

Lesson Plan: The History and Human Face of DACA

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Featured resources

KQED's The Lowdown: [The Evolution and Demise of DACA](#)

KQED Arts: [Dear Mr. Trump, I'm a DACA Kid—And Here's What You're Doing to Us](#)



Farida Jhabvala Romero/KQED

Teaching Tolerance: [Immigrant and Refugee Children, a Guide for Educators and School Support Staff](#)

Opening quick write prompt:

What do you know about the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program? What questions or thoughts do you have about DACA and the recent decision by the Trump administration to rescind the program?

A quick write allows students to write down their thoughts before discussing the opening question in order to increase participation and make the discussion more accessible to English Language Learners.

Objective

- Students will analyze the history of recent immigration reform efforts, especially as they relate to undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children.
- Students will evaluate arguments for and against immigration reform as well as personal stories from DACA recipients and write a response about the issue.

Essential Question and Lesson Context

What is DACA and how does the DACA program affect the lives of those who participated in it? Why did DACA start? Why was it rescinded?

Earlier this month, President Trump ended the DACA program, rolling back an Obama-era executive action created for undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children. DACA, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, protects recipients from deportation and gives them the right to work legally. DACA recipients must renew their status every two years, pass an extensive background check and pay a \$500 fee. Critics call the Trump administration's actions unwarranted and cruel, given that most DACA recipients have only ever lived in the United States and had no choice about coming here illegally. Proponents of Trump's decision claim Obama's executive action was illegal. Another claim that DACA recipients are taking jobs from native-born Americans has been [widely disputed](#).

Key vocabulary

Pre-teach key vocabulary before students do the reading, especially if you have English Language Learners. After going over the simple definition, consider providing a visual aid or having students draw one. More ideas for how to pre-teach vocabulary can be found [here](#).

Word	Simple definition
Defer (v.)	Delayed or withheld until a certain time <i>When you defer a decision, you put it off until another time.</i>
Comprehensive (adj.)	Covering completely, including most things <i>Many Democrats and Republicans believe the country needs comprehensive immigration reform rather than rely on temporary programs like DACA.</i>
Eligible (adj.)	Able to do or receive something <i>Passing a background check is one step to becoming eligible for the DACA program.</i>
Perilous (adj.)	Full of danger <i>The decision to share their information with the government now feels like a perilous choice to many DACA recipients.</i>
Rescind (v.)	To end or take back <i>President Trump decided to rescind President Obama’s executive action that established DACA.</i>

Investigate

- Discuss the quick-write prompt to gauge what students already know about DACA. (*Note: For more information about discussing a potentially sensitive topic with students, refer to [this guide](#) from Teaching Tolerance.*)
- Explain that students will be exploring the historical context of DACA, which came out of efforts to pass comprehensive immigration reform. Students will also be hearing about the experiences of two DACA recipients.
- As a class or in small groups, students trace the history of immigration reform efforts by viewing the interactive presentation in [The Lowdown post](#). At each “step” in the presentation, stop and ask students to summarize what happened.
- **Check for understanding after viewing the interactive presentation:** How did DACA initially become a policy? Why did President Obama and others support it? Why did critics oppose it? What is the status of DACA right now?

- Explain that students will now hear the stories from current and former DACA recipients about how the program affected their lives. As a class or in small groups, students listen to Dalia Nava's story (the [audio file in the Lowdown post](#)) and read [Maria's letter](#).
- **Check for understanding after both personal accounts:** What do Maria and Dalia's stories have in common? How are they different? How did being an undocumented immigrant affect each woman's life? Why do you think Dalia and Maria chose to share their stories with others?
- **Transition to the Make and Share:** Tell students they will have a chance to share their thoughts on this issue in the comments section of The Lowdown. The first time they comment, students must sign in to [Disqus](#), a free discussion app embedded in The Lowdown.
 - To sign in to [Disqus](#), click the "Comments" button at the bottom of the post.
 - Click the blue "Get Started" button in the gray "Welcome to Disqus" box.
 - Students will need to enter a username. We recommend first name, last initial.
 - After signing in for the first time, students must verify their email address before commenting. A verification email will appear in their inbox once they sign in to Disqus.

Make and share

- Individually or in small groups, students post in the comments section in response to what they have learned about the history and human face of DACA.
 - Responses should be supported by evidence from [The Lowdown post](#) and [Maria's letter](#).
 - Encourage students to reply to other comments after posting their response. Remind them to use evidence to support their claims and respectful language when responding.
- Students can write their own response or use the following questions as a starting point:
 - **Make your case:** What do you think Congress should do to address the legal status of undocumented immigrants like Maria and Dalia who came to the United States as children?
 - **Explore both sides:** What is the most convincing argument to continue with DACA? What is the most compelling reason to end a program like DACA? Explain your answer using evidence.
 - **Dive into research:** How many DACA recipients live in your state or community? What are their lives like? Research local immigration stories to find out more about this issue closer to home and summarize what you learn.
 - **Share out:** What stood out to you after reading [the post by Maria](#) or listening to Dalia's story in The Lowdown post? What specifically about these stories made an impression or influenced your views on this issue?
 - **Get creative:** What is a word or short phrase that symbolizes this issue for you? For example, many people refer to DACA recipients as "Dreamers," which is both a legislative acronym and a reference to the American Dream that many immigrants seek. What word would you choose to symbolize this issue and why?

Assessment/reflection

- Students reflect on what they have learned either through a class discussion or in writing:
 - What have you learned about DACA and immigration reforms related to undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children? Did your opinion change or stay the same as you learned more about the issue?
 - What was it like to post your responses publically and reply to other posts? What did you learn from other students? What do you hope they learned from you? What will you do the next time you post a comment in response to The Lowdown?

Circle chats, small-group discussions and [think-pair-share](#) provide a safer space for students to practice speaking and listening, and also boost participation during whole-class discussions.

Extension/homework

Write/speak locally: Students turn their opinions about DACA and immigration reform into a letter, short speech or presentation, then research ways to make their voice heard in their community. (Example: Speaking during the public comment section of a city council meeting, posting on an online forum, etc.) For a list of how to contact local officials in your area, check out [KQED Learning's Local Election Toolkit](#).

Common Core standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7	Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W1	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.