

I immigrated from [Belize](#) to the United States when I was 12 years old. I came along with my sister and one brother, leaving behind my father and an older brother. My mother and another older brother had immigrated to the U.S. six years earlier. My mother and father eventually got a divorce, and she married a U.S. citizen, became a citizen herself, and was therefore able to obtain immigration papers for us.

My transition to life in the U.S. was somewhat easy. I could speak, read, and write English so it made assimilation much easier. Throughout my early childhood, I knew about life in the U.S. My mother had traveled back and forth to the U.S., and she told us many stories.

I also regularly read U.S. news magazines like

*Time*

and

*Newsweek*

. The community I first lived in upon arrival was largely made up of immigrants, many of them from Mexico and Central America.

Since I was a child when we immigrated, it was not my choice to immigrate to the U.S. It was a decision made by my mother because she wanted her children with her and believed life in the U.S. would give us greater opportunities.

**Andrew, California**