



Migration Interviews

People move for many different reasons. Sometimes they leave one place because the situation there is not good for them. They may be persecuted because of their religious beliefs or unable to find jobs in an area that is economically depressed. Geographers call these reasons “push factors,” because they push people out of one place and toward another. Other times, people move because a new place promises a better life. They may want to find better schools or an area where they can afford to buy a home. Geographers call these reasons “pull factors,” because they pull people to a new place. When people decide to move, a combination of push and pull factors usually shapes their decision.

Divide into pairs. Interview your partner to find out how he or she came to live in the area where you live now. Be sure to ask the following questions. (You may ask others as well, but don't leave these out.)

1. When did you/your family move to this area?
2. Why?
3. Were there problems where you were living before that you wanted to get away from? If so, what were they?
4. What attracted you to this area?
5. Which do you think was more important in the decision to move—the push factors or the pull factors? What makes you think so?
6. If you know about an earlier generation of your family that came to this country (in other words, if your answers to 1-5 were about moving to your area, but your family was already in the United States), when did they come?
7. Why?
8. What were the push factors that led them to leave their home country?
9. What were the pull factors that attracted them to this country?