

“A Stitch in Time” Coming to America: An Immigrant Study Unit



**American Textile History Museum
Traveling Textiles Program
TEACHER'S GUIDE**

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Introduction

The American Textile History Museum in Lowell, Massachusetts, recreates the “museum experience” in school classrooms through the Traveling Textiles program. Our Museum Educator-led outreach programs and/or program kit rentals include all lesson plans and materials needed.* Our educational programs and Museum exhibitions aim to provide enjoyable opportunities for both personal growth and discovery through exposure to America’s diverse textile history and its impact on the present and future. We provide the information and artifacts for students to make this connection. Along the way, we showcase the creativity and problem solving skills shown by earlier American textile producers, both at home and in business, and encourage students to appreciate these skills and, most importantly, to develop their own.

How to Use this Guide

This guide is intended to provide educational materials supporting the main lesson which will be presented by a Museum teacher. Included are optional lesson plans for before and after the main lesson for those who wish to teach an entire unit on the subject, descriptions of related follow-up activities (without lesson plans), as well as background information, suggested readings, and connections to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (- the main lesson is not included). The pre-lessons are intended to give students a context for the arrival of the Museum teacher, one exploring the concept of a museum as someone’s collection, and another exploring useful background context information for the main lesson. The post-lessons relate to and reinforce the main lesson subject matter.

We ask everyone to complete and return the enclosed evaluation form to help us monitor and improve our offerings.

Objectives

An objective of the Stitch in Time: Coming to America program is to provide students with “hands-on” objects for interactive learning experiences that will enhance their understanding of immigration. The main lesson offers students multicultural experiences through interactive learning with material objects from diverse ethnic cultures. Students will identify various immigrant groups and learn what circumstances caused them to emigrate. Students will become aware of the difficult choices that immigrants had to make; many were forced to leave behind family members to come here, and many sold most of what they owned to pay for passage. Students will understand the difficulties of the immigrant’s journey and the many challenges immigrants faced when they arrived in America. The program demonstrates to students that most immigrants chose to bring a combination of the

functional and the familiar along with them. Students gain an appreciation and understanding of how cultural diversity has enriched our nation.

Program Description

Optional pre and post lessons are included for program reinforcement.

In the main lesson, *Stitch in Time: Coming to America*, students are introduced to the experience of immigration by role-playing immigrants from various nations who arrived in America in the late 19th-century, headed for mill towns like Lowell and Lawrence, Massachusetts. After an Ellis Island entry experience, they will handle objects and read materials that will assist them in recreating an immigrant's persona for presentation to the class.

Lesson Plans

Pre-Lesson Plan

Title: Collections and Museums

Program: Traveling Textiles – A Stitch in Time: Coming to America

Grade Level(s): 4-8

Length of time for Lesson: 45 min. – 1 hour

Lesson Prior:

Objective(s):

- Students will recognize elements involved in collecting items.
- Students will know what a museum is.
- Students will know aspects of the role of a museum in a community.

Materials: blackboard/chalk or whiteboard/marker

Steps:

1. Ask: Does anyone here have a collection?
 - Make a web diagram on the board of the types of collections mentioned, with "Collections" in the center
2. Ask: What makes these "collections"?
 - Define collection: a group of objects having something of importance in common
 - Identify the common element in each collection on the board (i.e. similar objects, from the same time period, all related to pets, etc.)
3. Ask: Why did you start your collection?
 - Make a list on the board. Possible responses:
 - objects are interesting
 - possible future value and historical importance
 - curiosity (educational interest)
 - interest in objects' common thread (time period, topic, etc.)
4. Ask: Have you ever wanted to show your collection to others? Discuss.
5. Ask: How would you show your collection? Discuss.
 - Define "museum" as a place to display a collection, where
 - people can see and admire art and artifacts
 - people can learn about art and history
 - people can learn about other cultures
 - = Museums are institutions that collect, preserve, study, and exhibit collections [Museums typically collect works of art, objects of historical value or interest, or information concerning scientific discoveries. Off-beat museums that cater to more individual interests exist, also, holding collections such as snow globes and squished pennies]
6. Ask: Has anyone ever visited a museum?
 - Name some local museumsAsk students to describe the buildings the museums were housed in
 - Ask why it might be important to have that type of building. Discussion

could include:

- public accessibility and large size for crowds
 - security issues
 - structure related to museum's focus (i.e. restored mill building, historic house, specially created architectural design, etc.)
 - rooms suited to displays (note size, features)
 - wall space suited to displays
 - special lighting to conserve yet enhance display items
 - color choices for walls, decor
7. Ask if the following are museums: a zoo, aquarium, botanical garden, planetarium, children's museum (Yes, they all are in their own way)
 8. Tell the class that you will present a lesson from the American Textile History Museum. It will deal with the immigrant experience in 19th-century America, particularly relating to immigrants whose destination was the textile mill cities, such as Lowell and Lawrence, Massachusetts, which sprang up from the effects of the Industrial Revolution (part of this museum's common thread).

