

Question #1

1) Why do the authors of Document 1 and Document 2 believe it is necessary to strictly define Americans, and promote efforts to assimilate, or "Americanize," immigrants in the United States? How do President Theodore Roosevelt and Senator Smith's arguments differ? Do you find their arguments persuasive? Why or why not? Based upon Document 3, how might Woody Guthrie respond to each of those proposals?

Document 1: [excerpt] "Hyphenated Americans" Speech (1915)

Former President Theodore Roosevelt delivered the following speech to a meeting of the Knights of Columbus in Carnegie Hall, New York City on October 12, 1915. With World War I raging in Europe and across the globe, Roosevelt warned of the need for preparedness amongst American citizens. Excerpts from this speech focus upon how Roosevelt defined "Hyphenated Americans" and the importance of their "Americanization" for the country's strength and success in future conflicts.

FOUR centuries and a quarter have gone by since Columbus by discovering America opened the greatest era in world history. Four centuries have passed since the Spaniards began that colonization on the main land which has resulted in the growth of the nations of Latin-America. Three centuries have passed since, with the settlements on the coasts of Virginia and Massachusetts, the real history of what is now the United States began. All this we ultimately owe to the action of an Italian seaman in the service of a Spanish King and a Spanish Queen. It is eminently fitting that one of the largest and most influential social organizations of this great Republic, a Republic in which the tongue is English, and the blood derived from many sources, should, in its name, commemorate the great Italian. It is eminently fitting to make an address on Americanism before this society.

DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

We of the United States need above all things to remember that, while we are by blood and culture kin to each of the

nations of Europe, we are also separate from each of them. We are a new and -distinct nationality. We are developing our own distinctive culture and civilization, and the worth of this civilization will largely depend upon our determination to keep it distinctively our own. Our sons and daughters should be educated here and not abroad. We should freely take from every other nation whatever we can make of use, but we should adopt and develop to our own peculiar needs what we thus take, and never be content merely to copy.

Our nation was founded to perpetuate democratic principles. These principles are that each man is to be treated on his worth as a man without regard to the land from which his forefathers came and without regard to the creed which he professes. If the United States proves false to these principles of civil and religious liberty, it will have inflicted the greatest blow on the system of free popular government that has ever been inflicted. Here we have had a virgin continent on which to try the experiment of making out of divers race stocks a new nation and of treating all the citizens of that nation in such a fashion as to preserve them equality of opportunity in industrial, civil, and/ political life. Our duty is to secure each man against any injustice by his fellows....

HYPHENATED AMERICANS

What is true of creed is no less true of nationality. There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americanism. When I refer to hyphenated Americans, I do not refer to naturalized Americans. Some of the very best Americans I have ever known were naturalized Americans, Americans born abroad. But a hyphenated American is not an American at all. This is just as true of the man who puts "native" before the hyphen as of the man who puts German or Irish or English or French before the hyphen. Americanism is a matter of the spirit and of the soul. Our allegiance must be purely to the United States. We must unsparingly condemn any man who holds any other allegiance. But if he is heartily and singly loyal to this Republic, then no matter where he was born, he is just as good an American as any one else.

The one absolutely certain way of bringing this nation to ruin, of preventing all possibility of its continuing to be a nation at all, would be to permit it to become a tangle of squabbling nationalities, an intricate knot of German-Americans, Irish-Americans, English-Americans, French-Americans, Scandinavian-Americans or Italian-Americans, each preserving its separate nationality, each at heart feeling more sympathy with Europeans of that nationality, than with the other citizens of the American Republic. The men who do not become Americans and nothing else are hyphenated Americans; and there ought to be no room for them in this country. The man who calls himself an American citizen and who yet shows by his actions that he is primarily the citizen of a foreign land, plays a thoroughly mischievous part in the life of our body politic. He has no place here; and the sooner he returns to the land to which he feels his real heart-allegiance, the better it will be for every good American. There is no such thing as a hyphenated American who is a good American. The only man who is a good American is the man who is an American and nothing else....

