

Turn of the Century Immigration

Overview

In this lesson, students will simulate the experiences of an immigrant's passage to and arrival in America during the turn of the century, relating these experiences to Emma Lazarus's poem *The New Colossus*. Students will also explore the process to become a naturalized citizen and learn about the different ethnic groups immigrating to America.

Grade

8

North Carolina Essential Standards for 8th Grade Social Studies

- 8.H.1.3 - Use primary and secondary sources to interpret various historical perspectives.
- 8.H.1.4 - Use historical inquiry to evaluate the validity of sources used to construct historical narratives (e.g. formulate historical questions, gather data from a variety of sources, evaluate and interpret data and support interpretations with historical evidence).
- 8.H.1.5 - Analyze the relationship between historical context and decision-making.
- 8.H.3.1 - Explain how migration and immigration contributed to the development of North Carolina and the United States from colonization to contemporary times (e.g. westward movement, African slavery, Trail of Tears, the Great Migration and Ellis and Angel Island).
- 8.H.3.2 - Explain how changes brought about by technology and other innovations affected individuals and groups in North Carolina and the United States (e.g. advancements in transportation, communication networks and business practices).
- 8.H.3.3 - Explain how individuals and groups have influenced economic, political and social change in North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.H.3.4 - Compare historical and contemporary issues to understand continuity and change in the development of North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.G.1.1 - Explain how location and place have presented opportunities and challenges for the movement of people, goods, and ideas in North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.G.1.3 - Explain how human and environmental interaction affected quality of life and settlement patterns in North Carolina and the United States (e.g. environmental disasters, infrastructure development, coastal restoration and alternative sources of energy).

Essential Questions

- What was it like for immigrants to travel from their homeland to America and be processed through Ellis or Angel Island?
- What is the process for becoming a naturalized citizen?
- What contributions have immigrants made to American society?

Materials

- Turn of the Century Immigration, reading and questions attached
- Supplies to simulate the experience on an immigrant ship (optional; see "Teacher Preparation")
- Immigrant Ship Images, examples attached
- *Ellis Island: The Immigrants' Experience*, attached; Immigrant stories and experiences, such as "The Colors of Freedom" by Janet Bode (optional)
- Statue of Liberty image, attached
- *The New Colossus* by Emma Lazarus, poem attached

- Immigrant ethnicities (before class, write onto stickers or Post-its for distribution to students): English, German, Italian, Irish, African, Japanese, Chinese, Jewish
- Citizenship quiz and key, attached
- Internet access to Thinkquest’s Immigration: The Living Mosaic of People, Culture, and Hope
 - <http://wayback.archive-it.org/3635/20130913061921/http://library.thinkquest.org/20619/>
 - Please note: As of 2014, Oracle is no longer maintaining their Thinkquest sites. This link is correct as of April 2017, but teachers should double check that this link is still active before starting the lesson. If the link is no longer active, Google the title of the website above to find another site.
- Immigrant Experiences Worksheet, attached
- World map (available online at: http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/pdf/world_country.pdf)
- Atlases

Duration

60 minutes

Teacher Preparation (optional)

Before class, set up your classroom in a way that helps students imagine they are on a boat. This can be done as simply as arranging desks closely together in the shape of a ship, or as complex as using large cardboard appliance boxes and other materials to simulate a ship. For the most creative ideas, enlist a few students to help prior to this lesson, or if time permits, have part of the lesson be students creating the ship and accessories (collaborate with the school’s art teacher for a great cross curricular project). If possible, place an oscillating fan in the background to simulate ocean breeze. Play ocean and/or boat sounds in the background as well (use a sound effect CD, sound clips from a movie, download sounds from the Internet, etc.) Project a picture of an immigrant ship, such as one of those attached.

Student Preparation

Assign an introductory reading on turn of the century immigration for homework prior to this lesson. A reading with corresponding questions is attached, or teacher may choose to assign a textbook reading.

Procedure

Simulating the Immigrants Journey

1. As students enter class, instruct them to crowd onto whatever boat you have created. Set the scene by having students close their eyes and imagine being on a ship headed from a foreign country to America in the late 1800s. Teachers should offer prompts to assist students in visualizing the journey of an immigrant, either by telling them what they would be experiencing (see the attached *Ellis Island: The Immigrants Experience*) or by reading from immigrant writings/journals. (Check out *The Colors of Freedom, Immigrant Stories* by Janet Bode, at the library.) While on the “boat” also assess students’ prior knowledge by asking them what they already know about immigration in the late 1800s-early 1900s.