Pre-Lesson Plan

Title: “All Americans are Immigrants”

Program: Traveling Textiles – A Stitch in Time: Coming to America

Grade Level(s): 4-8

Length of time for Lesson: 45 min. – 1 hour

Lesson Prior:

Objectives:

- Students will know what immigration is and the reasons for it from personal experience
- Students will use math and statistically analyze the immigrant background of a group of people (their class)
- Students will recognize a commonality in the immigrant experience for many diverse cultures

Materials: Blackboard/chalk OR whiteboard/marker (use a large print pad and marker if you wish to retain the statistics)

Steps:

1. Tell class that America has been called “a nation of immigrants.” Today we are going to test this theory in our class.
 - a. Ask: What is immigration? (ENTERING and settling in a country or region that you are not native to...one immigrates TO a country)
 - i. An immigrant is someone who has immigrated
 - ii. NOTE: emigration means LEAVING a country or region to settle in another...one emigrates FROM a country
2. Tell class that you will statistically analyze the class to see if all Americans are immigrants. Make a chart on the board (or pad) and fill it in as you question the class. Include categories such as:
 - Country of Origin
 - Voluntary/Involuntary Move
 - Reason for Leaving
 - Reason for Coming to America [i.e. economic, political, religious, social, force (slavery)]
 - Destination City (place of first residence in America)
3. Ask questions in this order. Those who self-identify should supply to the best of their ability all information for the chart (guesses are okay):
 - a. Is any class member an immigrant?
 - b. Were any class member’s parents immigrants?
 - c. Were any class member’s grandparents immigrants?Go back as far as necessary to include all students, even as far back as Native Americans, who came here from Asia over the Bering Straits
4. Tally the chart numbers, calculate percentages (or have students do this for homework). Draw any obvious conclusions about this group
5. Ask: “Are all Americans immigrants?”
 - a. Note similarities and differences amongst the immigrant groups as revealed on the chart

Post-Lesson Plan

Title: Immigrant Guides

Program: Traveling Textiles – A Stitch in Time: Coming to America

Grade Level(s): 4-8

Length of time for Lesson: 45 min. – 1 hr.

Lesson Prior: A Stitch in Time: Coming to America

Objective:

- Students will identify some of the problems new immigrants face when they arrive in a new country
- Students will interpret primary sources to identify practical issues new immigrants dealt with in America in the early 20th-century
- Students will find commonality in the immigrant experience from the past and today

Materials: “The Immigrant’s Guide” by YMCA (1 per student)
“What Every Immigrant Should Know” by Council of Jewish Women (1 per student)

Steps:

1. Distribute immigrant guides to students
2. Introduce the pamphlets: Help for the Newcomer
By the late 19th-century, numerous support organizations had been founded to aid immigrants in their new country. Representatives of these groups, as well as professional social workers, were often stationed at Ellis Island to offer assistance in travel arrangements, job opportunities, and housing. Advice pamphlets, such as the ones excerpted here, were made available to newcomers in several languages.
3. Have students read the pamphlets, noting the publication dates
4. Recalling the previous lesson, discuss the contents of each pamphlet. Sample questions:
 - a. What physical illnesses meant rejection to an immigrant coming in 1922? (insanity, feeble-mindedness, vile skin disease, favus, trachoma, tuberculosis)
 - b. Why do you suppose there was a hospital on Ellis Island? (some immigrants were ill when they arrived)
 - c. Were mentally ill or mentally-challenged immigrants admitted at Ellis Island? (No) Explain your answer. (Immigrants must be able to earn a living)
 - d. What was the American government’s reason for rejecting paupers or people with no visible means of self-support? (People who cannot earn a living must ask for charity)
 - e. What advice did this pamphlet offer mothers concerning health? (If you have a sick child, stay home or leave him with relatives)

- f. What was the requirement regarding literacy in 1922? (People must be able to read in some language) Did every immigrant have to know how to read English at that time? (No, any language would do)
 - g. What happened to one woman from the Ukraine who did not learn to read? (She was not allowed to enter) Why do you think she could not return to her own country? (Russian pogroms)
 - h. What point does the writer of the pamphlet make regarding cleanliness? (Dirt brings disease)
5. Assess the advice/information given:
 - a. What advice/information is still relevant today, what isn't?
 - b. What advice/information would you add?
 6. Ask students to create their own immigrant's guide (in class or as an at home assignment)
 - a. Design a brochure for immigrants coming to America today
 - b. Write the text, including information you think would be especially helpful now
 7. Presentation – this could be done in a variety of ways:
 - a. Have each student show and read their guide to the class AND/OR
 - b. Display the guides in the classroom or on a school bulletin board OR
 - c. Have students role-play using their own guides (see #2 below)

This lesson could incorporate these additional ideas or they could be stand-alone lessons:

1. Advertising Poster: As a second or alternate assignment, have students create an advertising poster, intended for placement in another country, encouraging people to immigrate to America. Refer to the 1870 Hong Kong advertisement in a following lesson
2. Role-playing: Ask students to role-play situations faced by immigrants based upon information in the YMCA's or Council of Jewish Women's guide. Students may choose immigrant roles, representing several different countries of origin. Other students can assume the roles of social workers or members of support organizations offering immigrant aid
3. Letters Home: Ask students to write letters to their families back home in the Old Country, as if they were immigrants who followed the advice in the immigrant guides. Ask others to write letters as if they were recent immigrants who did not follow this advice and to imagine what might have happened

“The Immigrant’s Guide” (an excerpt)

Published by the Young Men’s Christian Association, New York, NY; 1911 Edition

Your Money

Take care of it. Trust no irresponsible person with it. Change it at the Government’s money exchange office in Ellis Island. American coins are: a cent=half penny; 5 cents= 5d.; 25 cents=1s.; 50 cents=2s. 1d.; \$ or one dollar=4s. 2d.

