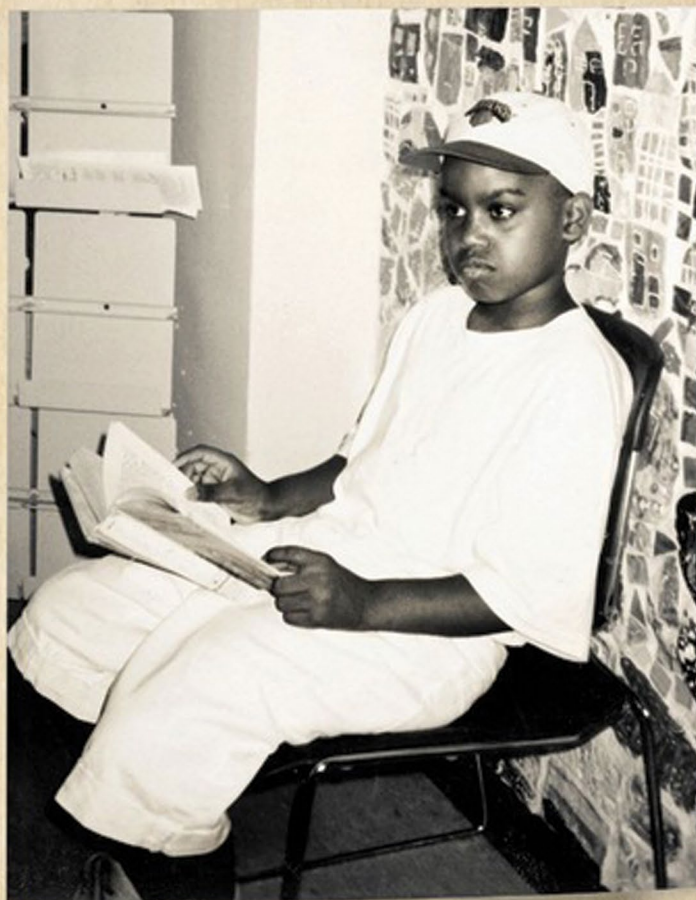


UNDOCUMENTED

by DAN-EL PADILLA PERALTA



FIRST YEAR AND COMMON READING

RESOURCE GUIDE

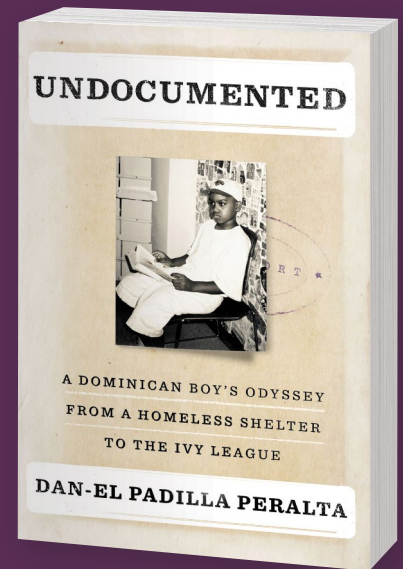
RESOURCE GUIDE WRITTEN BY CHRIS GILBERT



Penguin
Random House
ACADEMIC MARKETING

I. INTRODUCTION

THE DEBATE OVER UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES has persisted for years, and *Undocumented: A Dominican Boy's Odyssey From a Homeless Shelter to the Ivy League*, by Dan-el Padilla Peralta, serves as an invaluable addition to this national conversation. As he details his incredible journey from a homeless shelter to Princeton, Oxford, and Stanford, Dan-el's narrative compels the reader to reflect on U.S. immigration policy, the significance of literacy experiences, the power of education, and the importance of acknowledging the many contributions of the undocumented immigrant population. Through the questions, activities, and resources featured in this guide, students are encouraged to adopt a critical view of both *Undocumented* and related personal experiences and societal issues. This guide contains five sections: discussion questions, various classroom activities, research opportunities, service learning projects, and other resources for students, teachers, and programs. Each section is applicable to multiple curricular areas, and as such, this document has an interdisciplinary focus. Activities can also be easily modified and scaled, as they were constructed with flexibility in mind. Lastly, students are encouraged throughout to utilize technology and work collaboratively as they complete their First Year Experience (FYE); this guide should provoke meaningful analysis and reflection, and it supports the overall purpose of the FYE: to fuse rigorous classroom study with immersive, communal learning experiences.



II. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions can be posed to an entire class, given to small groups, used to initiate online discussions, etc.

