

Sample Working Outline (in APA Style)

Topic:	Immigration Reform
General purpose:	To persuade
Specific purpose:	To persuade my audience that progressive immigration reform is beneficial to the United States [<i>Claim of value</i>]
Thesis:	If approached responsibly, progressive immigration reform will benefit the United States in several ways.
Org. pattern:	Topical

INTRODUCTION

First they came for the “illegals,”
and I didn’t speak out because I wasn’t an “illegal.”

Then they came for the came for the “anchor babies,”
and I didn’t speak out because I wasn’t an “anchor baby.”

Then they came for the legal immigrants,
and I didn’t speak out because I wasn’t an immigrant.

Then they came for me,
and there was no one left to speak for me.

You may recognize my introductory statement as a modified version of the notorious “First they came . . .,” a famous statement and provocative poem attributed to pastor Martin Niemöller (1892–1984) about the decimation of the German intellectuals following the Nazis’ rise to power.

People always seem baffled by Nazism. But why are they baffled when the vitriolic rhetoric from some of the most outspoken critics of immigration reduce many immigrants to the status of nonhuman as well? Words like “illegals” are dehumanizing and therefore make fascism not very baffling. Nowadays, even legal immigration is under attack. Ann Coulter’s (2013) recent article—“The Problem Isn’t Just Illegal immigration, It’s Legal Immigration, Too”—illustrates this point. In the article she is unkind to most immigrants, especially those from nonwhite countries.

The vitriol about immigration reform could very well undermine our principles of democracy more could than immigration itself. Don’t we believe in the phrase that’s etched on the Statue of Liberty: “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” Viktor Frankl may have been right. To complement the statue on the East Coast, we need a “Statue of Responsibility” on the West Coast: “Freedom is in danger of degenerating into mere arbitrariness unless it is lived in terms of responsibility” (Frankl, 1959, pp. 209–210).

The responsible thing is not to toss out our core values as a free nation during the debate on immigration reform. I hope to maintain a responsible tone as I present an argument that some of you may not agree with: Comprehensive immigration reform—*which means providing a path to citizenship for all immigrants, including undocumented ones*—can benefit us in many ways.

No doubt, the issue of undocumented immigration is a polarizing dilemma; many people in this country think that undocumented immigration only has a negative effect on the economy, causes crime rates to go up, and fails to assimilate newcomers into our way of life. But contrary to these beliefs, *progressive immigration reform, if approached responsibly, will benefit the United States in several ways*. In this speech, I will support my argument by suggesting three benefits.

First, I will stress the economic benefits, presenting evidence that undocumented workers have *impacted the economy in a positive way*.

Second, I will present evidence that shows there is a *social benefit*, as crime will be reduced through comprehensive reform.

Third, I will show the *cultural benefit*. Undocumented people have made a great effort to embrace the belief systems of the dominant U.S. culture and, in many cases, they have enriched both cultures.

These are all good things.

Transition: So first let me explain how undocumented workers have positively impacted the U.S. economy.

BODY

I. Economic Benefits: Data show that undocumented workers and amnesty laws impact the economy positively, not negatively.

- A. First, a city-to-city study completed by economists found that undocumented workers had little effect on the wages and displacement of U.S. workers (Martin, Phillip, *The Research-Policy Nexus: The Case of Unauthorized Mexico-US Migration and US Policy Responses*, 2009)
 1. One plausible explanation is that undocumented workers fill less desirable, low-wage jobs.
- B. Second, more than two decades of research show the 1986 law raised wages and helped lift the economy. By 1992 average hourly wages for the millions of formerly undocumented workers had risen 15.1%, according to a Department of Labor survey. U.S. wages overall continued to rise, a 2012 study by the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, D.C. shows, even as the nation entered a recession that lasted from July 1990 to March 1991. (Woellert, 2013)
 1. If comprehensive immigration reform is achieved, history could repeat itself and the recession may end sooner rather than later.

- C. Third, economic projections from the Congressional Budget Office suggest that a comprehensive immigration plan that includes a way for undocumented workers to gain legal status would increase tax revenue by \$4.5 billion or more over three years, and increase gross domestic product by \$1.5 trillion over 10 years. (Avilia, 2013)
1. This revenue would offset the inevitable increase in some social service, health, and infrastructure costs originating from the use of services by the then-legal immigrants, who will have better access to government programs and health care.

Transition: The economic benefits are many, but I've highlighted three: (1) undocumented and amnestied workers have not and will not displace U.S. workers; (2) longitudinal research shows that the 1986 amnesty program increased overall wages and quality of life; and (3) amnestied workers will contribute tax revenue. So now, let's look at social benefits.

II. Social Benefits: Data show that undocumented workers and immigrants with amnesty impact the society positively, foremost in crime reduction.