Baggage

You will find your baggage in the baggage room. Aid the officers cheerfully to find it; don’t get nervous, but keep your head. When your baggage is found give it to the checker or agent, who will check it to the place where you go. Keep carefully the check that the agent gives to you, and do not worry about your baggage.

The Train

Don’t rush to the trains. Listen to the trainmen and do what they ask of you. On the train don’t waste the water, for the supply is limited. Do not wander from the train when it stops in a station; you may be left behind. Be cheerful and give prompt and respectful answers to all officials who ask you questions.

Work

America is a country of workers. Immigrants willing to work hard are welcome in America. Take the first honest job you get and keep it until you get something better. Keep yourself respectable and clean. Don’t tell the boss how to do his work. If you can’t find work go to the Young Men’s Christian Association and you may be helped.

Home Ties

You’ve left home, but don’t forget the old folks. Write home often. Let your family and friends know where you are and how you are getting along.

New Friends

Choose new friends carefully. Avoid the man who “knows it all.” Try to make friends of men who have the same ideals.

A New Home

Locate on the map the place to which you go. That will be your new home. Make it happy by living right. God is in America as well as in the homeland and His commandments are the same. If there is no church of your choice in your town then go to some other church. Join the Young Men’s Christian Association.

Don’t Gamble

You can’t get rich quickly by gambling. You’ll lose your money and be tempted to crime. Betting in every form is immoral. Don’t try to get something for nothing. If you earn honest money see that you spend it honestly.

It Helps

The Young Men’s Christian Association helped thousands of young men last year. It found work for many, helped others to good boarding houses and rooms, and assisted all who came under its influence to start right in a new country. You will do well to join the YMCA in the town where you settle and begin life in America in good company.

“What Every Emigrant Should Know” (an excerpt)

A simple pamphlet for the guidance and benefit of prospective immigrants to the United States
By Cecilia Razovsky, Dept. of Immigrant Aid, Council of Jewish Women, New York, NY 1922

Today in your town the post has brought many letters from America. One letter is for you. It comes from your husband who had been living in Detroit, Michigan, for eight years. When you open the letter and read it, you are very happy. You call your children to hear father's letter. There is good news in it:

My dear Wife and Children:

At last I find I can send for you to come to me in America. I have steady work now. I have saved enough money to pay for ship tickets for you, my dear wife, and for our four children. I am now a citizen of the United States. I shall make my home in Detroit, and I want my family with me. Write me when you are ready and I will send you the papers and the money you will need for the journey...

If you study this pamphlet carefully, you will know what kind of people may come to America, and what kind of people must stay at home. You will know if America will open its doors to you. You will know if it is wise for you to leave your old country for a strange one. And you will know where to go for information and whom to ask for advice.

Do not start on your long journey until you are fully prepared!

Some countries will not let you enter if you cannot read. America is one of these countries. Of course, if you are a wife going to your husband you may come to the United States even if you cannot read.

If you can read and understand Yiddish or Hebrew, Polish or Russian, German or Hungarian, or any other language or dialect, you will be able to pass the literacy test. During the past year many women who could not read were sent back after they reached Ellis Island. One woman, forty years old, who came to her nephew, had to go back because she could not read. Her home is in the Ukraine. She cannot go back to her old home. She is now in Constantinople. She has no friends there. She cannot find work. Her life is broken. What will become of her?

Learn to read before you begin on your journey.

Before you plan to start for America, make sure that your health is good. Are the children feeling perfectly well? You know that the trip to America from your home is a long one. Unless you and the children are strong and healthy you will have trouble on the way... Sometimes you have to wait for weeks in lodging houses in big cities until you get all your papers. The food is not as good as you cook it at home. The children do not like it. These things make children weak. It is easy to catch sickness when one is weak...

A long journey makes weak people sick and sick people become very ill when they travel...

Men and single women who are deaf or dumb or blind will not be allowed to come in because they cannot find work. Such people cannot earn a living for themselves and must ask for charity, and America will not admit paupers...

It is better not leave your home than to go away and then be forced to come back.

There are six very bad defects. They are insanity, feeble-mindedness, vile skin disease, favus, trachoma, tuberculosis. Some are defects of the mind and some are defects of the body... Sometimes children's bodies grow big, but their minds are like babies. They do not grow with the body.

If one of your children is like that, **stay at home**. Or leave that child with your relatives and go with your other normal children...