1. *Undocumented* opens with a page featuring a passage from *The Captives*, a photograph of young Dan-el, and remarks from Senator Jeff Sessions. How do these things shape the reader's expectations and frame the narrative?
2. *Undocumented* features a variety of different images. How do these images complement the narrative? Choose several photographs and discuss how each augments the text.
3. "Was he just making a short trip to Santo Domingo? Was Mom joking when she said that he could go down there and stay but that she would remain in New York with us? When would we see him again?" (18). Overall, how is Dan-el affected by his father's absence? Do you believe his father was justified in his decision to leave the U.S.? Explain.
4. Explore the role Dan-el's mother played in his life. In what ways did she support him and enable his success?
5. How does Dan-el's relationship with his brother change throughout the book? How do they influence each other?
6. "Demography is a bitch. Holla at me if you want me to break it down for you. You can find me chilling with the Muses, *studiis florentem ignobilis oti*" (299). Throughout the book, Dan-el utilizes different dialects in various situations. How does his ability to switch dialects allow him to navigate different environments?
7. "I had and have no intention of ever being only a Dominican, or a minority, or an undocumented immigrant, or a Spanish Harlem resident; or a Collegiate man, a Princeton man, an Oxford man" (294-295). How does Dan-el defy classification? In what ways does he construct an inclusive identity that incorporates various and sometimes contrasting experiences from multiple settings and communities?
8. The majority of Dan-el's narrative is written in English, but he frequently includes sections of Spanish narration and demonstrates a facility with Latin as well. How does this bilingualism aid Dan-el throughout his life? In what ways does his ability to modulate language allow him to connect with different communities and transcend socioeconomic boundaries?
9. While *Undocumented* undoubtedly details Dan-el's triumphs, what were his most significant challenges? Consider both internal and external obstacles.
10. How did Dan-el's literacy experiences (acts of reading and writing) shape his understanding of himself and various aspects of his life?
11. "Yet every single day, the ambitions and aptitudes of the undocumented millions are trivialized and marginalized by an immigration policy lacking in rationality or justice" (297). What are the most troubling facets of U.S. immigration policy? In general, how should immigration policy be changed?
12. If you could ask Dan-el one question about *Undocumented*, what would you ask and why?

III. VARIOUS CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

The following are short activities applicable to a variety of curricular areas.

1. Student Generated Questions (QAR)

When students are able to generate their own questions, they are typically more invested in the analytical process. Allow them to take ownership of inquiry and explore *Undocumented* through this activity. QAR refers to Question-Answer Relationships, and it works well in terms of encouraging both close analysis and personal connections. The types of questions include:

- **Right there questions:** answers to these questions are found explicitly in the text.
(*Why does Dan-el's father leave the United States?*)
- **Think and search questions:** answers lie in the text, but may only be found by examining several different sections and piecing them together.
(*How do Dan-el's various literacy experiences affect him?*)
- **Author and you:** answers require personal interpretation based on textual evidence.
(*Explain the reasoning of those who support and oppose in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants. Which side do you identify with? Why?*)
- **On my own:** answers connect personal experience with themes of the text.
(*What is the significance of education in your life? Explain.*)

Have students work independently or in pairs to generate several questions per category for a specific section of the book. After these questions are generated, instructors have several options:

- Have students trade and answer each other's questions in writing.
- Have students submit questions on notecards, and randomly select several for formative assessments.
- Have students select one question to expand upon in an extended written response or brief presentation ("Right there" questions do not work well for this).
- Have students answer each other's questions via collaborative documents on Google Docs (<http://docs.google.com>).*

For more information on this activity, consult this resource:

<http://www.readingquest.org/strat/qar.html>

*All Google resources mentioned in this guide are accessible with a free Google account.

2. Small Group Constructive Controversy

"Two friends had summarized bills introduced in California and elsewhere to make undocumented immigrants eligible for in-state tuition rates at state colleges and universities...I'd been fortunate enough to land at Princeton, with its financial aid, but what would have happened if I'd ended up at a state university, having to pay out-of-state fees?" (240).

- Should undocumented immigrants qualify for in-state tuition? Should each state have the right to determine this, or should the matter be determined entirely by the federal government?

