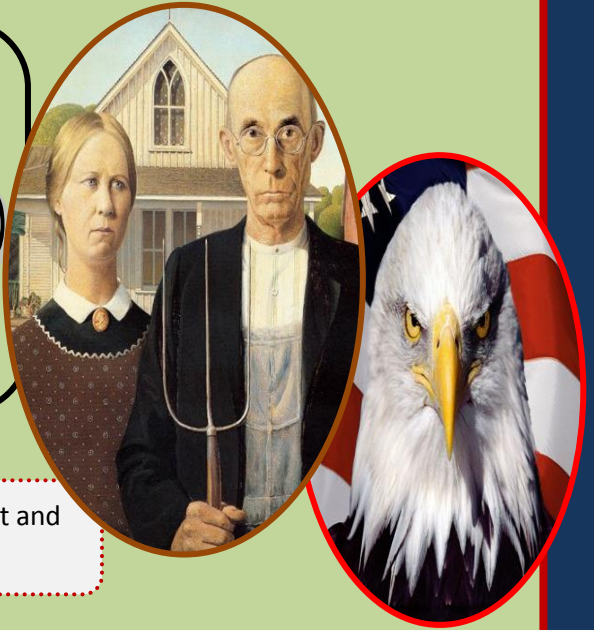


What is an AMERICAN?



Read the following text written by an American college student and answer the questions that follow it.

When I asked my father this question, he laughed and shook his head. I have a knack for asking the hard ones. But as **our** nation struggles with the issue of illegal immigration, we don't bother to ask

The first time **this** question occurred to me was while I was watching "American Idol" a few years ago. A beautiful Russian performer was struggling to get her green card. The judges loved **her** but rejected her all the same. My mother said it was because **they** wanted an American idol. I blinked and asked her, "What's more American than an immigrant?" She sighed.

Every single American citizen is an immigrant, even Native Americans, who came across the Bering Strait thousands of years ago. *Homo sapiens* originated in Africa, and every other place we settled we were strangers, right? But the United States is unique because **it** once welcomed all immigrants. The majority of Americans have ancestors **who** came over barely a hundred years ago. My earliest family immigrated scarcely three generations ago. And so we must ask ourselves: is it right to deny entrance to people who, like our ancestors, want to make a new home and are willing to work for the opportunities we have?

If **you** really think about it, the people who risk life and limb to come to our country have a higher opinion of U.S. ideals than a lot of us do. **Their** ancestors have lived in the same place for hundreds of years, perhaps more. Can you imagine the courage it takes to leave all that behind?

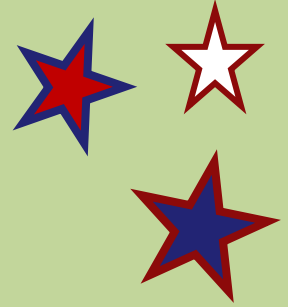
Furthermore, we owe immigrants a lot. For example, our fresh produce is cultivated by migrant workers, a harvest picked in shame. I believe the very least we can do is grant them citizenship, minimum wage, and schooling for their children. In addition to some of the more skilled jobs immigrants do, we take many advantages for granted – aisles of produce, janitors at fast-food restaurants – that are made possible by the people some scorn and wish to remove from our country.

Some say if we let everyone in, we won't have room. We're the third-largest country on the planet. There's room, and immigration is happening regardless. Let's screen for criminals but let others in. After all, can't we share Thanksgiving with the laborers who have more than earned their wages?

By [thelastharpy](#).

A. Say who or what the underlined words in the text refer to.

- | | |
|---------|----------|
| 1. our | 5. it |
| 2. this | 6. who |
| 3. her | 7. you |
| 4. they | 8. Their |



B. What's the equivalent of the following words? Match them.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. knack | a) in spite of everything |
| 2. bother | b) a leg or arm |
| 3. struggling | c) aptitude / capacity |
| 4. blinked | d) give |
| 5. scarcely | e) workers |
| 6. limb | f) refuse to accept |
| 7. grant | g) mind / care |
| 8. scorn | h) shut and opened the eyes |
| 9. room | i) barely |
| 10. regardless | j) fighting |
| 11. laborers | k) space |

C. Find evidence in the text for the following statements.

1. It is difficult to define what an American is.
2. The author of the text is used to asking difficult questions.
3. He has asked himself the question of what an American is some time ago.
4. The author of the text is American.
5. He highlights the immigrants' courage.
6. He is in favour of immigration to the USA.
7. Not everybody has a favourable opinion about immigration.
8. Immigrants play an important role in American society.

D. Topics for discussion.

1. This text poses the question of American identity. Try to give your own personal views on the matter.
2. How should we interpret the question "What's more American than an immigrant?"?
3. Why did the mother just sigh when her son asked her the previous question?
4. Why do people immigrate to other countries?
5. Is local culture threatened by immigration?
6. What do you think of the illegal immigration to the USA?
7. How would you define "home"?
8. Is America a "melting pot" or a "salad bowl"?

