

Summary: Newcomers to Florida

Florida's Diverse Population

People from around the world live in Florida. They bring diversity to Florida. Many of Florida's immigrants came as refugees. Others came to find better jobs. Between 1950 and 2000, many immigrants came from Cuba and Haiti.

In 1959, Fidel Castro became Cuba's dictator. Many people left Cuba because they did not like Castro's government. It took land and businesses away from them. Thousands immigrated to the United States. Most of them settled in Miami. It became a center for Cuban culture.

In the late 1950s, Haitians left their country to escape a cruel dictator and poor living conditions. Many Haitians came to Miami. Later, they settled in other parts of south Florida.

Thousands of immigrants from Mexico, Nicaragua, and Jamaica also came to Florida. In the 1980s, many Asians began immigrating to Florida. Today, Filipinos, Chinese, and Asian Indians live throughout Florida.

Newcomers Help Florida Grow

Life can be hard for immigrants when they come to Florida. Many arrive with few belongings and little money. Many live in crowded homes and work in jobs with low pay. Most have to learn a new language. They may face racism and discrimination. Many immigrants miss their old homes and worry about family members left behind.

Communities grow as more immigrants come to live in them. Many immigrants work hard and succeed in their new lives. They find jobs, buy homes, and go to school to learn new skills. Some start their own businesses. Many become American citizens and vote in elections. Some run for political offices, such as mayor and state legislator.

Immigrants learn about Florida's culture as they arrive. They also keep their own cultures alive by speaking their native languages, eating traditional foods, and celebrating special holidays. Over time, these customs mix with Florida's culture. For example, Floridians can listen to Cuban music, enjoy Haitian festivals, or eat in Chinese restaurants. This diversity makes Florida an exciting place.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

diversity *noun*, variety

refugee *noun*, a person who leaves his or her home in search of a place of safety, or refuge

After You Read

REVIEW Why did so many Cubans and Haitians want to leave their countries? Underline the sentence that tells why many people left Cuba. Highlight the sentence that tells why many people in Haiti left their country.

REVIEW Why is life challenging for some immigrants when they first come to Florida? Draw a box around the paragraph that tells why life is hard for many immigrants.