Students can answer and debate these kinds of questions during the Constructive Controversy activity. This activity requires students to research a controversial issue, assume a side (for or against), and argue it. To make things more interesting, though, students will eventually deliver arguments for both sides. Proceed in this fashion:

1. Present the topic and break students into groups of four with each consisting of two pairs.
2. Have each pair research both sides of the issue (this could be done during the same class, or students could be given substantial time to research and prepare out-side of class).
3. When ready for debate, have students flip a coin to determine which pair delivers the first argument and whether it is in support or against.
4. Time the debate and let the first side present their argument while the opposing pair attempts to refute it.
5. When time expires, allow the other side to present while the opposing pair argues against them.
6. After both pairs have presented their arguments, have them switch their positions and begin the debate anew.

After the activity concludes, the entire class could discuss, or students could expand on their individual beliefs through writing. Also, consider asking students if their original opinions were changed by the activity.

For more information on Constructive Controversy, consult:

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_71.htm

3. Compose a Literacy Narrative

"...I came across an abridged biography of Henry Kissinger and told myself as I read it that I'd be the next immigrant genius to make it big in government and politics. In another *Reader's Digest* volume, I read an abridged history of the Romanovs and imagined myself to be Rasputin, almost invincible in the face of poison and bullets. Then I checked out *The Count of Monte Cristo* from the local library and made Edmond Dantes my personal hero..." (65-66).

Undocumented is undoubtedly a literacy narrative as it details many of Dan-el's literacy experiences and the influence that each had on his life. According to The Ohio State University's Literacy Narratives of Black Columbus Project, "A literacy narrative is a first-hand narrative about reading or composing (or teaching reading and composing) in any form or context."

Have students emulate Dan-el's work through the composition of their own literacy narrative, and have them specifically analyze how their own race and social class have intersected with several specific literacy experiences. Encourage them to compose an articulate, reflective, organized narrative, and if time allows, have them write and revise multiple drafts. Have students consider the following questions as they prepare to write:

- In general, what roles have writing and reading played in your life?
- What are some particularly memorable literacy experiences you have had?
- How have your racial and social class identifications intersected with these literacy experiences? How have these aspects of your identity impeded and/or encouraged access to your literacy experiences?

For more information about literacy narratives, consult the applicable section in *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*, located here:

https://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/write/fieldguide/writing_guides.asp#BOLD03

4. Compare and Contrast Immigrant Experiences

After reading *Undocumented*, have students access the sources below. Each one details the experiences of a specific immigrant.

- **"Money, Class and College"**
<http://www.nytimes.com/video/business/100000002231125/money-class-and-college.html>
- **"A Young Immigrant Struggles for a College Education"**
<http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/25/an-undocumented-youths-struggle-for-higher-education>
- **"My Life as an Undocumented Immigrant"**
<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/26/magazine/my-life-as-an-undocumented-immigrant.html>

To begin, have students watch/read (two are videos, and one is an article) all three sources. Next, require students to choose one specific source to compare and contrast with Dan-el's narrative. To facilitate this process, instruct students to use a Venn diagram. In one circle, students should note unique aspects of the immigrant experience depicted

in their chosen source; in the other circle, they should note unique aspects of Dan-el's experience. In the middle section of the Venn diagram, students should record similarities. Have students pair up and share their analysis before transitioning to a whole class conversation. Students could also further explore their noted similarities and differences through extended writing.

5. Gallery Walk

In *Undocumented*, Dan-el's powerful writing is augmented by the many photographs featured throughout the book. Have students analyze additional images pertaining to the undocumented immigrant experience by participating in a gallery walk activity, described below.

A gallery walk requires students to move around the classroom while thoughtfully observing and analyzing visual content. To prep this activity, select five to eight images that you believe will prompt students to reflect and think deeply. You can select these images from the following three websites:

- <http://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/undocumented-immigrants-faces-of-the-displaced/1/>
Photographer John Moore's portraits of various undocumented immigrants.
- <http://audiovision.sepr.org/232/facing-deportation?slide=1>
David Harriman's portraits of immigrants who were deported to Mexico.
- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/undocumented-immigrants-homes-photos-mary-beth-meehan_55fad128e4b0fde8b0cd27d8
Mary Beth Meehan's photographs of the living spaces of undocumented immigrants.

After selecting the images, display each on its own designated laptop/tablet or print each out in color. Each image should be placed at a different location in the room, and desks should be arranged so students can easily move around and quietly visit each image station. Encourage them to spend sufficient time reflecting on each image, and as they do so, have students record responses to the following questions, per image:

- What would a good title for the image be? Why?
- What strikes you about the figure(s) (clothing, facial expression, etc.) or setting featured in the image?
- How does the image make you feel? Explain.
- In what ways can you connect the image to *Undocumented*?

