I. IMMIGRATION:

In this Immigration unit, we will be drawing from the rich pasts of our students and developing our own stories using our own very important voices. We will explore primary documents and historical fiction to continue our work as practicing historians. By adding our own stories to the historical record, we will be doing the work of historians. In the process, we will not only connect past to present but person to person.

II. Big Idea/Essential Question:

• Why do people leave their homes and what happens when they come to a new place?  
Many students have experienced displacement and will be able to generate valuable connections between themselves and the Plymouth Pilgrims that appear in their next unit. Before asking the students to understand why the Pilgrims’ story is important several hundred years later, we will draw upon these common experiences and develop our own very important stories, and thus do the work of historians.

• (Overarching): How do authors teach us about a specific time period in history through historical fiction texts? How do historical perspectives influence our understanding of community? How do we relate our experiences to those of people from the past to help us better understand them?

These essential questions are elaborations from other units, so that we may continue to connect our social studies and ELA, as well as to ground our understanding of the past in the language of the present. Additionally, an essential element of knowing history is recognizing that there are multiple perspectives that need to be recognized and explored for an accurate account. Finally, this work of story deconstruction and voice building demonstrates their role in a community and in that community’s historical impact.
III. Learning Goals:

a. The learning goals of this unit do not address any social studies content outlined in the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework. This unit will serve as a foundation for their Pilgrims unit, which will address standard 3.3 (the Plymouth Pilgrims). However, we will address several ELA CCSS:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.3**
  Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.6**
  Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author of a text.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3**
  Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

b. The historical elements of this unit draw mainly from the habits of mind, or ways of knowing in history, which will be developed in every lesson. Two of these habits are enumerated in the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework under the Concepts and Skills subheading for the third grade:

- 2. Observe visual sources such as historical paintings, photographs, or illustrations that accompany historical narratives and use them correctly in speaking and writing.

- 3. Observe and describe local or regional historic artifacts and sites and generate questions about their function, construction, and significance.
In addition to these habits, we will also be doing the work of historians by working both independently and collaboratively to deconstruct texts and analyze artifacts. Just as historians do, we will be using our present experiences to inform and contextualize our forays into the past. Finally, we will add our own stories to the record, so as to confirm our understanding of the importance of personal narrative and perspective in history. The purpose of both their individual and collaborative effort is to foster curiosity, confidence in one’s own ideas, the ability to question and critique, as well as the process of methodical analysis that is so essential to the social sciences.

c. Students will be developing their literacy skills mainly through their written narratives, which we will be work-shopping for several lessons. As such, they will be provided with lots of feedback and guidance regarding their personally chosen topic. Additionally, we will be developing our literacy skills through oral contributions in small and whole group discussions. Read alouds will also prove fruitful for literacy development, especially with texts with multiple copies so that students can follow along. Students will also be provided with a great deal of teacher modeling of thought and writing process, as well as student models of completed work in order to highlight expectations.

d. Throughout the unit, I will attempt to model concurrent and collaborative effort as historians, or members of a community of learners. The most essential tool for achieving this goal will be addressing the students as historians and discussing what that task means. Historical understanding includes factual knowledge, but also an awareness of the context of and multiple perspectives within events. As such, I will encourage my students to continue to think like historians, which means appreciating and building upon (wherever possible) each other’s contributions. Reciprocal respect between classmates
will build the empathy that is essential for historical practice. When we show compassion to ourselves and one another, we can then apply that to the people, the whole human beings, who lived before us.