Absolutely no feeble-minded or insane man, woman or child will be allowed to come and live in the United States.

If someone in your family has a vile skin disease which is catching-**let that person remain at home..**
America wants people who are clean: Because clean people do not bring sickness with them. To be well you must be clean. Dirt brings disease!

Post-Lesson Plan

Title: Advertising America

Program: Traveling Textiles – A Stitch in Time: Coming to America

Grade Level(s): 4-8

Length of time for Lesson: 45 min. – 1 hr.

Lesson Prior: A Stitch in Time: Coming to America OR Immigrant Guides

Objective:

- Students will itemize and consider the benefits, real and imagined, for people to immigrate to America

Materials: 1870 Hong Kong recruitment advertisement/
Lazarus poem/Clinton statement
Chalk/blackboard or marker/whiteboard
Drawing paper
Pens, markers, etc.

Steps:

1. Ask students to name incentives that would convince them to move to another country. Create a web of the ideas on the board, with “Reasons to Emigrate” in the center.
2. Distribute copies or read the Hong Kong recruitment advertisement to the students. Discuss:
 1. Who would write an ad like this and why? (Note: Sparsely populated states seeking more residents, and railroad companies and mill owners seeking workers were among those who sent agents abroad to attract settlers to the United States)
 2. Who was the intended audience?
 3. How convincing do you suppose it was? How truthful? How ethical?
3. Ask students to create an advertisement or promotional poster for a foreign newspaper urging people to leave their homeland for a new life in America. Within the ad, students should describe some benefits, real or imagined, of resettlement that might convince readers to move.
4. Have each student show and discuss their ad with the class.
 1. Who was their target audience?
 2. What incentives were cited?
 3. What interest group might have written the ad? For what purpose?
5. Homework or use for discussion as another lesson: Ask students to compare/contrast the viewpoint of their ads with the sentiments of the lines from immigrant Emma Lazarus's poem, “The New Colossus,” which refers to the Statue of Liberty, and the quote from President Bill Clinton

Advertisement from Hong Kong Recruiting Laborers to America, 1870

All Chinamen make much money in New Orleans, if they work. Chinamen have become richer than mandarins there. Pay, first year, \$300, but afterwards make more than double. One can do as he likes in that country. Nobody better not get more pay than does he. Nice rice, vegetables, and wheat, all very cheap. Three years there will make poor workmen very rich, and he can come home at any time. On the ships that go there, passengers will find nice rooms and very fine food. They can play all sorts of games and have no work. Everything nice to make man happy. It is nice country. Better than this. No sickness there and no danger of death. Come! Go at once. You cannot afford to wait. Don't heed any wife's counsel or the threats of enemies. Be Chinamen, but go!

Source: Rhoda Hoff. *America's Immigrants: Adventures in Eyewitness History*. New York: Henry Z. Walck, Inc., 1967, pp. 118-126; p.75.

From immigrant Emma Lazarus's poem, "The New Colossus," referring to the Statute of Liberty:

*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-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*



We must resolve never to close the golden door behind us and always to welcome people into our hearts... Anyone who accepts the rights and responsibilities of citizenship is our fellow citizen equal in the eyes of God, entitled to be treated equally and with dignity by all of us.

- President William Jefferson Clinton
from a speech given on July 4, 2000

Post-Lesson Plan

Title: Mary Antin's Journal

Program: Traveling Textiles – A Stitch in Time: Coming to America

Grade Level(s): 4-8

Length of time for Lesson: 45 min. – 1 hr.

Lesson Prior: A Stitch in Time or another post-lesson

Objective:

- Students will identify historic details about Russian Jewish immigration to America
- Students will identify with the hardships/joys associated with immigration
- Students will practice writing and presentation skills

Materials: Mary Antin's Journal text (1 copy/student or read it aloud)
Paper/pens

Steps:

1. Tell students that today they will read an excerpt from the daily journal of an 11 year old Russian Jewish girl who immigrated to America in 1892.
2. Distribute copies of the text or read it aloud
3. Discuss:
 - a. Note details
 - i. This journal excerpt is part of her autobiography
 - ii. Jews were treated cruelly in Russia at that time
 1. Eastern European Jews were never emancipated (given equal rights) like they were in Western Europe (1791 in France, 1800s in W. & Central Europe)
 2. Russia tried to crowd the Russian Jews into the "Pale of Settlement," an area along the western border of Russia
 3. Starting in 1881, pogroms, a series of massacres of the Russian Jews, caused many Jews to flee to the U.S. and to Palestine
 - iii. Mary's father leaves for America first, by way of a German port city then by ship to Boston
 1. He borrowed the money for the trip and some expenses were paid by an emigrant aid society
 2. He never expects to return to Russia
 3. He sends for the rest of the family (mother & 4 children) 3 years later
 - iv. Difficulties of the journey
 1. They broke up the home, selling many items
 2. Limited money meant they faced traveling inconveniences
 3. 16 days at sea
 - v. Reunion in Boston