After students have circulated around the room, have them share their responses in small groups or during a whole-class discussion.

IV. RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

The following topics are designed to provide students with opportunities for extended inquiry and analysis. In response to these, students could:

- Compose a research paper
- Deliver a presentation
- Design a lesson plan and teach a class
- Create a website (<http://www.weebly.com> and <https://sites.google.com> are excellent free resources for this)

1. “I kept coming across the fulminating rants of anti-immigrant zealots who invoked the law as cover for their xenophobia, saying that since the good-for-nothing illegals didn’t follow the law and didn’t wait their turn in line, they had to be kicked out. I wanted to ask them: What if the laws don’t make sense? What if they don’t take into account the kinds of experiences my family had gone through? What if the rules are simply wrong?” (145-146).

Take a close, extended look at current U.S. immigration policy and identify several specific laws that are in desperate need of revision or elimination. Why do these particular facets of immigration policy require attention? If you had the ability to reshape or replace the specific laws you have selected, how exactly would you respond? Why?

2. There has been a debate for some time regarding whether immigrants lacking documentation should be referred to as “illegal” or “undocumented.” Scrutinize and summarize arguments from both sides of the debate. Next, choose a side, conduct research, and formulate an argument for the term you believe is appropriate. Be sure to address the opposing viewpoint and refute it. Finally, discuss why this particular debate matters.
3. “And from New York, I expand to America and to the entire scope of my wanderings across it, from New York to Princeton and California, to make the same point: that I am embedded, productively, in an American web of relations; that I call America mine because my life has been and is fully American” (298-299).

To help reinforce the notion that immigrants are inseparable from American experience, perform research and explore your own immigrant past. To discover more about your immigrant history, conduct research by consulting family members and accessing genealogical resources such as those listed below. If you immigrated to the United States, reflect on your experience, interview relatives, and provide a detailed account of your immigration journey and the factors that catalyzed it. If you were born in the U.S., perform genealogical research and examine your family’s lineage and related immigration history. If possible, trace your

family’s history back to your first relatives who immigrated to the U.S. Who were they? When did they arrive? Where did they emigrate from? As best you can, provide a comprehensive account of your own immigrant history.

Useful genealogical resources for this activity include:

- <http://www.searchforancestors.com/rootsweb/global.html>
 - <http://www.worldgenweb.org/>
 - <http://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/family-history-center>
 - <http://www.genealogy.com/>
 - <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/>
 - <http://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/index.html>
4. “And don’t even get me started about the escalation in deportations over the past five years—undertaken at the initiative and with the support of a Democratic White House whose advocacy for the suffering and downtrodden has not, to date, extended to the families broken or the lives mangled by deportations” (295).
- Scrutinize deportation figures in the U.S. and assess how the number of deportations has fluctuated over the past twenty to thirty years. Next, examine deportation policy and identify specific laws that you believe influenced the deportation data you located. Finally, consider the nation’s political landscape and see if you can identify correlations between deportation figures, related policies, and political parties. In other words, how did deportation numbers and policies change under Republican and Democratic administrations? Do you notice any correlations or evidence of causation? Be sure to consider present circumstances during your analysis.
5. “Through books and Collegiate, I’d imagined a way out of poverty. Admission to Princeton would be the final step in transforming my imagination into reality. I’d have full financial aid, I’d get a great education, and I’d earn a Princeton degree...who could turn me down with a Princeton B.A.? I’d leave the hood and take Mom and Yando with me” (173).

Analyze the complex relationship between poverty, higher education, and social mobility. What are the primary obstacles discouraging impoverished people from accessing higher education? Does a college education ensure economic advancement? To what extent do work ethic, luck, and external factors inhibit or encourage social mobility? Carry out research and generate thorough answers to these questions.

V. SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS

These projects are designed to connect students' learning experiences with the larger community.