IV. Rationale:

a. Our first essential question is an accessible way for the students to enter into a very unfamiliar time in history. Many students have experienced displacement and will be able to generate valuable connections between themselves and other immigrants from both their class and from the past. Using the present to understand the past connects the students to the actual humans who existed and their experiences; beyond humanizing an unfamiliar concept, this way of connecting past and present is essential to the historical discipline. Our overarching essential questions are elaborations from other units, so that we may continue to connect our social studies and ELA, as well as to ground our understanding of the past in the language of the present. Additionally, an essential element of knowing history is recognizing that there are multiple perspectives that need to be recognized and explored for an accurate account. Finally, this work of story deconstruction and voice building demonstrates their role in a community and in that community’s historical impact. Working on our writing and reading hones the skills necessary to being a successful historian in and out of school. Hopefully the work that we do in this unit will prove as meaningful to the students as it will to their teachers. We long to get to know their stories and begin to know a little bit more of the whole person, and not just the partial student. I wish that their reading and writing about immigration is relevant and poignant to their own lives, so they may begin to do the hard work of connecting to others.
b. The unit’s primary question addresses three CCSS ELA standards and the two “practice” standards mentioned below from the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework under the Concepts and Skills subheading for the third grade. These standards relate to the essential questions of this unit in many ways. My first essential question (*Why do people leave their homes and what happens when they come to a new place?*) directly addresses the two Concept and Skills standards (habits of mind or ways of knowing in history) that are the disciplinary crux of my unit. It is by addressing this question that we will continue our work as historians, as we explore our own pasts, look to others’ stories, and develop empathy. My second essential question, which is composed of three smaller questions, addresses the ELA standards listed in the CC. By addressing this overarching essential question, we will do the reading, writing, and research that is essential to the historical practice.

c. Students do not need any prior content knowledge to engage with this unit. They will, however, have to bring their innate curiosity and interest about the places from which they came. They will also have to bring their natural habit of storytelling and sharing which is universal to most humans. With this level of engagement on our side, we will begin to reach higher standards for historical practice. In other words, a personalized lens will boosts the students to new heights in their reading, writing, and analyzing. Additionally, I expect that the commonalities in immigration patterns within the class will bring us closer together, and wherever students are not naturally inclined to do so, I will work on building that empathy. Our understanding of one another will help us become closer as a learning community, not only in history but in other areas as well.
d. For our work in this unit, many students have special needs that will require specialized attention. Many will need a great deal of modeling in our group work during our read alouds, which I will happily provide. Additionally, I will provide student samples of personal narratives which they can emulate. Their work as compassionate historians and active listeners will have to be facilitated by myself or Patty, as we uncover sensitive topics and quite personal stories. Finally, several students will require specific ELA supports; Caroline and Rachel will receive a scribe so that they may contribute meaningful stories without struggling to simply write anything at all. With ELLs and other students who may not be self-starters, I will provide sentence starters and guidance. My high flyers have been scaffolded by the conference nature of this literary activity of reading and writing. Students will always be pushed to write greater length and in more detail; high flyers will also edit their work to a degree that others will not. Again, their achievement in these tasks will be scaffolded by conferences with myself or with Patty.

e. I have drawn upon a great deal of research that has informed my plans. Edinger provides a great deal of insight as to how to engage in historically-minded best practice. This mainly involves a great deal of empathy building through developing, sharing, and reading personal narratives. To develop this historical empathy we will review and build upon our understanding of perspective or point of view. In addition to these historical skills, we will also further our ability to explore and make inferences, two tasks that are essential to the discipline; in order to achieve this, we will work with primary sources and artifacts wherever possible. I have also drawn on other non-historically centered pieces of literature to inform my practice. In Delpit’s *Multiplication is for White People,* I found a very useful anecdote about Delpit’s daughter, who had a music teacher that called his
students “prodigy.” From this, it became important to me that I address my students as historians, all the while making explicit the expectations and modeling the behavior of actual historians. I have also drawn upon several Best Practice methods, including the integration of authentic experiences, the use of appropriate primary sources (instead of purely fictionalized texts), and the gradual release of responsibility. This last element of Best Practice is also a reference to Routman’s “I do, we do, you do” model, which underpins this entire unit. Finally, I also incorporate accountable talk, which models more positive and constructive sentence starters. These include ways to address the students (“Can anyone rephrase what ____ just said?” or “Can anyone remind ____ what my question was?”), ways for the students to address one another (“I agree with ____ because…” or “I still have a question about….”), and ways for the students to organize their own thoughts.