For an American citizen to vote as a German-American, an Irish-American, or an English-American, is to be a traitor to American institutions; and those hyphenated Americans who terrorize American politicians by threats of the foreign vote are engaged in treason to the American Republic.

PRINCIPLES OF AMERICANISM

Now this is a declaration of principles. How are we in practical fashion to secure the making of these principles part of the very fiber of our national life? First and foremost let us all resolve that in this country hereafter we shall place far less emphasis upon the question of right and much greater emphasis upon the matter of duty. A republic can't succeed and won't succeed in the tremendous international stress of the modern world unless its citizens possess that form of high-minded patriotism which consists in putting devotion to duty before the question of individual rights. This must be done in our family relations or the family will go to pieces....

What is true of the family, the foundation stone of our national life, is not less true of the entire superstructure. I am, as you know, a most ardent believer in national preparedness against war as a means of securing that honorable and self-respecting peace which is the only peace desired by all high-spirited people. But it is an absolute impossibility to secure such preparedness in full and proper form if it is an isolated feature of our policy... But it is equally true that there cannot be this preparation in advance for military strength unless there is a social basis of civil and social life behind it. There must be social, economic, and military preparedness all alike, all harmoniously developed; and above all there must be spiritual and mental preparedness....

RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF CITIZENS

We should meet this situation by on the one hand seeing that these immigrants get all their rights as American citizens, and on the other hand insisting that they live up to their duties as American citizens. Any discrimination against aliens is a wrong, for it tends to put the immigrant at a disadvantage and to cause him to feel bitterness and resentment during the very years when he should be preparing himself for American citizenship. If an immigrant is not fit to become a citizen, he should not be allowed to come here. If he is fit, he should be given all the rights to earn his own livelihood, and to better himself, that any man can have. Take such a matter as the illiteracy test; I entirely agree with those who feel that many very excellent possible citizens would be barred improperly by an illiteracy test. But why do you not admit aliens under a bond to learn to read and write within a certain time? It

would then be a duty to see that they were given ample opportunity to learn to read and write and that they were deported if they failed to take advantage of the opportunity.

No man can be a good citizen if he is not at least in process of learning to speak the language of his fellow-citizens. And an alien who remains here without learning to speak English for more than a certain number of years should at the end of that time be treated as having refused to take the preliminary steps necessary to complete Americanization and should be deported. But there should be no denial or limitation of the alien's opportunity to work, to own property, and to take advantage of civic opportunities. Special legislation should deal with the aliens who do not come here to be made citizens. But the alien who comes here intending to become a citizen should be helped in every way to advance himself, should be removed from every possible disadvantage, and in return should be required under penalty of being sent back to the country from which he came, to prove that he is in good faith fitting himself to be an American citizen.

PREPARATIVES TO PREPAREDNESS

Therefore, we should devote ourselves as a preparative to preparedness, alike in peace and war, to secure the three elemental things: one, a common language, the English language; two, the increase in our social loyalty citizenship absolutely undivided, a citizenship which acknowledges no flag except the flag of the United States and which emphatically repudiates all duality of intention or national loyalty; and third, an intelligent and resolute effort for the removal of industrial and social unrest, an effort which shall aim equally at securing every man his rights and to make every man understand that unless he in good faith performs his duties he is not entitled to any rights at all.

The American people should itself do these things for the immigrants. If we leave the immigrant to be helped by representatives of foreign governments, by foreign societies, by a press and institutions conducted in a foreign language and in the interest of foreign governments, and if we permit the immigrants to exist as alien groups, each group sundered from the rest of the citizens of the country, we shall store up for ourselves bitter trouble in the future....