1. Participate in National Educators Coming Out Day and/or National Institutions Coming Out Day

- United We Dream, the largest immigrant youth-led organization in the country, promotes two different days designed to support undocumented students: National Educators Coming Out Day and National Institutions Coming Out Day. Share the information below with students and encourage them to participate in one or both days.
- National Educators Coming Out Day is held annually on November 12th. The purpose of the day is to encourage educators to publicly announce support for undocumented students. In the past, professors at various participating schools pledged their support and were photographed holding signs announcing that they were "unafraid educators with and for undocumented students." Additionally, undocumented students and their allies were also photographed with their own signs (many of these images can be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/uwdimages>). These images became part of a larger social media campaign. Students can access information about the day and related materials at <http://unitedwedream.org/educatorsout/>. Note that the site also features a link to a social media toolkit that suggests ways that students and educators can use platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to publicize their support.
- National Institutions Coming Out Day (NICOD) is held annually on April 7th. The purpose of the day is to publicize what schools are doing to support undocumented students. Students and educators can access information about the day at <http://tinyurl.com/uwdnicod>. Interested parties can use this site to pledge to be a part of NICOD, receive an informative toolkit detailing what other schools have done to support undocumented students, and connect with United We Dream. In 2015, some participating universities issued official statements of participation. For example, the University of Washington's statement can be viewed at <http://www.washington.edu/president/2015/04/07/national-institutions-coming-out-day/>. Students could lobby their own university to do the same.

2. Host an UndocuWeek

Students can work together to organize and host an "UndocuWeek." During UndocuWeek, each day features unique activities and events designed to promote awareness of undocumented immigrants and the many challenges facing them. An UndocuWeek can be held at any point, but some schools have chosen to schedule

the week around National Educators Coming Out Day or National Institutions Coming Out Day. During past UndocuWeeks, groups at various universities have:

- Screened and discussed pertinent films such as *Papers: Stories of Undocumented Youth* and *Documented*
- Held open mic sessions for students and faculty
- Gave educational presentations on U.S. immigration policy
- Displayed artwork from undocumented students
- Held town hall discussions on issues concerning undocumented youth

To help generate ideas for your own UndocuWeek, examine past events held at the following universities:

- **UC Berkeley**
<http://news.berkeley.edu/2014/04/09/undocuweek-dirks/>
- **Humboldt State University**
<http://www2.humboldt.edu/multicultural/Download/Undocuweek.pdf>
- **San Francisco State University**
<http://ctinsider.org/attachment/345/UndocuWeek+2015.pdf>
- **UCLA**
<http://dailybruin.com/2013/11/18/ideas-to-hold-immigration-awareness-week-at-ucla/>

3. Debunk Myths Regarding Immigrants and Immigration

"ILLEGAL immigrants getting these benefits? They're a drain on our country's resources. They're not citizens...They take jobs. They send lots of money, TENS OF BILLIONS of dollars every year, back home in remittances. So they take jobs from hard-working Americans, they free-ride on benefits that good citizen Americans pay for with their taxes..." (240-241).

Have students identify and debunk myths regarding immigration and the immigrant population through the creation and distribution of brochures and/or fact sheets. These two document forms are ideal for this activity because they typically feature concise language, statistics, and they are easily distributed and quickly read.

- To begin, place students in small groups. In these groups, students should list some of the most prominent myths about the immigrant population they are familiar with. After this, have students perform online research to locate additional myths and information about immigrants.
- Next, have students perform research (using credible sources) to debunk the myths they have identified.

- Finally, students should organize their information in a concise, visually-appealing format. If possible, show them examples of exemplary brochures and fact sheets, and direct students to create their own and distribute them to the campus population. Note that students could also distribute digital versions of their work through social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

Useful resources for this activity:

- **https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/legacy/reports/Immigration_MythsFacts.pdf**
An “Immigration Myths and Facts” document from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- **<http://www.tolerance.org/immigration-myths>**
“10 Myths About Immigration,” a resource from Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center
- **<https://www.canva.com/create/brochures/>**
A free, online brochure maker
- **<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/participation/promoting-interest/fact-sheets/main>**
Suggestions and guidelines for composing fact sheets

4. Become an Expert and Educator

Have students select a topic related to *Undocumented* to research in small groups. Some suggested topics include:

- Financial aid availability and college affordability for undocumented students
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
- The DREAM Act
- The Supreme Court case *Plyler vs. Doe* and its relevance to undocumented students
- The psychological and emotional effects of being undocumented

The purpose of this activity is for students to become experts on their topic so that they may effectively educate other members of the campus community. First, student groups should read and analyze the applicable sections of *Undocumented* while performing secondary research as well. After students have sufficiently researched their topic, have them answer the following two questions:

1. What is the essential information that others must know about my group's topic?
2. What are controversial elements of my topic?

Finally, have students present their research to the campus community in such a way that it both informs and invites them to debate the issue. Groups could:

- Staff an information booth (be sure to obtain permission first) in a visible area and distribute brochures, fliers, or other documents. Free web resources mentioned elsewhere in this guide will work for this, or students could use programs such as Microsoft Publisher to create documents.