V. Assessments:

a. Throughout the unit, students will be informally assessed through their participation and cooperation with fellow historians during both the lessons’ discussions and activities. With my informal assessment, I hope to monitor my more abstract learning goals; that is, I hope to measure how well my students are contributing to the community of historians we are as a class. Furthermore, I will be assessing their ability to work collaboratively. Students will be formally assessed through their completion of their personal narratives. These will serve as my formative assessment of the unit, as they will demonstrate to me in real time how successful my lessons are and what I need to do to make the future lessons of the unit more successful. Their personal narratives will demonstrate their ability to distill historical elements and qualities from the examples we read in class; their
active and thoughtful participation in our carousel will demonstrate their ability to apply
the empathy, analysis, and engagement that is the meat of the unit’s historical content.

b. Students will know the teacher’s standards for the informal assessment of participation
and cooperation, as they are the common policy of the class. If behavioral issues arise, I
will reiterate explicitly my expectations for their conduct. Should students need
reminding, I will state directly why I need their attention and why what we are doing is
important. For each distinct element of the personal narrative and our other historical
explorations, students will be provided with a model of the teacher’s thought process as
well as a model of the completed work. A rubric may also be necessary for the final
narrative as well as our carousel, which would further outline expectations for the
students.

c. The culminating assessment of this unit will be a narrative, for which the format will
remain printed on paper with one-inch margins on all sides and highlighted title and
author. The rubric for this assessment will be developed by the class out of their work on
the immigration interview. Students will be very familiar with this rubric, as well as
expectations for their participation in our carousel.

d. Students will receive written feedback from the teachers throughout the unit, especially
as it pertains to their personal narratives. I will be sure to give oral feedback to the class
when issues that apply to the whole class arise. If I feel it is necessary, I will return to the
models to demonstrate what it is I am looking for what where they must return to their
completed work. Finally, students and parents will both be able to see the final narratives,
which will hang in our classroom. Their rubrics will illustrate the quality of their work
and their performance during our carousel will demonstrate to both student and parent.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lesson</th>
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<tr>
<td>10/15</td>
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<td>“Where do we come from?”</td>
<td>Participation (i)</td>
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<td>Read aloud</td>
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<td>Immigration interview</td>
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<td>Free write</td>
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<td>10/22</td>
<td>TWO</td>
<td>Read aloud</td>
<td>“What is important about my journey?”</td>
<td>Participation (i)</td>
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<td>Immigration interview</td>
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<td>(qualities for rubric)</td>
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<td>Free write workshop (f)</td>
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<td>Return to stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/29</td>
<td>THREE</td>
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<td>“Why did we leave to come here?”</td>
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<td>Apply rubric</td>
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<td>Rubric filled out (f)</td>
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<td>Jigsaw presentation</td>
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<td>11/5</td>
<td>FOUR</td>
<td>Ms. K’s artifacts</td>
<td>“How do I remember my country?”</td>
<td>Participation (i)</td>
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<td>Six square (things I want to have in story)</td>
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<td>Contribution (i)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Read aloud</td>
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<td>Six square (f)</td>
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<td>Return to narratives</td>
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<td>Free write (f)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>FIVE</td>
<td>Review books</td>
<td>“How will people from the future know about</td>
<td>Participation (i)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Review rubric</td>
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<td>Contribution (i)</td>
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This sequence of activities models the gradual release of responsibility and includes copious amounts of modeling so that the students may achieve the ways of knowing in history and ELA content standards that compose this unit. Students will be supported throughout with high quality examples and lots of exposure to their rubric. In fact, the rubric we will employ will be created by the students based on the criteria they highlight as important in the immigration interview. By the end of this unit, I hope to not only have high quality writing samples from all students, but also a level of personal forwardness and universal empathy.

VII. Resources:

a. Explicit parental involvement is necessary in this unit. As such, I will provide any parents I interact with throughout the day with the details of our work in this unit. I will also recommend and encourage that students talk to their parents about what we are reading and writing, so that they may deepen and enrich their own narratives. Finally, parents will always be invited to visit the work of their children, which we will hang proudly in a public space within the school. Parents may monitor their students’ performance through my written feedback on their narratives, as well as my response on the culminating rubric. It was necessary to develop an alternative, as many students were unable to tap
their parents as a resource for this lesson for a variety of reasons. To accommodate for this, several students developed the immigration story of the grandfather from our second read aloud. This was certainly a less engaging alternative and seemed to be a disappointment for most students who had to do it. Unfortunately, I could not think of another option that would have been more authentic.

b. I will be drawing mainly on community and family resources, in the form of histories related and realities experienced. As mentioned above, students will be encouraged to engage with their parents and use as much as possible of their historical resources to inform their own personal narratives.