AMERICANIZATION

The foreign-born population of this country must be an Americanized population no other kind can fight the battles of America either in war or peace. It must talk the language of its native-born fellow-citizens, it must possess American citizenship and American ideals. It must stand firm by its oath of allegiance in word and deed and must show that in very fact it has renounced allegiance to every prince, potentate, or foreign government. It must be maintained on an American standard of living so as to prevent labor disturbances in important plants and at critical times. None of these objects can be secured as long as we have immigrant colonies, ghettos, and immigrant sections, and above all they cannot be assured so long as we consider the immigrant only as an industrial asset. The immigrant must not be allowed to drift or to be put at the mercy of the exploiter. Our object is not to imitate one of the older racial types, but to maintain a new American type and then to secure loyalty to this type. We cannot secure such loyalty unless we make this a country where men shall feel that they have justice and also where they shall feel that they are required to perform the duties imposed upon them. The policy of "Let alone" which we have hitherto pursued is thoroughly vicious from two standpoints. By this policy we have permitted the immigrants, and too often the native-born laborers as well, to suffer injustice. Moreover, by this policy we have failed to impress upon the immigrant and upon the native-born as well that they are expected to do justice as well as to receive justice, that they are expected to be heartily and actively and single-mindedly loyal to the flag no less than to benefit by living under it.

We cannot afford to continue to use hundreds of thousands of immigrants merely as industrial assets while they remain social outcasts and menaces any more than fifty years ago we could afford to keep the black man merely as an industrial asset and not as a human being. We cannot afford to build a big industrial plant and herd men and women about it without care for their welfare. We cannot afford to permit squalid overcrowding or the kind of living system which makes impossible the decencies and necessities of life. We cannot afford the low wage rates and the merely seasonal industries which mean the sacrifice of both individual and family life and morals to the industrial machinery. We cannot afford to leave American mines, munitions plants, and general resources in the hands of alien workmen, alien to America and even likely to be made hostile to America by machinations such as have recently been provided in the case of the two foreign embassies in Washington. We cannot afford to run the risk of having in time of war men working on our railways or working in our munition plants who would in the name of duty to their own foreign countries bring destruction to us... What would be done to us in the name of war if these things are done to us in the name of neutrality?

... I ask you to make a special effort to deal with Americanization, the fusing into one nation, a nation necessarily different from all other nations, of all who come to our shores. Pay heed to the three principal essentials: (1) the need of a common language, with a minimum amount of illiteracy; (2) the need of a common civil standard, similar ideals, beliefs, and customs symbolized by the oath of allegiance to America; and (3) the need of a high standard of living, of reasonable equality of opportunity and of social and industrial justice. In every great crisis in our history, in the Revolution and in the Civil War, and in the lesser crises, like the Spanish war, all factions and races have been forgotten in the common spirit of Americanism. Protestant and Catholic, men of English or of French, of Irish or of

German, descent have joined with a single-minded purpose to secure for the country what only can be achieved by the resultant union of all patriotic citizens....

Even in the matter of national defense there is such a labyrinth of committees and counsels and advisors that there is a tendency on the part of the average citizen to become confused and do nothing. I ask you to help strike the note that shall unite our people. As a people we must be united. If we are not united we shall slip into the gulf of measureless disaster. We must be strong in purpose for our own defense and bent on securing justice within our borders. If as a nation we are split into warring camps, if we teach our citizens not to look upon one another as brothers but as enemies divided by the hatred of creed for creed or of those of one race against those of another race, surely we shall fail and our great democratic experiment on this continent will go down in crushing overthrow. I ask you here to-night and those like you to take a foremost part in the movement a young men's movement for a greater and better America in the future.

ONE AMERICA

All of us, no matter from what land our parents came, no matter in what way we may severally worship our Creator, must stand shoulder to shoulder in a united America for the elimination of race and religious prejudice. We must

stand for a reign of equal justice to both big and small. We must insist on the maintenance of the American standard of living. We must stand for an adequate national control which shall secure a better training of our young men in time of peace, both for the work of peace and for the work of war. We must direct every national resource, material and spiritual, to the task not of shirking difficulties, but of training our people to overcome difficulties. Our aim must be, not to make life easy and soft, not to soften soul and body, but to fit us in virile fashion to do a great work for all mankind. This great work can only be done by a mighty democracy, with these qualities of soul, guided by those qualities of mind, which will both make it refuse to do injustice to any other nation, and also enable it to hold its own against aggression by any other nation. In our relations with the outside world, we must abhor wrongdoing, and disdain to commit it, and we must no less disdain the baseness of spirit which lamely submits to wrongdoing. Finally and most important of all, we must strive for the establishment within our own borders of that stern and lofty standard of personal and public neutrality which shall guarantee to each man his rights, and which shall insist in return upon the full performance by each man of his duties both to his neighbor and to the great nation whose flag must symbolize in the future as it has symbolized in the past the highest hopes of all mankind.

