

## Desi Arnaz | Lesson Plan

Why is America considered the “Land of Opportunity” for all people, regardless of nationality, race, or religion?

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Through Desi Arnaz’s life story, students will recognize the importance of hard work and talent. They will understand why America is known as the “Land of Opportunity” for all people, regardless of a person’s nationality, race, or religion.

### Learning Objectives:

- Retell the life story of Desi Arnaz, following his journey from Cuban citizen to American superstar.
- Describe the role of hard work and talent in Arnaz’s success as a musician, actor, television producer, and businessman.
- Explain why America is known as the “Land of Opportunity” for everyone.

### Key Vocabulary:

- **Immigrant:** A person who moves to a new country.
- **Political Revolution:** A violent rebellion that attempts to establish a new political system and transform a society.
- **Persecution:** Continual cruel treatment because of a person’s race, religion, politics, or some other difference.
- **Destiny:** The future that a person will have.
- **Discrimination:** Unfair treatment because of something beyond a person's control.

**Educational Standards:** CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.R.7, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.SL.4, CCRA.W.2

**Academic Subject Areas:** Biography, American Values, Hard Work

### What You’ll Need

- Video: *Desi Arnaz: The Immigrant Who Became a Star* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Desi Arnaz: The Immigrant Who Became a Star* (Click [Here](#))
- Pictures of Desi Arnaz

### Lesson Plan (45 minutes)

Warm-Up: (10 minutes)

1. Challenge students to imagine for a moment that they were born in a different country and just arrived in the United States as teenagers with no money and no knowledge of the English language.



2. Ask students to consider their action plan to survive and succeed in this country. Write their responses on the board.
3. Explain that the class will watch a video about a teenage boy who came to America with nothing and would go on to become one of the most successful entertainers and businessmen in American history.
4. Show students pictures of Desi Arnaz and ask them to share what they might already know about him. Give a brief description of him, if needed:
  - Desi Arnaz, a Cuban-born entertainer, emigrated to the United States in 1933, fleeing political turmoil in his homeland.
  - Despite arriving with little, Arnaz rose to prominence as an actor, musician, and producer, famously co-starring with his wife, Lucille Ball, in the groundbreaking television show "I Love Lucy."
  - His success story embodies the American dream, showcasing the opportunities available in the U.S. for immigrants to achieve greatness through talent and determination.
5. Display the worksheet and distribute individual copies to students.
6. Read over the worksheet as a class so that students know what to listen for during the video.

Watch and Complete: (20 minutes)

1. Watch the video.
2. Pause throughout the video to allow students to complete answers and notes on the worksheet. Assist as needed.

Wrap-Up: (15 minutes)

1. Allow students several minutes to complete the worksheet independently.
2. Revisit the responses on the board from the opening activity. Which of those things did Desi Arnaz do?
3. Invite volunteers to share their responses to question 9 on the worksheet.
4. Conclude by restating why America is known as the "Land of Opportunity" for all people (Because with hard work and talent, anyone can succeed here!).
5. Collect the worksheet as a formative assessment or participation grade.

**Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15-20 minutes)**

Distribute the worksheet and allow students to complete it while they follow along with the video.