Directions for Writing: Write an argumentative essay in which you take a position on whether or not the United States should allow illegal immigrants to stay in the country. Use information from the articles, #1 “Immigration: Obama vs. Congress,” #2 “Dangerous Crossing,” and #3 “Balanced Politics: Immigration” to support your points. Make sure to include information from ALL passages in your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can

- Read the passages
- Plan your response
- Write your response
- Revise and edit your response

Your written response should be in the form of a multi-paragraph essay. Be sure to

- Include a claim
- Address counterclaims
- Use evidence from both sources
- Avoid overly relying on one source

Article #3: Balanced Politics: Immigration

Overview/Background

A political battle that has been heating up recently is the battle over immigration. Terrorism, the drug war, and the national deficit have all fueled interest in a long dormant debate. The U.S. population, fed largely by immigration, will grow to 420 million by the year 2050 (according to the U.S. Census). The Hispanic population alone should be over 100 million, which is especially relevant since over 60 percent of immigrants come from Mexico.

Proposals have recently been put through by the President and House to deal with various aspects of illegal immigration, varying from amnesty for existing illegals, guest worker programs, deportation, fines for unpaid taxes, stricter border enforcement, and so on. However, very little attention has been given to legal immigration. Is immigration in general good for the country? Should we increase the level of people that are allowed to enter the country and work towards citizenship?

Yes

1. Some of the most intelligent and ambitious individuals, who are unsatisfied with their own countries, bring their skills to America. Few countries offer the limitless opportunities that the United States offers. You can start your own business, learn a high-tech career, become a movie star, publish a best-selling novel, or be elected to office. People in other countries crave the same things we do: recognition, wealth, fame, and the feeling of making a difference. America offers endless ways for a "nobody" to become great. Many countries of the world limit
educational opportunities, stifle entrepreneurship, and prevent individuals from reaping the rewards of their hard work. Consequently, such individuals -- the cream of the crop -- often come to America. In fact, our nation was founded by English and other European citizens that risked their lives to sail across the ocean to an unknown future. America can't help but become better from the influence of such people.

2. **It increases the diversity and expands the culture of the country.** No country in the world has the diversity of races, religions, languages, and cultures. America is called the great "melting pot" because we bring together all sorts of people around the world. Diversity brings more tolerance for people that are, on the surface, different than us. It introduces new ideas, new perspectives, new music & food, different customs, new forms of entertainment, diverse strengths & skills, and a host of other advantages.

3. **Immigrants often taken the low-paying jobs (like food service & hotel cleaning) that most Americans don’t want to do at such low wages.** Few Americans like to wash dishes, bust tables, mop floors, pick up garbage, etc. These types of jobs must be done, but employers consistently have trouble finding regular employees to do the work. A wage of $5-$7 is usually too low to induce Americans to take and stay at such jobs. However, immigrants who may be lucky to earn $5 a day in their native countries are more than willing to work these jobs.

4. **Decreasing or eliminating legal immigration will inevitably create more incentive to come to the country illegally, which leads to less assimilation and fewer taxpaying, law-abiding citizens.** Many individuals have only one true hope for a better life for themselves or their children -- emigrate to America. The enormous number of immigrants in this country show that they will try to get here whether or not there are laws to stop them. Illegal immigrants must hide their identities. Thus, they aren’t going to be attending American schools, filing tax returns, or doing other things that typical Americans do. Plus, if they’re already breaking the law by being here, what’s to prevent them from breaking other laws we have? Legal immigrants, especially those who plan to stay permanently, must pay taxes and are more likely to attend school to learn history, English, and a marketable skill. Since they don’t have to hide, they are more likely to assimilate with other Americans and adopt the culture. Lastly, they can eventually earn the right to vote and participate in our political process, meaning they can develop a decision-making stake in the future of our country.

5. **It improves the overall image of America internationally, as it is seen as an open, welcoming country; and immigrants who return home or maintain contact with family back home have a true image of America, not the one propagated in much of the international media.** It's no secret that the United States has a very unfavorable image around the world. Most American citizens are proud of their country and are happy to be here. So why do we have such an unfavorable image abroad? What percentage of the people in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East that have been sampled in these favorability opinion polls do you think have actually been to the United States for any significant amount of time? Think about it, for those that haven’t lived here, their opinion of America is based almost entirely on the media. Thus, the socialists, communists, and propagandists that dominate the international news media may be most responsible for America’s image. We can help alleviate the problem by allowing more people to enter the country. Real people can see what it means to have freedom of speech, freedom to worship, freedom to publish and assemble. They can see our diversity and our shunning of those who lack tolerance. They can sample our sports and our entertainment. They can meet for themselves the "evil Americans". As more people return home or communicate with loves ones, people around the world will increasingly learn what a great country we have.
6. Adding an additional group of cheap labor adds to the flexibility of business, leading to cheaper prices, better quality products, and higher profits. Labor is one of a number of costs of doing business. When businesses have trouble filling low skill jobs such as washing dishes or cleaning rooms, they have only two choices: raise the wage rate high enough to fill the jobs or eliminate the positions altogether. While higher wages sounds good, it means businesses must either accept lower profit margins or they must raise prices to make up the difference. A hike in prices means we pay more for restaurants, hotels, factory products, etc. while draining money from other segments of the economy (since we have less to spend). Lower profit margins mean lower stock prices in our 401(k)’s and less investment dollar inflow. The second choice of eliminating jobs is obviously undesirable for a couple of reasons, not the least of which is the fact that a willing worker could be denied a job that a business wants to offer. But also, when a business eliminates these jobs, it means lower quality products and services. For example, your favorite restaurant might want to carry three bus people for the Friday night shift, but because of a labor shortage, it may only be able to hire two bus people. The work will still get done, but is the cleaning of tables going to be as thorough? Do you think it will take the same amount of time to get a table on a busy night? These types of problems can be helped by increasing the labor pool through the increase of legal immigration.

