



Unit 4: Understanding the U.S. School System

Students' Guide

LESSON 5: Families as a Resource

Content Objectives

- Students discuss parent-teacher conferences and the role of interpretation during interactions with educators.
- Students brainstorm ways to cultivate community support for migrant and refugee learners.

Rights Objectives

- Students brainstorm ways secure the right to a non-discriminatory education.
- Students analyze the interaction between the universal right to education and language difference.

Language Objectives

- Students continue to build their language skills around rights.
- Students practice reading, writing, and speaking in English.

KEY VOCABULARY:

Nouns	Verbs
Conference	To notice
Interpreter	To succeed
Grades	To expect
Evaluation	To access (an interpreter)
A role	To meet
Community	To interact
Expectation	To hear (more from a student in class)
Test/quiz	

*These lessons contain some basic information about U.S. law. This information is **not legal advice** and is not a replacement for legal advice from a trained attorney. All information is current as of the date it was produced (April 2016).*

LESSON ACTIVITIES:

PART A) Talking about School Conferences and Using Interpreters

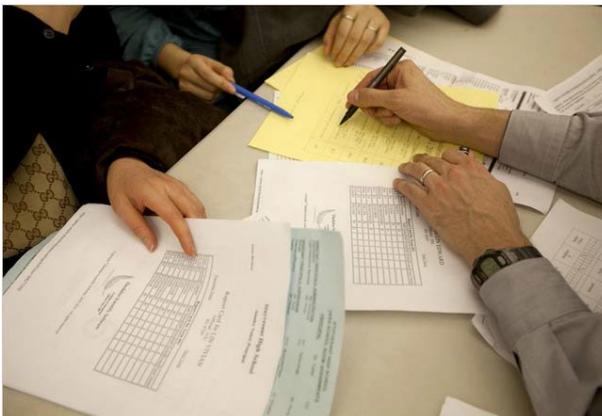
Look closely at the following picture of a mother (left) participating in a school conference with her daughter's high school teacher (right), using an interpreter (center).



Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/20/nyregion/20bigcity.html>

- What details do you notice about this picture? Write what you notice down on a white board or piece of paper everyone can see.
- Share what is different or the same about this meeting and interactions with teachers in your country or with your children's teachers.

Together the woman and her daughter's teacher review her daughter's grades and other evaluations of her daughter's school performance. With the help of her interpreter, the woman asks questions and talks with the teacher about how to help her daughter be successful in school.



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PART B) Reading He’s Story

Read the story below as a class or in small groups. If you choose, write your answers to the questions that follow in the spaces provided. Discuss your answers in English or (when possible) your native language.

“At Stuyvesant, Interpreting Parent-Teacher Night” By Susan Dominus [Adapted]

He Qiu Hua, a mother of two who moved to New York in 1992, walked quickly from floor to floor the other night, holding a piece of paper with room numbers on it, staying close to Ms. Cheng, her interpreter, who came to New York last year from Wuhan, China.

Once inside a math classroom, Ms. Hua listened to Ms. Cheng as she interpreted the teacher’s words: The second quiz was not as good as he might have liked; Ms. Hua’s daughter was very quiet; he would like to hear more from her in class. In a meeting with a science teacher, Ms. Cheng smiled as she told Ms. Hua that her daughter’s lab work was very good.

Source: Adapted from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/20/nyregion/20bigcity.html>

- What is Ms. Hau’s role in the school conference? What is Ms. Cheng’s role?

- What would you want or expect from an interpreter during a school conference?

- What might be hard or problematic about using an interpreter during a school conference? How could these challenges be addressed, if at all?

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- How do people in your community or your child’s school access interpreters?
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PART C) Final Reflections

As a class, discuss your answers to the following questions, considering your experiences and those of people you know who are immigrants or refugees.

- What might be hard or problematic about using an interpreter during a school conference? How could these challenges be addressed, if at all?
- How do people in your community or your child’s school access interpreters?
- How do U.S. teachers expect families to help students? How do these expectations affect immigrant and non-immigrant families differently?
- How else do adults who are immigrants or refugees help their family members with school?

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