- b. Discuss emotional impact of the move and what the family may face next
- 4. Ask students to write based on Mary Antin's journal entry. Examples:
 - a. Pretend you are Mary's brother or sister. Write your own reactions to the 3 year wait and finally the journey to America
 - b. From the viewpoint of an immigrant arriving at Ellis Island in New York, describe your reactions to landing day. Mention your experience on the ship, the smells, the noise from so many people speaking different languages, the entry process (medical exam by a stranger, questions by the Board of Inquiry), your first meal in America, etc.
 - c. Write a reaction piece on some detail from Mary's journal entry, i.e. the Russian pogroms, leaving your homeland never to return, how to prepare for a journey of this nature
 - d. Write a story from the point of view of someone your sex/age who is packing to emigrate
- 5. Have students share their writing with the class

The Experience of One Ten Year Old Jewish Girl:

Mary Antin was born in 1881 in Russia and came to America at the age of eleven. In her native language, *Yiddish*, she recorded her immigrant experiences in her daily journal. In the following excerpts from her autobiography, *The Promised Land*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1912) she describes the cruel treatment of her Jewish people in her native country. She recalls the family's separation from her father and their reunion in New York three years later.

...Driven by a necessity for bettering the family circumstances, Father made a great resolve to begin life all over again. And the way to do that was to start on a new soil. My father determined to emigrate to America.

Just at this time occurred one of the periodic anti-Semitic movements whereby government officials were wont to clear the forbidden cities of Jews, whom, in the intervals of slack administration of the law, they allowed to maintain an illegal residence in places outside the *Pale* (the area where Jews were required to live in Russia) It was a little before Passover that the cry of the hunted filled the Jewish world with the familiar fear. The wholesale expulsion of Jews from Moscow and its surrounding district at cruelly short notice was the name of this latest disaster. And hundreds of fugitives, preceded by a wall of distress, flocked into the *Pale*.

The open cities becoming thus suddenly crowded, every man's chance of making a living was diminished in proportion to the number of additional competitors....'Next year-in America!' So there was our promised land!..."

Then came the parting; for it was impossible for the whole family to go at once. I remember it, though I was only eight. It struck me as rather interesting to stand on the platform before the train, with a crowd of friends weeping in sympathy with us, and Father waving his hat and saying-"Good-bye, Plotzk Village, good-bye forever!"

Then followed three long years of hope and doubt for father in America and us in Russia. There was toil and suffering and waiting and anxiety for all. My father had been carried away by the westward movement, glad of his own deliverance, but sore at heart for us whom he left behind. We were so far reduced in circumstances that he had to travel with borrowed money to a German port, whence he was forwarded to Boston, with a host of others, at the expense of an emigrant aid society....

I was in bed sharing the measles with some of the other children when Mother brought us a thick letter from Father, written just before boarding the ship. The letter was full of excitement. There was an elation, a hint of triumph, such as had never been in my father's letters before...My father was inspired by a vision. He saw something-he promised us something. It was this 'America.' And 'America' became my dream.

I am sure I made as serious efforts as anybody to prepare myself for life in America on the lines indicated in my father's letters: In America, he wrote, it was no disgrace to work at a trade. Workmen and capitalists were equal. The cobbler and the teacher had the same title: "Mister." And all the children, boys and girls, Jews and Gentiles, went to school!...

.....
Oh, Dear! Why can't we get off the hateful ship? Why can't Papa come to us? Why so many ceremonies at the landing?...Now imagine yourself parting with all you love, believing it to be a parting for life, breaking up your home, selling the things that years have made dear to you; starting on a journey without the least experience in traveling, in the face of many inconveniences on account of the want of sufficient money; being met with disappointment where it was not to be expected, with rough treatment everywhere, till you are forced to go and make friends for yourself among strangers; being obliged to sell some of your most necessary things to pay bills you did not willingly incur; being mistrusted and searched, then half-starved, and lodged in common with a multitude of strangers; suffering the miseries of seasickness, the disturbances and alarms of a stormy sea for sixteen days; and then stand within a few yards of him for whom you did all this, unable to even speak to him easily. How do you feel?

Oh, it's our turn at last! We are questioned, examined, and dismissed! A rush over the planks on one side, over the ground on the other, six wild beings cling to each other, bound by a common bond of tender joy, and the long parting is at an END!"

Post-Lesson Plan

Title: Food for Thought

Program: Stitch in Time: Coming to America

Grade Level(s): 4-8

Length of time for Lesson: 45 min. – 1 hr.

Lesson Prior: A Stitch in Time or another post-lesson

Objective:

- Students will use prior knowledge to discuss a current issue
- Students will practice writing skills

Materials: paper/pens

Steps:

1. Use the following statement to initiate discussion:

In the 1930s, Eleanor Roosevelt called America, with its many nationalities, “a pressure cooker.” What do you think she meant by this and do you agree with her?

2. Extend the metaphor to the following ideas:

Would you describe America as a “melting pot,” a “chef’s salad bowl,” or perhaps an “ice-cube tray”? Explain.

3. Have students write a paragraph describing their view of America today, using one of these metaphors or one of their own.
4. For homework or an extended assignment, have students bring in a recipe from their own culture. Have students write an imaginative paragraph about what that food represents about the culture it comes from. Collect the recipes into a cookbook and add the comments.