Statue of Liberty

2. Finally, tell students that they are almost to the shore of a land called New York! Ask them what they see and how they are feeling (as immigrants). As students respond, project an image (such as the one attached) of the **Statue of Liberty**. Hand out or project the attached poem by *The New Colossus* by Emma Lazarus and have a student volunteer read it out loud. Discuss:
 - How does this poem make you feel? What is its mood and tone?
 - What images do you visualize when reading this poem? What sounds do you imagine hearing? What smells do you imagine?
 - Who is the “she” of the poem? How would you characterize “her”?
 - What comparison does Lazarus make between the Statue of Liberty and the Colossus of the ancient world? How is this statue different?
 - What did the Statue of Liberty symbolize in the late 1800s-early 1900s? Has that symbolism changed today? Explain.

3. Explain to students that “between 1820 and 1920, approximately 34 million persons immigrated to the United States, three-fourths of them staying permanently. For many of these newcomers, their first glimpse of America was the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor. The Jewish American poet Emma Lazarus saw the statue as a beacon to the world. She wrote this poem to help raise money for the pedestal and it was carved on the pedestal. The poem captures what the statue came to mean to the millions who migrated to the United States seeking freedom, and who have continued to come throughout history. (Source: <http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0874962.html>)

Ellis Island

4. When the “boat docks”, the teacher should sort the students much the same way the immigrants were sorted at Ellis Island as they “de-board.” Give each student a sticker or Post-It that designates their ethnicity (ethnicities should include English, German, Italian, Irish, African, Japanese, Chinese, Jewish). At this point, teachers may wish to simulate the Ellis Island experience (refer to the attached *Ellis Island: The Immigrants’ Experience*). For example, teachers can have students form lines by ethnicity, and quickly “assess health”, randomly marking students with chalk-marked “E” for eyes, “L” for lameness, or “X” for disability. Some students could be informed they are too ill and will be sent back, others could be informed they are being detained or quarantined before moving on to their American destinations.
5. Instruct the students to write a creative journal entry about their experience so far. (Prompt them with questions such as: What have they seen? How do they feel (physically and emotionally)? How has it differed than their life back home? Do they know what is going on? Are they looking forward to anything? Are they nervous about or dreading anything?)
6. Next, give each student the attached citizenship quiz. Explain to students that they must get at least 18 of the questions correct. Once students have finished, go over the answers to determine who passed. Allow students to respond to the test and their opinion of it. Often, students will realize after taking this quiz that becoming a naturalized citizen today is a long and difficult process. Teachers may choose to have students reflect on their emotions and the results of their quiz in another immigrant response journal.
7. Provide students with a world map and have them chart their journey from their home country (students will choose this based on the ethnicity assigned) to America using the atlases. Students can complete this individually, or partner up with a student of the same assigned ethnicity to complete the activity. Tell them about both **Angel** and **Ellis Island** and allow them to reason out which port they likely landed at (based on their ethnicity).
8. Have students access <http://wayback.archive-it.org/3635/20130913061921/http://library.thinkquest.org/20619/> to research their assigned ethnicity, as well as Angel or Ellis Island. After reading, students should summarize what happened to them while they were there. Also encourage students to analyze the pictures available on the site, which can give them additional insight as to what their experiences would have been. As students view the site, they should complete the *Immigrant Experiences Worksheet* for their ethnicity. Once students are finished, they will report back to the class regarding their ethnicity. Students will then complete the entire chart based on what their classmates teach them.

Additional Activities

- Compare immigration today to immigration at the turn of the century. See Carolina K-12’s Learning About Immigration in North Carolina with “A Home on the Field”
 - <http://civics.sites.unc.edu/files/2012/05/AHomeontheField1.pdf>
 - Accompanying PPT: <http://civics.sites.unc.edu/files/2012/05/HomeontheFieldPPT1.pdf>

Name: _____

Turn of the Century Immigration

Between 1880 and 1920 the U.S. acted as a huge magnet for immigrations from all directions. Most settled in large cities like San Francisco, New York, Chicago, and Boston. Previous immigrants had come to America from western and northern Europe and were often well educated, spoke English and had useful skills. Except for the Irish, most were also protestant. By 1880, the trend of immigration changed. Most coming to America were from southern and eastern Europe and tended to be Catholic or Jewish, poor, unskilled and knowing no English. Their habits and culture were very different from native-born Americans.

America was viewed as the “golden door” to opportunity – hope of a better life. For this new wave of immigrants, life in Europe and Asia was difficult at best. They came seeking to escape famine, land shortage and religious or political persecution. Others, known as “birds of passage”, wanted to come to America temporarily for money with the intention of returning to their homeland. There were some political efforts in the southern states like S. C. to recruit immigrants for more desirable locations such as Germany and Belgium in an attempt to increase the white labor force for the mills and to sell farm land.