- Launch an online campaign through social media or a designed website. Encourage students to create captivating presentations through <http://www.prezi.com> or Google Slides (<http://www.google.com/slides/about/>).
- Design and publish infographics. An infographic is a visual representation of information that features short sections of text and multiple charts, graphs, and other visuals. The digital medium offers students a unique way to package and represent knowledge while sharpening their digital literacy skills. Free resources for this include <http://piktochart.com> and <http://easel.ly>.

Regardless of the format students select, their presentations should invite their audience to ask questions and engage in debate.

5. Mentor and Educate Local Youth

“He was a tall white man with wavy light brown hair who’d asked us to call him Jeff...He kept asking questions. I had a new friend. There was something about him that convinced me he was actually interested in what I was saying” (49, 51).

Dan-el benefits immensely from his relationship with Jeff, and there are other adults described in the book who also mentor and assist Dan-el during his youth. Additionally, Dan-el later serves as a mentor himself. Have students become mentors by encouraging them to work with youth in the following ways:

1. Locate local schools in need of qualified tutors/mentors. While students can certainly investigate any school for potential tutoring and mentoring opportunities, encourage them to seek out schools serving underprivileged populations. Students can contact local schools directly to inquire about specific opportunities, but the following resources can also help with this activity:
 - **<https://www.volunteermatch.org/>**
VolunteerMatch lists volunteer opportunities throughout the country.
 - **<https://www.unitedway.org/get-involved/volunteer>**
This resource allows students to view United Way volunteer opportunities across the country.
 - **<http://www.bbbs.org>**
The Big Brothers Big Sisters of America website provides access to numerous mentoring opportunities.
2. Visit local middle and high schools and deliver presentations on the challenges facing undocumented students and the available resources that can help these students overcome them. For this endeavor, consider utilizing several resources mentioned elsewhere in this guide (visual aid software and websites, websites for brochure creation, etc.). Consider covering the following information during the presentation:
 - Undocumented students and higher education access
 - National and state policies affecting undocumented students and financial aid availability

- National and local organizations that advocate for undocumented youth
- The process of becoming a student activist and connecting with like-minded individuals

The following resources contain information of interest to teenaged undocumented students:

- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/for-undocumented-students>
Information from The College Board for undocumented students.

- <http://e4fc.org/resources/scholarshiplist.html>
From Educators for Fair Consideration, a list of scholarships and related resources for undocumented students.
- <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/focus/supporting-undocumented-youth.pdf>
The U.S. Department of Education's resource guide for supporting undocumented youth.

VI. OTHER RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND PROGRAMS

The following are resources useful for extending a study of *Undocumented* and its many related subjects:

- <http://www.c-span.org/video/?327476-1/words-danel-padilla-peralta>
A videotaped interview with Dan-el Padilla Peralta.
- http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/23/nyregion/from-an-undocumented-boyhood-to-a-doctorate.html?_r=0
A piece in *The New York Times* about *Undocumented* and its author.
- <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB114505937960426590>
The 2006 *The Wall Street Journal* article Dan-el mentions in *Undocumented*.
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/09/24/i-told-harvard-i-was-an-undocumented-immigrant-they-gave-me-a-full-scholarship/>
A piece by Dario Guerrero, an undocumented immigrant at Harvard College.
- <http://thedartmouth.com/2014/03/31/never-rested-undocumented-life-at-dartmouth/>
An article discussing undocumented students at Dartmouth College.

- <http://mydocumentedlife.org/>
A website started by Carolina Valdivia, an undocumented graduate student.
- <http://myimmigrationstory.com/>
A collection of stories from immigrants.
- <http://www.thedream.us/>
A multimillion-dollar national scholarship fund for DREAMers.
- <http://unitedwedream.org/>
The website for United We Dream, the largest immigrant youth-led organization in the country.
- <http://e4fc.org/>
The website for Educators for Fair Consideration, an organization empowering undocumented young people.
- <http://www.defineamerican.com>
The website for Define American, an organization that seeks to shift the narrative regarding immigrants, citizenship and identity in the United States.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE

Chris Gilbert has taught high school English for the past ten years in Asheville, North Carolina. He is also an avid writer. His work has appeared in *The Washington Post's* education blog, "The Answer Sheet," NCTE's (National Council of Teachers of English) *English Journal*, and he

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For additional resources, visit www.penguin.com/fye