7. It gives struggling people all over the world an opportunity for a better life. This country was built on immigrants who sought opportunity, political & religious freedom, etc. At some point in this debate we need to set aside the question of whether it’s good for America and look at the point of view of the immigrant. Imagine you were in a place where you could be stoned to death for practicing your religion. Imagine you got paid the same regardless of how hard you worked. Imagine you were unable to study for a new career or start up your own business. Imagine you were forced to rely on government rationing of food to scratch out a living. Imagine the only access to medical care was physicians with only a few months of training who lacked vaccines and basic medical equipment. Would you want to live the rest of your life like this? Would you want your kids to live their whole lives like this? I’m guessing most people, if given a choice, would take the risk in coming to America to achieve something better. Our country was built and has grown on the backs of such people.

No

1. More immigrants means more opportunity for terrorists, drug dealers, and other criminals to enter the country. As we discovered, many of the terrorists on 9/11 came to the country legally. And as any DEA official will tell you, most illegal drugs can be traced to Central or South America. Any additional opportunities to enter the country only increases the chances for terrorists, drug dealers, and other criminals to expand their enterprises. Once these people are in, our open society allows them practically free reign to wreak havoc.

2. Immigrants, especially the poorer ones, consume a high amount of government resources (health care, education, welfare, etc.) without paying a corresponding high rate of taxes. Almost all immigrants will start out earning very low wages, and unless they get additional education or training, they will likely be paid that way indefinitely. Unfortunately, our tax system is set up to keep low-income people from paying taxes. Depending on how many kids and how many deductions they have, many families will pay ZERO income taxes on the first $20,000-30,000 of wages (above what a couple both earning full-time minimum wages brings in for a year). A large 10 percent bracket after that keeps additional taxes low. If they’re eligible for the Earned Income Credit and Child Tax Credit, they may actually receive money back from the government without paying a cent in to it. Poorer individuals are also far less likely to have health insurance, a retirement fund, or backup savings in case of job loss. In
other words, the level of government resources required for social security, health care, welfare, unemployment compensation, etc. will be increased heavily for a group that pays little or no taxes.

3. **The national identity and language is disappearing. The great "melting pot" is being replaced by divisive multiculturalism.** The United States used to be referred to as the great "melting pot" because immigrants adopted the customs, language, and culture of America. Thus, we were no longer Italian-Americans, German-Americans, Mexican-Americans, etc. but instead were simply Americans. Unfortunately, this is quickly becoming a memory as schools and politicians continue to push "multiculturalism", which motivates immigrants to maintain their own language and customs rather than assimilate into American society. How many times have you seen groups of immigrants traveling in packs while speaking their own language. When is the last time you opened a set of instructions written in English only? While we should do everything to help immigrants learn the language and get used to living here, the entrenched multiculturalism is creating divisions that only increase with more immigration. Consider the mass protests that took place in this country when the immigration issue started to heat up. The protests featured hoards of Mexican flags, anti-American slurs, and a Spanish version of the national anthem. Is this what is needed to bring the country together?

4. **The emigration to the United States hurts the home country, as much of the male population, workers, and top intellectuals often leave their country.** Unlike the United States, most countries don’t have an immigration problem. Many have the opposite problem; i.e. they are losing too many people that form the foundation of the economic and family structure. For example, when thousands of people come to the U.S. from Mexico, a family at home often loses one of its main breadwinners. Industries in Mexico also have a smaller pool to build an adequate workforce. Plus, the immigrants that come to America comprise more than just those that fill minimum-wage jobs. Top intellectuals often come for top white-collar job opportunities, religious freedom, or the endless other perks of living in the U.S. That means, for example, that the home country has a tougher time filling high-skilled positions like in medicine and technology. We often have trouble filling these positions in America, so imagine how hard it may be in other countries if the cream of the crop of their intellectuals leaves.

5. **Less-skilled American citizens earn less money and have fewer job opportunities because they must compete with immigrants in the job market.** Despite the improving economy, we still have millions of citizens out of work. Whether it’s lack of skills or lack of opportunities, many of those citizens will be forced to take the low-paying unskilled jobs. If you pump in millions of new workers seeking jobs, it decreases the amount of work available. Plus, the laws of economic supply and demand will push the wages down far from what they would be.

http://www.balancedpolitics.org/immigration.htm