

# Assimilation into american society- immigrants



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Literature & Composition Essay #1 June 26, 2011 Assimilation into American society: "Immigrants" written by Pat Mora In the poem, "Immigrants", it talks about how immigrants want their children to be welcomed into American society. They will do whatever they need to, to get their children to be as American as possible; even if they lose some of their own culture in the process. The poem, "Immigrants" by Pat Mora, has many underlying themes. The main theme of how immigrants assimilate into American culture has a deep connection to freedom and responsibility.

This poem is all about freedom and responsibility that the immigrants have to their children. They want to be able to give their children what they never had. In exchange, their children may lose part of their original culture as well as their individuality. In the poem, "Immigrants" there is three underlying themes that are trying to be conveyed to the reader. The poem's main intention is to show what immigrants go through when they are trying to adapt to their new lives in the United States.

One of the themes is how the immigrants have to go through incorporating themselves into a different culture than their own. Another theme of the poem is how the immigrants try to hide their culture and at the same time keep some of it in a new country where different is not always accepted. The poem shows that the immigrants hide their culture by saying, "whisper in Spanish or Polish when the babies sleep, whisper in a dark parent bed..." (761). Lastly, a third theme deals with the pressure and angst that immigrants continuously feel about whether or not their children will be accepted into American culture.

The line of the poem that expresses this is, “ will they like our boy, our girl, our fine American boy, our fine American girl? ” (761). Even though the immigrants have done their best to make their children into American citizens they still have the fear that “ real Americans” won’t accept them. The theme that is prevailing in this poem is how immigrants must amalgamate themselves and their children into the American culture. Throughout the poem there are many times when assimilation is talked about, such as with the figurative language that is used.

The immigrants describe how they: “ wrap their babies in the American flag, feed them mashed hot dogs and apple pie, name them Bill and Daisy, buy them blonde dolls that blink blue eyes or a football and tiny cleats before they can even walk” (760). They feel that in order for their children to succeed in the United States they must be as Americanized as possible. The symbolism of wrapping their babies in the American flag is that the immigrants wanted to surround their children with as much American influence as possible.

The immigrants feed them as much “ American” food or have them play with as many “ American” toys as possible so that they are just like any other “ American” child. The immigrants do whatever is necessary to make their children have a better life than they ever had. The immigrants feel that it is their responsibility to give their child a better chance at having a life full of freedoms. They believe that America is the place to do this. The main theme of this poem is very much connected to freedom and responsibility. The immigrants most likely come from a country where they do not have very many freedoms.

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The immigrants run the risk of crossing the border and losing more of their freedom and their children's freedom. As a parent they felt that they needed to break free from having no freedom and give their children the right to have freedom. Even though, when they raise their children as "Americans", their children lose part of their heritage in the process. In order to fit in among Americans they must be able to speak English which means leaving behind their native language. The immigrants feel as though they must hide their culture in order for their children to be accepted.

By the immigrants doing this, they actually take away some of their children's freedoms themselves. They make their own children feel as though they can't be proud of their culture in a place where everyone is supposed to be welcomed. They feel as if they must make a small sacrifice so that they can have more freedoms. The children of the immigrants truly are not free if they cannot be themselves. The poem, "Immigrants" by Pat Mora, has three strong themes that shine throughout the poem. Each one of them has their own connection to freedom and responsibility.

Immigrants feel responsible for their children's well-being which includes being able to give them more freedom than they had growing up. They feel that their children deserve the best and they will do what they need to achieve it. They will even dissolve their own culture to be more like Americans. The immigrants essentially are taking away their children's freedoms just like governments do. Will the immigrant's children ever really be free? Works Cited Mora, Pat. "Immigrants." Literature and Ourselves. Ed. New York: Pearson Education, 2009. Print.