Most immigrants arrived by steamship. Travel across the Atlantic from Europe took approximately one week, while Pacific crossing from Asia took nearly three weeks. The cheapest accommodations were in steerage, the cargo area where conditions were crowded and unsanitary. Upon arrival at the designated port of entry, immigrants faced the question of whether they would be admitted to the U.S. The process at Ellis Island in NYC required a physical exam and government inspection of documents. As the major immigration station in the US at the turn of the century, nearly 20 million immigrants passed through Ellis Island. Immigrants arriving from Asia gained admission at Angel Island in San Francisco Bay. Processing at Angel Island was a contrast to Ellis Island. Immigrants faced harsh questioning and lengthy detentions in a rundown, dirty facility. Writings known as Tibishi poems have been found on the detention and barrack walls expressing the immigrant’s anger and disappointment in America. Immigrants coming to the Port of Charleston, S.C., on the other hand, were sponsored with free passage, guaranteed jobs, and a place to stay with local families while in Charleston. A welcoming committee tried very hard to meet all their needs.

Although life in America was a great improvement in most cases, it had a hard time living up to the dreams and expectations of most immigrants. They were immediately faced with finding a place to live, getting a job in addition to understanding an unfamiliar language and culture. It was difficult to adjust to life in a large industrial city. Their urban living conditions could be classified as slums with all the typical issues and problems associated with that environment. Most took the lowest paid jobs and often whole families including young children worked to earn enough to survive. Working conditions were unsafe with long hours at little pay. Immigrants from each country tended to live in the same neighborhoods. These ethnic neighborhoods were like cities within cities offering new immigrants a chance to hold on to some aspects of their old world. These de facto neighborhoods provided familiar foods, others who spoke their language, and worship services. Often a political boss would offer services and aid in exchange for political support.

After 1886, the immigrants’ first sight of America was often the Statue of Liberty. At the base of the statue were the words written by Emma Lazarus:

“Give me your tired, your poor
Your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free.”

Not all Americans agreed with this sentiment. Many native-born Americans resented the new immigrants. Industrialists were delighted with the plentiful cheap labor, but American workers were worried by these new arrivals’ willingness to work long hours for low wages. American “nativists” believed the new immigrants were

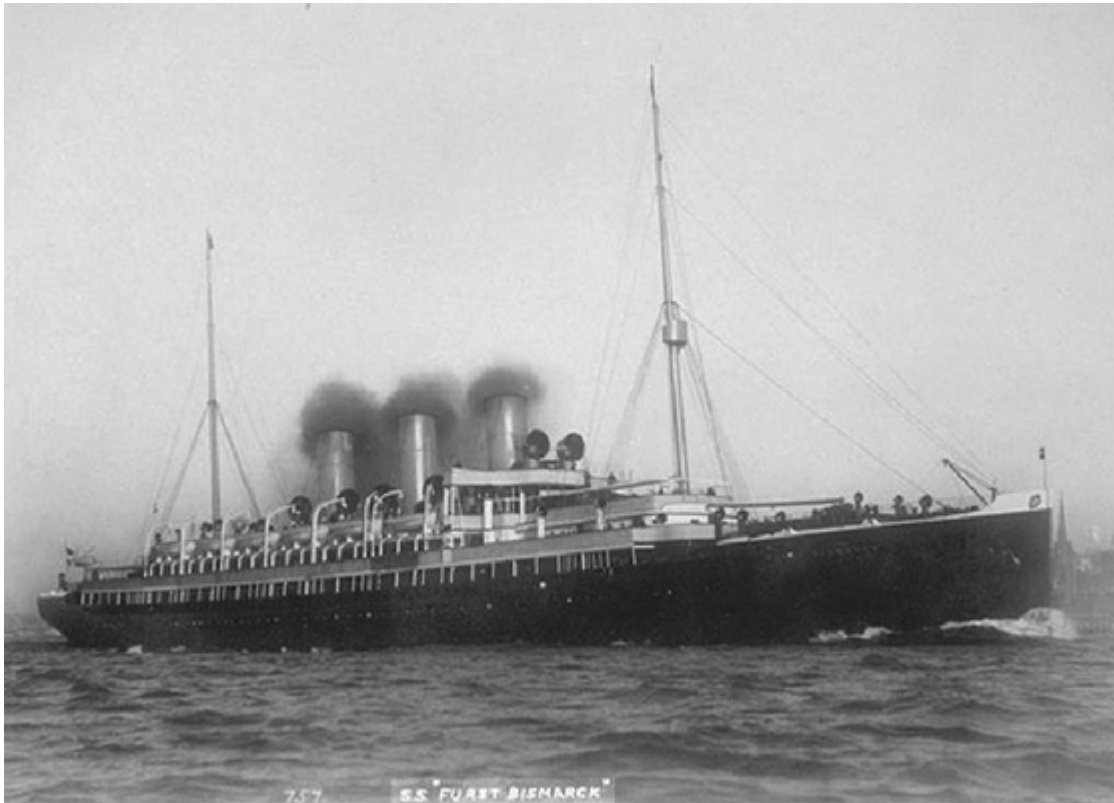
a physically and mentally inferior group. Some feared they were radicals who wanted to destroy American democracy. There were some efforts to restrict the influx of immigrants. Congress tried to pass a Literacy bill in 1897 to restrict those immigrants who could not read, but President Cleveland vetoed the bill. Congress did exclude a particular group of people during this period – the Chinese. Because of language and cultural differences, the Chinese appeared to be unwilling to “Americanize”. Asian immigrants, who were victims of severe interrogation and detention on Angel Island, were often left with feelings of anger and disappointment. Tibishi poems on the barracks and detention room walls serve as proof. In 1882, Congress responded to California’s demands by passing the Chinese Exclusion Act prohibiting Chinese workers from entering the U.S for 10 years. Also, the Gentleman’s Agreement with Japan supported both countries' desire to limit the Japanese from leaving their native country and coming to America.

