

LESSON

How Do Borders Shape Belonging?

Introductory Lesson

Overview

About This Lesson

In our lives, we encounter many kinds of borders. Borders can be political, legal, social, cognitive, ideological, moral, and more. They are visible and invisible, spoken and unspoken, inconsequential and deeply felt. Regardless of their type, borders carry meaning, shape our interactions with others, and influence our sense of belonging in the world.

In this lesson, students will analyze multi-genre texts in order to understand the complexity of the many borders we all navigate on a daily basis. They will consider how borders are created and maintained, how they affect our thinking about ourselves and others, and how they can influence our sense of belonging in the world. This lesson, when taught alongside the lesson *What Is Belonging?*, helps students develop the conceptual framework for a deeper exploration of the intersection of belonging and borders in literature and in life.

Essential Question

- How can the borders we experience in our lives shape our sense of who we are and where we belong?

Guiding Questions

- What kinds of borders exist in the world and what purposes do they serve?
- What forces keep borders in place? What forces can break them down?
- How can borders affect our sense of belonging and our interactions with others?

What's Included

This lesson uses the following student materials, which you can access in this [Google Folder](#).

- **Gallery: Border Image Analysis**
- **Reading: Introducing Borders**
- **Reading: Introducing Borders (adapted version)**

Preparing to Teach

Teaching Notes

1. Introducing the Conceptual Framing for a Borders and Belonging Unit

We have designed these introductory lessons (this lesson and What Is Belonging?) to prepare students to engage with the resources and activities in Facing History's Borders and Belonging collection. The purpose of these lessons is to develop students' conceptual understanding of the ways in which the tangible and intangible borders we encounter in our lives can shape our sense of belonging in the world. We encourage you to teach both introductory lessons before engaging students with other resources in the collection.

2. Revisiting Your Classroom Contract

In the first activity, students will engage with visuals that depict a wide range of tangible and intangible borders and touch on human migration, socio-economic class, gender identity, and social groups. You can set the tone with intentional framing that includes revisiting your [classroom contract](#) to recommit to the norms for behavior and communication that your group established. This is an important step to help ensure that none of your students feel targeted or uncomfortable during this activity.

3. Adapting This Lesson for Your Context

The resources in this lesson are adaptable for students in grades 6-12, and we encourage you to modify them for your context. For younger students, or if you have a shorter class period, you may need to reduce the number of images students discuss in the first activity. For the second activity, we have provided two versions of an informational text with different levels of complexity for you to choose from.

Lesson Plan

Activities

1. Use Images to Introduce the Concept of Borders

- Remind students that in the previous lesson, they were introduced to the concept of belonging. Let them know that in this lesson, they will deepen their thinking about belonging by considering how the borders we experience in our lives can impact our sense of belonging in positive and negative ways. Group students into pairs and project the images from the Border Image Analysis gallery one at a time. Have students discuss the following questions for each image with their partner:
 - How would you describe the border in this image?
 - Who or what keeps the border in place?
 - Who does this border impact?
 - How might this border affect one's sense of belonging in positive and/or negative ways?
- Then project the following questions for a private journal response. Let students know that they will not have to share what they write.
 - What kind of borders do you experience in your life?
 - How do they affect how you feel and the choices you make?

2. Read and Discuss an Informational Text

Next, let students know they will be reading an informational text about borders. You might read it together as a class or have students work in pairs, using a strategy like [Read Aloud](#) or [Say Something](#). If it's the first time they've used a strategy, make sure to model with the first section of the reading, perhaps by doing a [Think Aloud](#).

- Pass out and read **Introducing Borders** or **Introducing Borders (adapted version)**.
- After students have finished reading, create groups of four to discuss the Connection Questions that follow the reading.
- Then facilitate a class discussion of the Connection Questions. Leave time for students to share their ideas about the final question, which prompts them

to apply what they have learned about the relationship between borders and belonging.

3. Reflect and Connect

- To synthesize their learning and convey new understandings, have students choose one of the following prompts, which they can submit as a formative assessment.

On an [exit ticket](#), respond to the following questions:

- What new, different, or deeper understanding about borders do you have after engaging in this lesson's activities? What makes you say that?
 - How can the borders we experience in our lives shape our sense of who we are and where we belong? Use evidence from the reading *Introducing Borders*, as well as your own lived experiences, to help answer this question.
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- Review the reading *Introducing Borders* and then use ideas and short quotations from the reading, as well as your own examples, symbols, and images to respond to the following questions with a [Sketch to Stretch](#): *How can the borders we experience in our lives shape our sense of who we are and where we belong?*
 - Use words and phrases from the reading *Introducing Borders* to create a [found poem](#) that responds to the question: *How can the borders we experience in our lives shape our sense of who we are and where we belong?*