c. We will treat each student's familial and community resources with respect, so that every member of our community of historians and community of learners feels valued. We will apply this same empathy to the characters we interact with in our read alouds, as well as the real people encountered in historical documents.
VIII. Reflection:

a. In order to explain how my unit reflected the Ways of Knowing philosophy, it is essential that I explain what I believe to be essential to said philosophy. Primarily, I believe that students come to know in history by engaging in relevant and authentic topics. It was essential, therefore, that my unit not seem like a random or disjointed study. Instead, I focused on a meaningful and poignant portion of my students’ lives: their family stories of coming to America. To accompany this relevancy, I believe that students come to know in history by engaging with actual sources. Given the literary nature of my unit, it was easy to tap into the plentiful wealth of historical narratives regarding immigration. I also looked for excerpts and artifacts that would enhance their understanding. In so doing, we read a great deal of personal stories that built the students’ innate empathy for others. This ability to compassionately explore another’s perspective is yet another essential historical skill that underlay my entire unit. They were required throughout to respectfully share, comment, and participate in our community of historians or community of learners. We employed accountable talk to further develop the collaborative skills that underpin historical practice. This was particularly necessary for the co-exploration we conducted in regards to artifacts, excerpts, and illustrations. Students were guided to build off of one another’s insights and inferences (“I want to add…”), as well as to respectfully agree or disagree with a reason or detail. As such, we came to richer and more thoughtful conclusions about our historical documents.

b. My unit as it actually played out varied quite a bit from what I had originally planned.

The original course of the unit was to span six weeks, with one lesson each week. Unfortunately, this had to be cut short due to the holiday and an impending deadline for the completion of our other history unit on the Pilgrims. Therefore, the entire sixth lesson
had to be incorporated into the fifth lesson. The unit also featured several other minor changes, although the other lessons remained mostly intact. For our first lesson, we spent a bit more time reading *How Many Days to America: A Thanksgiving Story* than anticipated; as such, our first draft of our Observations and Questions t-chart was rather sparse and lacking. Additionally, we did not get the chance to really explore how we were going to transform this t-chart into an Immigration Interview. However, our work in this first lesson did provide us an excellent foundation for our “do-over” in the second lesson. The familiarity of the task and chart format made simultaneous reading and analyzing easier for the students. We were able to generate a rather lengthy list of absolutely essential questions for an Immigration Interview (see Appendix Item 1).

Again, this took longer than I had planned, which meant yet again we did not get around to free writing a rough draft of our own immigration stories. So far for the unit, this was the major way that my actual lessons strayed from my plans. Given this, it became apparent that lesson three could not be a primary source study because we had to actually start writing. Therefore, lesson three became a conference style writer’s workshop that we prepared for with over three nights of homework. Students had to ask their parents ten questions and write down their responses (see Appendix Item 2). Even students who were not engaged on the first night became engaged by the second and were eager to ask ten questions (see Appendix Item 3). By the second night, they were tasked to employ the Immigration Interview as a guide; several students went above and beyond, which made me so glad that I had provided extra spaces for the kids to add their own questions (see Appendix Item 4). However, we did run into a bit of trouble when we settled down to writing. About eight students did not bring in any homework, which meant that they
would have to write an immigration story for the grandfather from our second read aloud (see Appendix Item 5). The quality of this work is clearly lesser than that of the rest of the class; it is no wonder, as it is less engaging to write someone else’s story than to write one’s own. Regardless, it was good that we began to write in the third lesson, because it took every lesson onward to complete our stories. Given this pace, Patty and I decided that it would be best to not complete several different drafts of the same story; unfortunately, that means that I do not have a good measure of the progress of the students’ stories. I have included copies of two students’ final work, which was completed over the last three lessons of the unit (see Appendix Item 6). Lessons four and five had to be adjusted slightly to accommodate extra time for working on our narratives, but the changes were not nearly as drastic as those in lesson three. In lesson four, we worked on analyzing my artifact (see Appendix Item 7). The students excelled in class but struggled when they were to extend the skill for homework in regards to their own artifacts. In our final lesson, the students created their illustrations to accompany their stories on the back of their artifact sheets (see Appendix Item 8). The students for the most part followed my model and drew their artifacts instead of illustrating another element of their immigration stories. While I would have liked to see another portion of their stories represented, I was surprised by the quality of their drawings. This was a lovely conclusion to the unit, as it provided us quite a bit of closure as well as a chunk of time to present to one another. I would have liked to have filmed their presentations, because their reading truly gave a personal quality to the stories that was not captured in just their words.
This unit jived very well with two other units. The first complimentary unit was our ELA “Third Graders are Independent Readers and Writers” unit. In those lessons, we worked hard on giving the students the skills to successfully read and write about both fiction and non-fiction. This helped to prepare them for the Immigration unit in several ways. Primarily, it helped them hone their active reading and listening skills. This was essential for our read-aloud work, as well as our peer conferencing. The previous ELA unit also provided lots of writing background. This meant that when the students went to begin their immigration stories, they had the skills to self start and continue without much prompting or guidance. Finally, the ELA unit provided a familiarity with the conferencing style of revision that was threaded throughout the unit. Students knew that they would receive and be expected to provide both positive feedback and constructive criticism from peers and teachers. The second complimentary unit, our Pilgrim unit, ran concurrently for the majority of my Immigration unit. This extended exposure to a very familiar immigration story (that of the Pilgrims) gave us another point of view from which to experience the immigrant’s story. Our Pilgrim books provided yet another narrative model for the students to emulate, but unlike our other read alouds the students were reading these texts independently. Their work with the Pilgrims also allowed them to focus on portions of the immigrant’s story that we might not have had as much time for otherwise, like the journey over or the conditions before departure from the homeland. One piece of strong evidence that their study of the Pilgrims influenced their immigration work was that Derrick offered up a unique question to add to our Immigration Interview: “Did you wear the same clothes?” This clearly came out of our
comparison of Pilgrim clothing versus contemporary clothing. I was so pleased that they stretched their understanding!