Source: <http://www.teachingushistory.org/lessons/TurnoftheCenturyImmigration.html>

Answer:

1. Why did immigrants leave their homeland?
2. What attracted them to America?
3. How were the ports of entry similar and/or different?
4. How did immigrants adjust to their new home?
5. How did Americans respond to the new immigrants?
6. What do you think would be most difficult about the immigrant experience?
7. How does immigration at the turn of the century compare to immigration today?

Immigrant Ship Images



Ellis Island: The Immigrants' Experience

By Rita G. Koman

Immigrants endured an ocean voyage from eight to more than twenty days—generally in cramped, unhealthful steerage—making their arrival at Ellis Island a victory of sorts over the conditions of passage. Some wore tags of identification stating their ultimate point of U.S. destination. All had passports and other papers detailing information about themselves. Second- and third-class passengers were usually processed and on their way before those in steerage. Many of the new arrivals were young adults clutching the hands of children and carrying babies. Most had all their earthly possessions in a “bundle” (a makeshift sack or blanket) or a suitcase. Few expected ever to return to their homelands. Their reasons for coming to the United States were as varied as the people themselves.

Having secured passage from places such as Hamburg or Liverpool, immigrants usually booked one-way passage with the expectation of staying. If they were detained or forced to return by authorities at Ellis Island, steamboat companies bore the expense. The percentage of returnees was about 2 percent, or sometimes up to one thousand a month. Detainees with medical problems were chalk-marked “E” for eyes, “L” for lameness, or “X” for mental disability. If not sent back, detainees sometimes remained quarantined for days or weeks at Ellis before moving on to their American destinations.

Upon disembarking, immigrants were directed toward a large building where they immediately entered the gigantic, sixty-foot high Registry Room. Here they underwent a quick medical exam followed by a review of their traveling papers and some legal questions, such as age? destination? employment? Most cleared this process in five hours and left for their ultimate destination the same day. Those who were detained were suspected of trachoma, a highly contagious eye disease causing blindness, or “loathsome and contagious” diseases such as tuberculosis, measles, or favus, a scalp and nail fungus. These people went upstairs to the second floor for closer examination by trained medical personnel from the U.S. Public Health Service (10). Breathing difficulties, lameness, or abnormal posture could be observed on stairways by observant health care workers.

The medical facilities included a 275-bed hospital, contagious disease wards for 450, X-ray facilities, laboratories, and a morgue. Between 1900 and 1954, 355 births and 3,500 deaths (1,400 of them of children) were recorded. In 1924 alone the record showed nearly fifty surgical procedures performed monthly.

Once past medical inspection, immigrants joined one of many lines to answer remaining questions. Here in the span of about two minutes inspectors decided whether to admit the immigrants into the United States. It was not unusual for inspectors to work twelve-hour shifts during the peak immigration period from early spring to late fall. Sometimes immigrants without sufficient money would have to wait for the arrival of a relative or funds before leaving, but generally five days was the maximum stay at Ellis Island. Additionally, circumstances prompted boards of inquiry to ascertain why some immigrants were migrating and to determine whether they should be detained or deported. Alerts about criminals wanted in other countries, suspicion of contract laborers, or simply the fear that extremely poor people would become public charges were common.