Post-Lesson Plan

Title: Immigration Discrimination

Program: Traveling Textiles – A Stitch in Time: Coming to America

Grade Level(s): 4-8

Length of time for Lesson: 1 Hour

Lesson Prior: A Stitch in Time or another post-lesson

Objectives:

- Students will define the words “discrimination” and “stereotype”
- Students will identify and discuss historical examples of ethnic discrimination
- Students will identify immigration issues, both specific and general, such as why immigrants come, their concerns, and their difficulties upon arrival
- Students will reflect on and evaluate their own opinions about immigrants
- Students will assess their own connections with their own ethnic heritage

Materials: “The Chinese of the Eastern States” sheet
“Analyzing Discrimination” sheet

Steps:

1. Ask for those wearing something yellow to raise their hands. Tell them that you really dislike yellow and they should have known not to wear it to your class. Give them all an extra homework assignment (rescind this later before the end of class). Do the same for students wearing sneakers (change discrimination item for each class.) Discuss student’s reactions – was this fair, will they know better next time?
2. Tell class that today you will grapple with issues of discrimination directed toward immigrants and you want everyone’s input.
 1. Define “discriminate”
 - i. Perceive fine distinctions or distinguishing features of something
 - ii. Act on the basis of prejudice (hatred against those distinctions in i.)
3. Ask: Has anyone here felt discrimination based on ethnic origin or have you seen it happen to others? Discuss briefly.
4. Read “The Chinese of the Eastern States” aloud to class or distribute copies for all to read silently.
5. Some possible discussion questions:
 1. According to Carrol Wright, what was the chief reason people came from Quebec to the U.S.?
 2. What examples does Wright offer to make his point that French Canadians do not usually adjust to American life?
 3. Do you think his argument(s) are valid? Why or why not?
 4. Does Wright’s report demonstrate bias against certain ethnic groups? Which group(s)?

5. What does Wright think that the Chinese and French Canadian immigrant groups have in common?
 6. In your opinion, how has Wright stereotyped French-Canadians?
 - i. Define “stereotype” (oversimplified concept of person, event, etc. thought to typify; a fixed idea about something)
 7. What were some major concerns of immigrants coming to America?
 8. What difficulties did all nationalities face in coming to America?
 9. Did new immigrants receive assistance upon reaching Ellis Island? What support systems did they find to help them resettle? (refer to immigrant guide lesson)
 10. What role did the following institutions play in helping immigrants adjust to their new environment: schools, neighborhoods, movies, ethnic clubs, churches, foreign language newspapers?
 11. Why did most employers and mill owners of the late 19th and early 20th centuries favor immigration and object to restrictions in policy?
 12. Why do you think new immigrants were willing to take any job, no matter how low the pay, how long the hours, or how unsafe the working conditions?
 13. How were the latest arrivals generally treated? Why do you think there tended to be a lack of acceptance for the newest immigrants?
 14. Why did some national groups seem to have more difficulties than others in assimilating?
 15. Do you think that immigrant groups should endeavor to preserve the traditions of their native cultures? Should they forfeit their ethnicity in exchange for “Americanization,” or should they try to strike a balance between the two?
 16. What contact do you personally maintain with your own ethnic heritage?
 17. Immigrants continue to come to America in hopes of a better life. Others have fled here as refugees, in order to escape religious or political persecution. Who are some groups who have recently immigrated and what conditions caused them to leave their native lands?
 18. Should the United States continue to be an asylum for the oppressed, or do you think immigration should be restricted?
 19. Is it fair that some immigrants come into this country illegally? Do you think illegal aliens should be sent back to their country of origin?
 20. Do you know (or can your students meet) immigrants who have resettled in your community recently? [Consider inviting them to visit your classroom and sharing their personal experiences upon arrival and adjustment to life in America.]
6. Remember to rescind the homework assignment for wearers of yellow, etc.
 7. Homework: Read “Analyzing Discrimination” and write a one paragraph reaction piece on one of the listed questions.

The Chinese of the Eastern States

Carrol Wright was a social worker in Lawrence, MA in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He expresses his view of French Canadian immigrants in the following excerpt:

“With some exceptions the Canadian French are the Chinese of the Eastern States. They care nothing for our institutions, civil, political, or educational. They do not come to make a home among us, to dwell with us as citizens, and so become a part of us, but their purpose is merely to sojourn a few years as aliens, touching us only at a single point, that of work, and, when they have gathered out of us what will satisfy their ends, to get them away to whence they came, and bestow it there. They are a horde of industrial invaders, not a stream of stable settlers. Voting, with all that it implies, they care nothing about. Rarely does one of them become naturalized. They will not send their children to school if they can help it, but endeavor to crowd them into the mills at the earliest possible age...

These people have one good trait. They are untiring workers, and docile...To earn all they can by no matter how many hours of toil, to live in the most beggarly way so that out of their earnings they may spend as little for living as possible, and to carry out of the country what they can thus save: this is the aim of the Canadian French in our factory districts.”

