

Immigration and human rights with ‘Papers, please’

Previous compulsory steps / Prior students' knowledge	Basic concepts of refugees, territory, immigration, states rules, international norms on refugee protection, human rights
Learning objectives	Developing knowledge about immigration
Subjects	Social sciences, English as a foreign language, History, Citizenship
Recommended Age	10-14
Material needed	Trailers of the video games, game play videos, technological equipment to project the videos
Sequence duration	60-90 minutes
Individual or group activity	Group activity
Skills developed (after learning objectives)	Critical thinking, cultural skills, empathy
Price range of the game	<20€
Extension / differentiation activities (at the end of the sequence)	This pedagogical sequence can serve to teach ethics, history, politics
Similar games to use with the approach of the sequence	Return of the Obra Dinn

Step by step: how to implement the sequence

- **Step 1 – Familiarising the students with the game (10 minutes)**

Papers, please takes place during the Cold War, on the border of the hypothetical country of Arstotzka. This sequence can be used to teach about historical borders, country rules, and law immigration, as well as to encourage discussions about human rights and refugees.

Papers, please is a game in which the player assumes the job of an immigration officer, deciding who gets to enter and who doesn't in the fictional country of Arstotzka in 1982. To prevent terrorists, criminals, and human traffickers from entering the country, the player must examine the paperwork. People can be interrogated, fingerprinted, or scanned to see if they have irregularities in their documents.

They may attempt to bribe the officer on occasion. The first two errors are unpunished. The player is awarded five credits starting with the third. At the end of the day, it is up to the officer to decide how he will spend the funds. He is obligated to pay the rent and has the option of feeding, heating, or medicating his kid, wife, uncle, and/or mother-in-law. The player will confront moral problems such as permitting an alleged immigrant wife to enter the country without all of the required paperwork or none at all, putting the country at risk of receiving a terrorist. The game features a scripted story with twenty different ways to end it, as well as an endless game mode.

As a starting point, show them the [Papers, please Trailer](#).



Afterwards, ask them to identify the basic concepts of the game and define with the whole classroom the main concepts identified.

- **Step 2 – Game playing (20 minutes)**

Project the video game on a screen in front of your class. Explain to the students that you are going to play the game and that they can discuss the game playing along the process. You can stop at various times during the game and ask the students what you should do next. According to the time you have available, continue in the same day with Step 3 or you can organize the lesson in 2 days.

- **Step 3 – Group work (20 minutes)**

Arrange the classroom forming 5 worktables. Place on each table one flipchart sheet on which you will write one question from the following list:

1. What are the job roles of border patrol agent?
2. What were the restrictions to enter Arstotzka?
3. Why do you think the restrictions increased in this country and made it more difficult to enter?
4. How did the game make you feel when I had to make a hard decision? If you were the player, would you take a different decision? Why ?
5. What connections can be made between the video game and immigration issues in our country?

Explain to the students that they need to walk in the classroom and visit each worktable to answer the corresponding question.

After the completion of the task, assign students volunteering to read the answers from each table and discuss them with the whole classroom.

- **Step 4 – Guided discussion and shared reflection (15 minutes)**

In order to integrate the learning content and the benefits of the activity, you should conduct a debriefing process. Here are some questions to guide the debriefing process:

- What questions does this game raise in your mind about the refugees?
- What elements of immigration do you notice (papers, people, activities)?
- What are some positive and negative effects of immigration?
- What are some challenges that come with refugees and immigration?
 - E.g., population expansion, wars, terrorist attacks, inequality
- What are some international norms on refugee protection and human rights?



References

Papers, please Web Site: <https://papersplea.se/>

Papers, Please – Trailer, Youtube: <https://youtu.be/QP5X6fcukM>

Papers, Please - GOG.com https://www.gog.com/game/papers_please

Papers, Please! – YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RsWQfZI-Xtc>