The processing experience seemed inhumane at times because of the sheer numbers, but most of the commissioners in charge tried to move the people through as quickly as the ever-tightening

immigration laws allowed. Beginning with legislation in 1924, more processing took place at the point of departure, making the job less tedious for American inspectors. For the approximate 20 percent who failed immediate clearance and required detention, fourteen dormitories organized by gender were equipped with canvas or wire mesh mattresses for sleeping. The dormitories accommodated up to fifty people and lined the balcony overlooking the registry room. A large dining room served meals on a continual basis to both those passing through and those detained. Over twenty years the island grew to become a miniature city where a staff of seven hundred doctors, nurses, interpreters, matrons, clerks, maintenance workers, and night guards worked up to twelve-hour days, seven days a week. Groups such as the YMCA, Red Cross, and Salvation Army assisted by serving coffee and donuts, providing used clothing, and helping find lost luggage, wandering children, and mainland relatives. Holidays were observed with special events such as parties produced by the welfare groups.

Ellis Island served as a transition place for thousands of immigrants. Marking the division between their past and their unknown future, processing at Ellis Island was an experience few ever forgot. Once the experience was complete, a barge took new arrivals to Battery Park at the tip of Manhattan where they were met by relatives, directed to sites within the city, or sent to train stations to connect with points throughout the United States. While many lived out the remainder of their days in New York, many others went to Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and other cities. Thousands more headed for the farmlands of Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas.

Source: <http://aubreyseiler.pbworks.com/w/file/fetch/105059487/Ellis%20Island%20Immigrants.pdf>

Image: The Statue of Liberty



Source: <http://www.wirednewyork.com/landmarks/liberty/images/liberty.jpg>

“The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name Mother of Exiles.
From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

Citizenship Quiz

To become a naturalized citizen you must:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Be a lawful permanent resident of the United States (have a green card)
- Be a permanent resident of the U.S. for five years.
- Be a person of good moral character
- Have the ability to speak, read and write English (with exceptions)

Have a basic knowledge of the history and government of the United States.

- Be willing to take an oath of Allegiance to the United States.
- File a N-400 Application for Naturalization
- Pay a \$25.00 fingerprint fee
- Be photographed
- Pay a filing fee of \$225.00

Answer the following:

1. What are the colors of our flag? _____
2. How many stripes are on the flag? _____
3. How many stars are on the flag? _____
4. What is our date of independence? _____
5. Who is our current president? _____
6. How do we elect the president? (Explain how the electoral college works): _____

7. What country did we fight during the Revolutionary War? _____
8. How many amendments to the U.S. Constitution are there? _____
9. What is the capital of North Carolina? _____
10. Who is the governor of North Carolina? _____
11. Who becomes President if the President and Vice President should die? _____

12. In what month do we vote for President of the United States? _____
13. Who has the power to declare war? _____
14. What is the main purpose of the United Nations? _____

15. What is the introduction to the Constitution called? _____
16. For how long do we elect the President? _____
17. Who said "give me liberty or give me death"? _____
18. Which major countries were our enemies during World War II?

19. How many Supreme Court justices are there? _____
20. What is the "Supreme Law of the United States"? _____
21. Who was the main writer of the Declaration of Independence? _____
22. What is the national anthem of the United States? _____
23. How many times may a Senator be re-elected? _____
24. In what year was the Constitution written? _____
25. What are the heads to the 15 Executive Departments called? _____

To receive a passing score you must get 18 or more questions correct.

Answer Key to Citizenship Quiz

1. Red, white, blue
2. 13
3. 50
4. 7-4-1776
5. Donald J. Trump (answer will change)
6. Each state has a number of electoral votes equal to the number of Senators and U.S. Representatives. The total number of electoral votes for each state is given to the candidate winning the popular vote for the state. The candidate with the majority of electoral votes (270) wins the presidency.
7. England
8. 27
9. Raleigh
10. Roy Cooper (answer will change)
11. Speaker of the House
12. November
13. Congress
14. Peacekeeping
15. Preamble
16. 4 years (8 total if they serve 2 terms)
17. Patrick Henry
18. Italy, Germany, Japan
19. 9
20. Constitution
21. Thomas Jefferson
22. Star Spangled Banner
23. An unlimited amount
24. 1787
25. The U.S. Cabinet

Immigrant Experiences Worksheet

Immigrants	Why did they come?	What did they bring with them?	How was their experience different from other immigrants?	How was their experience similar to other immigrants?
English				
Germans				
Italians				
Irish				
Africans				
Japanese				
Chinese				
Jewish				