- A. First, crime is not an innate characteristic of undocumented people. Longitudinal studies indicate a drop in crime in areas that have a larger undocumented population. (Martinez, Stowell, & Lee, 2010).
1. This contradicts the belief that undocumented or documented immigrants *cause* increases in crime rates.
- B. Second, crime is actually more common among natural-born citizens. A study released in 2008 by the Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit Immigration Policy Center, found that on the national level, U.S.-born men aged 18–39 are five times more likely to be incarcerated than are their foreign-born peers. And, while the number of illegal immigrants in the country doubled between 1994 and 2005, violent crime declined by nearly 35% and property crimes by 26% over the same period. The Policy Center even determined that on average, between 2000 and 2005, cities such as Los Angeles that took in a higher share of recent immigrants saw their crime rates fall farther than cities with a lower influx of undocumented immigrants. (Kingsbury, 2008)
1. This is consistent with another longitudinal study, which found that undocumented people were less likely to be involved in criminal activities than people born in the U.S. (Ousey & Kubrin, 2009. *Exploring the Connection between Immigration and Violent Crime Rates in U.S. Cities, 1980–2000*)
 2. Thus, undocumented or unfettered immigration doesn't lead to increased crime. In fact, the opposite may be true. Increased immigration lowers crime rate.

- C. Third, a comprehensive immigration study using FBI statistics indicates that, after passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, applications of FBI crime statistics on a nationwide county-by-county basis showed legalizations meant less crime. Legalizing 1% of the population in a county corresponded to a 2% decrease in crime per capita—around 200,000 fewer crimes every year on a national level. (McClure, 2012)
1. This point, coupled with the others already made, indicates the preponderance of evidence indicates that both undocumented and documented immigrants cause crime rates to go down.

Transition: We've looked at the economic and the social benefits that result from immigration in general and immigration reform in particular. But there is another, less tangible but equally important benefit: the cultural one.

III. Cultural Benefits: Data and anecdotal evidence show there are many cultural benefits to immigration.

- A. First, research indicates there is an upward mobility of undocumented people and their children over time. This is significant because it indicates assimilation of outsiders into mainstream U.S. culture. (Jimenez & Fitzgerald, 2007).
1. The assumption that undocumented and documented immigrants refuse to assimilate is unfounded. Immigrants do not pose a threat to American economic, political, or cultural values.
- B. Second, both documented and undocumented immigrants have a proud history of serving in the U.S. military, which culturally benefits us by protecting our freedoms. (Amaya, 2007).
1. In 2003, one of the first U.S. casualties of war in Iraq was Marine Lance Corporal Jose Gutierrez. He originally came to the U.S. as an undocumented immigrant. (Amaya, 2007. *Latino Immigrants in the American Discourses of Citizenship and Nationalism During the Iraqi War*, 2007)
 2. Along with Lance Corporal Guitierrez, there were many other undocumented servicemen and women who have died in both the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns, including Cpl. Jose Angel Garibay, Cpl. Jesus Alberto Suarez, and Staff Sgt. Riayan A. Tejada.
 3. These examples show that immigrants, even undocumented ones, fight to protect the very culture many think they undermine.

C. Third, and more broadly, Richard Florida (2012), an expert in urban studies, has shown a definitive correlation between demographic diversity and quality of life. More heterogeneous cities have more things to do, healthier citizens, greater investment in human capital, higher socioeconomic statuses, and more talent for starting businesses and solving problems. Thus, we don't want to stymy diversity; we want to promote it.

1. There are many ways to achieve diversity, but welcoming immigrants—both documented and undocumented—into our communities is one.

Transition: I've outlined just a few of the economic, social, and cultural benefits that result from immigration in general and immigration reform in particular. No doubt, there are many more things to consider.

Conclusion

Immigrants come to the United States from all parts of the globe. Racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity exposes American citizens to new ideas and new ways of life. Diversity introduces Americans to new forms of cuisine, religion, and language, and helps educate American citizens about ways of life from other parts of the world. Although diversity may at first cause conflict between people of different races and ethnicity, generations of contact reduce ethnic conflict.

I began this speech by suggesting that not only are there significant benefits to immigration worth noting—and I've provided examples to support this—but that the tone we use to talk about immigration reform matters. A threat to our culture is not immigration itself, but how we talk about immigration and other matters. If we do so uncivilly and, at times, with an animosity toward others, we risk decaying into proto-fascism.

I understand that my argument represents only one of many different views. I understand that the statistics I provide on crime do not count "undocumented immigration," which some people view as a crime itself. Hence the word "illegals," because people see immigration without authorization itself as illegal. But illegal immigration is at most a victimless crime. And, as I've suggested in my speech, the benefits of both legal and illegal immigration are many. Of course, I too prefer immigrants come legally. But even if they have not, they do not deserve to be dehumanized.

I hope you'll re-examine your opinions on this matter. I hope, too, that one day, when someone writes a poem about our nation it will go like this:

First they came for the "illegals,"
and I spoke out.
So they never got the chance to come for me.

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