

America though filled  
with thousands of  
people



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America is a nation filled with all different types of people.

People of different color, languages, traditions, and dreams. Because we are a nation of immigrants, we do not share the characteristics of “ race, religion, ethnicity, or native language that} form the common bonds of society in other countries” (Exploring Language 252). However, by agreeing to learn and use just one single language we have been able to unite many different people and create an incredibly diverse population. Yet, why is it that United States, though filled with thousands of people who do not speak English as their first language, must have one official language, English? In California, the majority of the schools are required to teach ESL (English as a second language) to Hispanic children. These programs were created to teach Mexican immigrants English and the way the United States works. All through California, you will see not just see and hear English but Spanish also. Being from California I am very familiar with this system of two different languages. I used to have a history book that had a dictionary in the back that translated the English vocabulary words into Spanish, so that those Hispanics that did not know English well could still learn.

I am not sure if it is like this in Florida, where there is a large population of Philippinoes, but should there be? Should a country where their goal is to have only one language, be catering to those immigrants who come here to be free and yet are not willing to speak the native language? Many argue that the knowledge of English is not “ part of the formula for responsible citizenship in this country” (Exploring Language 252). Others argue that anymore than one language in a country will only lead to a “ chaotic mess which will lead} to countless problems in the government’s efforts to

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manage the nation's business" (Exploring Language 253). Therefore, should the United States be catering to the needs of the minorities and not teach them English, or should American schools continue with their ESL programs? Under the most common method of bilingual education used throughout this country, " non-English-speaking students are taught all academic subjects such as math, science, and history exclusively in their native language.

English is taught as a separate subject" (Exploring Language 254). The problem resulting from this is that it is unable to tell if a minority child has learned enough English to be placed in entirely English speaking classes, therefore some minority children are kept in " native language classes for six years" (Exploring Language 254). So, is bilingual teaching effective? In the most part it is. In southern California I met a friend freshmen year of high school who knew very little English, but by the time we had graduated she could carry on a conversation with no problem. She was placed in classrooms where everything was spoken in Spanish, her native language, yet she was also taking two English classes. Maybe it's not helpful for some because they are unwilling to learn our language, but for those who do come here and want to be a part of our society, they appreciate the bilingual classes and take full advantage of them. English is already the official language of the United States, so why is it that many are still arguing that we should not have bilingual classrooms in schools? And why is it that many believe that an immigrant to the U.

S should know the language before they decide to come here and become a citizen? America is a land of the free, and everyone, whether born here or another country should be given a fair chance. The United States is the most

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prominent country in the world and has not had any drastic problems with language. Teaching bilingual education in schools is a good idea in that it gives minorities the chance to learn English and become part of a free society, something everyone loves, or dreams to have. English