Document 2: [excerpt] "Shut the Door" Speech (1924)

As part of the debate over the Immigration Act of 1924 (also known as the National Origins Act), Senator Ellison DuRant Smith of South Carolina gave voice to many who supported immigration restrictions as a means of preserving existing American resources.

It seems to me the point as to this measure—and I have been so impressed for several years—is that the time has arrived when we should shut the door. We have been called the melting pot of the world. We had an experience just a few years ago, during the great World War, when it looked as though we had allowed influences to enter our borders that were about to melt the pot in place of us being the melting pot.

I think that we have sufficient stock in America now for us to shut the door, Americanize what we have, and save the resources of America for the natural increase of our population. We all know that one of the most prolific causes of war is the desire for increased land ownership for the overflow of a congested population. We are increasing at such a rate that in the natural course of things in a comparatively few years the landed resources, the natural resources of the country, shall be taken up by the natural increase of our population. It seems to me the part of wisdom now that we have throughout the length and breadth of continental America a population which is beginning to encroach upon the reserve and virgin resources of the country to keep it in trust for the multiplying population of the country.

I do not believe that political reasons should enter into the discussion of this very vital question. It is of greater concern to us to maintain the institutions of America, to maintain the principles upon which this Government is founded, than to develop and exploit the underdeveloped resources of the country. There are some things that are dearer to us, fraught with more benefit to us, than the immediate development of the undeveloped resources of the country. I believe that our particular ideas, social, moral, religious, and political, have demonstrated, by virtue of the progress we have made and the character of people that we are, that we have the highest ideals of any member of the human family or any nation. We have demonstrated the fact that the human family, certainly the predominant breed in America, can govern themselves by a direct government of the people. If this Government shall fail, it shall fail by virtue of the terrible law of inherited tendency....

I think we now have sufficient population in our country for us to shut the door and to breed up a pure, unadulterated American citizenship. I recognize that there is a dangerous lack of distinction between people of a certain nationality and the breed of the dog. Who is an American? Is he an immigrant from Italy? Is he an immigrant from Germany? If you were to go abroad and some one were to meet you and say, "I met a typical American," what would flash into your mind as a typical American, the typical representative of that new Nation? Would it be the son of an Italian immigrant, the son of a German immigrant, the son of any of the breeds from the Orient, the son of the denizens of Africa? We must not get our ethnological distinctions mixed up with our anthropological distinctions. It is the breed of the dog in which I am interested. I would like for the Members of the Senate to read that book just recently published by Madison Grant, *The Passing of a Great Race*. Thank God we have in America perhaps the largest percentage of any country in the world of the pure, unadulterated Anglo-Saxon stock; certainly the greatest of any nation in the Nordic breed. It is for the preservation of that splendid stock that has characterized us that I would make this not an asylum for the oppressed of all countries, but a country to assimilate and perfect that splendid type of manhood that has made America the foremost Nation in her progress and in her power, and yet the youngest of all the nations. I myself believe that the preservation of her institutions depends upon us now taking counsel with our condition and our experience during the last World War.

Without offense, but with regard to the salvation of our own, let us shut the door and assimilate what we have, and let us breed pure American citizens and develop our own American resources. I am more in favor of that than I am of our quota proposition. Of course, it may not meet the approbation of the Senate that we shall shut the door—which I unqualifiedly and unreservedly believe to be our duty—and develop what we have, assimilate and digest what we have into pure Americans, with American aspirations, and thoroughly familiar with the love of American institutions, rather than the importation of any number of men from other countries. If we may not have that, then I am in favor of putting the quota down to the lowest possible point, with every selective element in it that may be.