d. *From the unit as a whole, students learned what immigration was, became more familiar with the immigration stories of their own families and other families, and conducted the work of historians by adding their own accurate and detailed stories to the historical record.* To demonstrate this, I’d like to take you through Cameron’s progress. At first, Cameron was extremely confused about what an immigrant was. He was sure that no one in his family was an immigrant and that he would not be able to complete the assignment. This was a lovely opportunity for me to share with the class that unless you are Native American, your family came from somewhere else. Cameron seemed skeptical after our conversation, but he agreed to talk to his family. The next day, he came in with a complete story about his Scottish and Irish heritage (see Appendix Item 6). While his final copy leaves a lot to be desired in terms of the details of his family’s story, it is apparent that he made a great breakthrough in his understanding of what an immigrant was. Certainly his familiarity with and curiosity about his own story increased dramatically, to the point where he was eagerly filling out a list of further questions he still had and wanted to ask. Several of these are drawn from his experience with the Pilgrims’ immigration story, which indicates to me his developing awareness of the immigration stories of the people presented in our narrative examples. Just like Cameron, Josephine worked diligently to create unique questions to interview her father with (see Appendix Item 6). She put in a great deal of effort carefully dictating her father’s answers, which she had to translate from Spanish into English before turning them into me for homework (a task she completed without prompting from me or Patty). Her story
is exemplary in so many ways: primarily, it demonstrates her understanding of immigration and her own families immigration experience; secondarily and just as importantly, Josephine’s story is detailed and nuanced in a way that mimics the writing of our expert models (not just my own, but that of the authors in our text set). Truly, her story is crafted with such precision and detail that it stands out from all the other students’ work. Josephine most thoroughly accomplished the work of the historian, not just by adding an excellent story to the record but also by eliciting empathy with the tenderness of a daughter and the eagerness of the historical author.

e. From this unit, I have come to see history as story telling. From this perspective, I see how brilliantly historical work meshes with ELA work. In a way, with both subjects we are attempting to cull the story or truth of the matter from an object, be it an artifact or a book. This way of looking at history allows us to draw out the multiplicity of perspectives that are implicit in any given story. Of central importance to this conception of historical thought is empathy building. To understand or try to see something from a variety of perspectives (and not simply what is most apparent or most agreeable) requires a great deal of compassion and care. This is especially important when looking at a concept that is composed of many different tales, such as immigration. In this case, everyone has something unique to contribute; in other words, another part of the historical magic is an authentic task. I am positive that the students who were working with Grandfather’s Journey were less happily engaged than those who were working on their own personal narratives. Although I am disappointed that I was not clever enough to develop a stimulating alternative for these students, I have learned a valuable lesson from their work. History requires a little (if not a lot of) active participation from our larger
community. Going forward, I am excited to use those resources more effectively, so that we can continue to tell the whole story bit by bit.