesh Shukla has been hiring software professionals from India for years.**

This has not always been easy because in order to get work visas for Nusym's staff he has had to compete with large US companies such as Microsoft or Indian software companies such as Infosys and Wipro. But now he expects it to be easier to get visas for professionals working for his company, because many big companies no longer sponsor foreign workers applying for work visas. That is partly because they are hiring fewer people during the recession, but also because of a new set of government rules.

**Applications slow**

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) issues H1B work visas designed to bring highly skilled foreign professionals into the US. Companies have to sponsor their employees and file visa applications to get foreign workers up to a set quota every year.

This year the limit for these visas is 65,000. The US immigration department is inviting applications for H1B visas for its 2010 quota year, which begins on 1 October 2009. Eight weeks after the time for the filing of petitions began, only around 45,000 H1B visa applications have been received. In the past, the H1B quota used to fill up within a week. "We are still accepting petitions, so folks who are interested should apply and get their petitions in," says Sharon Scheidhauer from USCIS in New York City.

**Different situation**

IT professionals from India have been much in demand in the US in recent years. In past years, more than 60% of the H1B visas were granted to professionals from India.

But this year, things are different. Firstly, the big companies that have been hit by the recession are neither hiring staff themselves nor giving much business to the IT companies that might have hired foreign professionals themselves. But also, the US Congress has forbidden companies and banks that receive funds from the Troubled Asset Relief Program (Tarp) from hiring foreign workers.

**Hard to get**

The strict implementation of immigration rules by US authorities has made matters worse for foreign workers. Manhattan-based Indian American lawyer Prashanthi Reddy has mainly Indian-origin clients who are either based in India or the US. She also maintains one office in the Indian city of Hyderabad."Indian professionals are just afraid to come here because they are hearing so much bad news about the economy and layoffs," she says. "Also, the USCIS seems to be clamping down hard on Indian consulting companies, which are owned by Indian nationals." "It could be that they found some rotten apples and they think that the entire basket is bad. The work visa rules have always been there, but the USCIS is now implementing them more rigorously."

The USCIS requires H1B applicants to provide many documents, including photos and brochures of the office, tax returns as well as the work orders, contracts and client letters. All that makes the process tedious for many companies and it is also expensive. H1B visas cost around $5,000 (£3,131) per person. Yet there are some Indian American companies who are hiring Indian professionals because it is easier to get H1B visas this time.

Foreign workers, who are already working in the US on H1B visas, are facing problems getting their visas extended, however, or getting sponsors to apply for a green card. "They are in a lot of trouble, because some have lost jobs while some sponsors are not willing to follow up," says Ms Reddy. "So people who have lived here for five to 10 years are forced to pack up and leave."

**Strict rules**

Some H1B visa holders have been waiting for their precious green cards for many years now. Ashish Sharma is an Indian IT professional who is employed by a company in California. He came to the US on an H1B visa 10 years ago. He says there is a big backlog of Indians waiting for green cards.

"The sense of uncertainty and the restrictions on job search and career development lead to the dilemma that it might be worth going to some place where one easily gets work and life is easy," he adds.

Indian workers are calling for comprehensive immigration reforms in America, including changes in work visa rules. But American lawmakers are having none of it. Senators Dick Durbin from Illinois and Charles Grassley from Iowa have reintroduced a bill on the H1B visa programme. It calls for increased oversight and enforcement and discourages the use of H1B visa holders. It also requires all employers to pledge that the H1B visa-holder will not displace an American worker. But many Indians strongly object to some provisions of the bill saying they are against the principles of free trade.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk>, 2009/06/08 23:03:21 GMT

1. **Vocabulary**

Make sure you can explain the following words/phrases

*to file visa applications – to grant visa – to clamp down on companies – a tedious process – a big backlog of Indians – comprehensive reforms – to pledge*

1. **Writing**
2. **2Print Sponsor**

Write a fluent and coherent summary of the text in some 10-15 lines. Apply the necessary tips and techniques studied in unit 8 of Language Leader.

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| **SLIDE SHOW** |

<http://projects.nytimes.com/immigration>

Watch the slide show **“Struggling in the suburbs”** (part VI Social Services)**.** Take note of the key information so that you can explain what the pictures are about.

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| **AUDIO SLIDE SHOW** |

<http://projects.nytimes.com/immigration>

Watch the audio slide show **“Without papers, looking for a future”** (part VII The Family)and try to answer the following questions:

* Explain about the girl’s situation.
* Which difficulties does she experience?
* What might be a solution to her problems?

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| **DISCUSSION** |

**Should illegal immigrants get an amnesty?**

**A coalition of NGOs, MPs and trade unions is calling for long-term illegal migrants to be given leave to remain in the UK. What do you think about the plans?**

London's mayor is among those backing the campaign to give long-term undocumented migrants leave to remain.

The plans could give nearly half a million people the right to stay but to qualify they would need to have been in Britain for at least six years.

However, the group Migrationwatch, which monitors the scale of immigration into the UK, says the proposals could cost the country an additional £1m per immigrant across their lifetime. The organisers of the march claim that, in the case of Spain in 2005, the measure paid for itself many times over in new social security and tax revenues.

Some opinions

I have been to the Strangers into Citizens event today. I know many Zimbabweans, some who have been here over 6 years. They are here because they have had to leave their country for safe sanctuary here. They are the nicest people you could wish to meet, kind, polite and loyal. All this time their lives have been on hold. Let them work, pay tax and be a part of this country. ***Sue, Kent, UK***

This is a terrible idea. There should never be any reward for simply managing to evade detection for long enough. No matter how long any illegal immigrant has been here they should be sent home. No exceptions, no excuses. The financial implications are neither here nor there, whether positive or negative. ***Ryan Newman, Falkirk, Scotland***

Illegal immigration will last as long as there are rich and poor countries in the world. People come because they are desperate. What right do we in rich countries have to deny others a right to the lives we have merely for the crime of being born abroad? ***Clara Ackerman, California***

No, we should definitely NOT have an amnesty. We already have too many people and too few resources - the NHS can't cope with the existing population. And the 450,000 immigrants presumably come with extended families, so the number will be far, far greater than that suggested by the people pushing for this. This is a crazy suggestion and will sow social discord. ***A. Dean, Cheltenham***