The great desideratum of modern times has been education not alone book knowledge, but that education which enables men to think right, to think logically, to think truthfully, men equipped with power to appreciate the rapidly developing conditions that are all about us, that have converted the world in the last 50 years into a brand new world and made us masters of forces that are revolutionizing production. We want men not like dumb, driven cattle from those nations where the progressive thought of the times has scarcely made a beginning and where they see men as mere machines; we want men who have an appreciation of the responsibility brought about by the manifestation of the power of that individual. We have not that in this country to-day. We have men here to-day who are selfishly utilizing the enormous forces discovered by genius, and if we are not careful as statesmen, if we are not careful in our legislation, these very masters of the tremendous forces that have been made available to us will bring us under their domination and control by virtue of the power they have in multiplying their wealth.

We are struggling to-day against the organized forces of man's brain multiplied a million times by materialized thought in the form of steam and electricity as applied in the everyday affairs of man. We have enough in this country to engage the brain of every lover of his country in solving the problems of a democratic government in the midst of the imperial power that genius is discovering and placing in the hands of man. We have population enough to-day without throwing wide our doors and jeopardizing the interests of this country by pouring into it men who willingly become the slaves of those who employ them in manipulating these forces of nature, and they few reap the enormous benefits that accrue therefrom.

We ought to Americanize not only our population but our forces. We ought to Americanize our factories and our vast material resources, so that we can make each contribute to the other and have an abundance for us under the form of the government laid down by our fathers.

The Senator from Georgia [Mr. Harris] has introduced an amendment to shut the door. It is not a question of politics. It is a question of maintaining that which has made you and me the beneficiaries of the greatest hope that ever burned in the human breast for the most splendid future that ever stood before mankind, where the boy in the gutter can look with confidence to the seat of the Presidency of the United States; where the boy in the gutter can look forward to the time when, paying the price of a proper citizen, he may fill a seat in this hall; where the boy to-day poverty-stricken, standing in the midst of all the splendid opportunities of America, should have and, please God, if we do our duty, will have an opportunity to enjoy the marvelous wealth that the genius and brain of our country is making possible for us all.

We do not want to tangle the skein of America's progress by those who imperfectly understand the genius of our Government and the opportunities that lie about us. Let us keep what we have, protect what we have, make what we have the realization of the dream of those who wrote the Constitution.

I am more concerned about that than I am about whether a new railroad shall be built or whether there shall be diversified farming next year or whether a certain coal mine shall be mined. I would rather see American citizenship refined to the last degree in all that makes America what we hope it will be than to develop the resources of America at the expense of the citizenship of our country. The time has come when we should shut the door and keep what we have for what we hope our own people to be.

Document 3: "This Land Is Your Land" (1940)

Born in Oklahoma in 1912, Woody Guthrie would become one of the foremost voices of American folk music. Guthrie wrote "God Blessed America for Me" in February 1940 as a response to Irving Berlin's song "God Bless America" which he viewed as elitist and not reflective of the America that he knew. Over time, the song evolved and was renamed "This Land is Your Land."

This Land Is Your Land Words and Music by Woody Guthrie

This land is your land This land is my land
From California to the New York island;
From the red wood forest to the Gulf Stream waters
This land was made for you and Me.

As I was walking that ribbon of highway,
I saw above me that endless skyway;
I saw below me that golden valley;
This land was made for you and me.

I've roamed and rambled and I followed my footsteps
To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts;
And all around me a voice was sounding:
This land was made for you and me.

When the sun came shining, and I was strolling,
And the wheat fields waving and the dust clouds rolling,
As the fog was lifting a voice was chanting:
This land was made for you and me.

As I went walking I saw a sign there
And on the sign it said "No Trespassing."
But on the other side it didn't say nothing,
That side was made for you and me.

In the shadow of the steeple I saw my people,
By the relief office I seen my people;
As they stood there hungry, I stood there asking
Is this land made for you and me?

Nobody living can ever stop me,
As I go walking that freedom highway;
Nobody living can ever make me turn back
This land was made for you and me.