Source: Annual Report of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics, Number 12, 1881, pp. 469-470.



Analyzing Discrimination

In the 18th and 19th centuries German immigrants were generally made to feel welcome as they settled throughout the U.S. Yet during World War I citizens of German descent were in constant danger of physical as well as verbal attack. German language was dropped from college curricula and even the common *Hamburger* was renamed *Salisbury steak*. Many German-Americans, anxious to prove their patriotism, had their names legally Anglicized.

Soon after Japan's bombing attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, the U.S. government confiscated property owned by Japanese-Americans and placed them in internment camps for the duration.

In 1979, when Iranians seized the American Embassy in Teheran and took hostages, there were numerous attacks against Iranian students and people of Iranian descent in this country. Following the Sept. 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center, Arab-Americans and Muslims were targeted and abused. These represent examples of discrimination against persons because of their ethnic heritage, due to politics and religion practiced by some in their native countries.

Questions:

1. Were all immigrant groups treated equally after arriving in America?
2. Why were some nationalities welcomed more than others? Which groups did Americans prefer to have join their ranks?
3. How did historical events on the world stage influence America's choice of immigrants or impact upon those in disfavor?
4. Do some immigrant groups still suffer discrimination in America today?
5. How do you react when you hear someone tell (or laugh at) ethnic jokes? What's *not funny* about jokes based on racial or ethnic stereotypes?

Related Follow-up Activities

Make a Classroom Ethnic Paper Quilt

MATERIALS:

For a quilt made of colored paper:

Paper sizes can vary. To create a 1" border on each patch use:

8" X 10" for colored backing

7" X 9" for white or colored design patch

Paper scraps in various colors

❖ You can use fabric in place of paper if it's available

Plain white paper (for preliminary design planning)

Glue (Elmer's or school glue)

Markers, crayons, colored pencils, etc.

Yarn

Hole punch

Glitter, sequins, found items, etc.

METHOD:

Create a quilt that reflects the ethnic background of your classroom, made from colored paper or designs transferred onto material.

Have each student (or group of students) design a quilt patch that depicts what they like best about his or her immigrant heritage.

1. Make a preliminary sketch on plain white paper first
2. Copy the final design onto white or colored paper, or fabric. Draw designs on with markers, etc., or make collages by cutting paper or fabric pieces and glue on to create the picture
3. Create the border around each patch by backing the design patch with a larger piece of paper or fabric, or make a border by repeating a design, like flags, all around the edge
4. When complete, tie patches together by punching holes in the corners or along all edges and tying with yarn – or, plan to staple or pin the patches up into a quilt format.
5. Hang your quilt where all can see it.

Guide the design process by brainstorming on the following before you start:

1. Symbols – graphics that represent something else by association, resemblance, or convention, in a simple format. Use symbols to represent the ethnic aspects you want to portray
2. Forms – use simplified forms rather than including a lot of detail
3. Color – color can bring out different moods or impressions. Hold up yellow and red papers and ask about emotional response to each. Students should choose colors for the effect they want



How People Contribute to American Culture - A Class Collaged Mural -

Objectives:

- To help students identify how various ethnic groups have contributed to American culture
- To use cooperative learning skills

Materials:

Large paper – preferably a roll
Wall space
Scissors
Glue
Drawing paper
Drawing utensils (pencils, markers, crayons, possibly paint)
Magazines

Method:

As a group, students will design and produce a large-scale collaged “mural.”

- Roll out 2 widths of large paper to cover a large wall space
- Brainstorm (as a class) on how people contribute to American culture. List ideas
- Discuss how to unify everyone’s ideas into 1 picture



Examples of solutions:

- Draw a grid onto the hanging paper, and everyone is responsible for 1 block
- Create a border using words (descriptive, or different languages). Everyone completes a strip to use as part of the border. Then, everyone helps fill inside

Worksheet

The Oldest Person You Know

Students can help collect and preserve history. Conduct an interview of the oldest person you know. Use this page as your worksheet.

If the person (or that person's parents or grandparents) was an immigrant, ask these questions:

1. What country did they immigrate to America from?
2. Why did they come here?
3. How old were they when they came?
4. How did they travel here (mode of transportation)?
5. What difficulties did they encounter?
6. What work did they do?
7. Did they do the same work as in the old country?

If the person was not an immigrant, nor remembered family members that were, ask them to tell a story that was passed down in their family. Ask them:

1. When and where did this story begin to be told?
2. Why do you think this story got passed down through the generations?

Student Reflection: On the back of this sheet, write the story down. Tell whether you think you will tell this story to your own children someday.

Find Out About a Famous American Immigrant

As a research project, have students find out about an immigrant who later became a famous American. Read a biography about this person or an autobiography that he/she wrote. Specifically find out when and why they came to the United States and what they had to say about their immigrant experience. Collect illustrations and write a report about this famous immigrant to share with the class. Below are some examples of famous American immigrants:

NAME	COUNTRY	CAREER	NAME	COUNTRY	CAREER
Isabel Allende	Peru(Chilean)	Author	C. Thomas Mann	Germany	Author
Mario Andretti	Italy	Racing	Peter Max	Germany	Artist
Ann Margaret	Sweden	Actor	Frank McCourt	Ireland	Author
Charles Atlas	Italy	Bodybuilding	Zubin Mehta	India	Music
Mikhail Baryshnikov	Russia	Ballet	John Muir	Scotland	Naturalist
Irving Berlin	Russia	Music	Martina Navratilova	Czechoslovakia	Tennis
C. Niels Bohr	Denmark	Physics	Hakeem Olajuwon	Nigeria	Basketball
Frank Capra	Italy	Film	Patrick Oliphant	Australia	Cartoonist
Andrew Carnegie	Scotland	Steel/Business	Yoko Ono	Japan	Music
Charlie Chaplin	England	Actor	Seiji Ozawa	China(Japanese)	Music
Liz Claiborne	Belgium	Fashion Design	I.M. Pei	China	Architecture
B. W. DeKooning	Netherlands	Artist	Itzhak Perlman	Israel	Music
Placido Domingo	Spain	Opera	Sidney Poitier	Bahamas	Actor
Albert Einstein	Germany	Science/Math	Andre Previn	Germany	Music
Patrick Ewing	Jamaica	Basketball	Joseph Pulitzer	Hungary	Journalist
Gloria Estefan	Cuba	Music	Anthony Quinn	Mexico	Actor
Enrico Fermi	Italy	Physics	Oscar de la Rente	Dom. Republic	Fashion Design
Michael J. Fox	Canada	Actor	Hyman Rickover	Russia	Science
Felix Frankfurter	Austria	Law	Edward G. Robinson	Romania	Actor
Greta Garbo	Sweden	Actor	Knute Rockne	Norway	Football
J. K. Galbraith	Canada	Economics	Eliz. Kubler Ross	Switzerland	Medicine
Andy Garcia	Cuba	Actor	Arthur Rubinstein	Poland	Music
Marcus Garvey	Jamaica	Politics	Carlos Santana	Mexico	Music
Kahlil Gibran	Lebanon	Author	Arnold Schwarzenegger	Austria	Actor/ Bodybuilding
Sam. Gompers	England	Labor Leader	John Secada	Cuba	Music
Wayne Gretzky	Canada	Hockey	Willima Shatner	Canada	Actor
Alf. Hitchcock	England	Film	Gene Simmons	Israel	Music
Bob Hope	England	Actor	Sammy Sosa	Dom. Republic	Baseball
Imam	Somalia	Model/Actor	B.E. Steichen	Luxembourg	Photography
Peter Jennings	Canada	TV News	Charles Steinmetz	Germany	Electricity
Al Jolson	Lithuania	Actor	Isaac Stern	Russia	Music
Elia Kazan	Turkey	Film/Theater	Levi Strauss	Bavaria	Clothier
Henry Kissinger	Germany	Politics	Elizabeth Taylor	England	Actor
Ted Koppel	England	TV News	von Trapp family	Austria	Music/Hotel
Lenny Krazelburg	Russia	Swimmer	Rudolph Valentino	Italy	Actor
Angela Lansbury	England	Actor	Eddie Van Halen	Netherlands	Music
Bela Lugosi	Hungary	Actor	An Wang	China	Computers
Yo Yo Ma	France(Chin.)	Music	Elie Wiesel	Romania	Author

Preserving Ethnic Textile Traditions

Most ethnic groups worked to preserve customs of their former homelands while striving to adapt to American culture. Traditional culture, including religious practices, holiday celebrations, music, crafts, special clothing, and ethnic cuisine, were continued here. Members of the younger generation generally wished to become Americanized as soon as possible, while their parents and grandparents honored former ways amid the new, and passed the old customs down to the next generation.

Today's descendants of immigrants lead very different lives than their ancestors who came from rural, pre-industrial villages, yet most still cherish their ethnic heritages. They are grateful that the old culture has been kept alive and plan to pass it on to their own children. Our country has been enriched by the diverse cultural traditions of immigrants.

Activity:

Many ethnic groups have traditional textiles and weaving techniques that have been developed within their culture. Ask students if any have learned a traditional textile craft from a grandmother or older person in the family or neighborhood. Have students select a textile tradition from the following chart (or one of their own choosing) and report on fabric and weaving method. Include a picture or drawing of the material. Give extra extra credit if a sample is brought in to show the class.



Textile Traditions by Country

Continent/Country	Textile	Description
Africa		
Ghana (Asante peoples)	Kente Cloth	woven silk strip cloth for ceremonial occasions
Zaire (Kuba peoples)	Kuba Cloth	embroidered tie-dyed raffia cloth of palm leaf fiber
East Africa	Kanga	rectangle of pure cotton cloth, bordered, printed
Nigeria (Yoruba peoples)	Yoruba Egungun	mask/costume of multicolored & textured fabric
Ghana/Ivory Coast	Adinkra Cloth	hand printed & embroidered "good-bye" cloth
Nigeria (Yoruba peoples)	Adire	indigo resist-dyed cloth
Mali (Bogolan)	Bogolanfini	hand-printed mud cloth
Sahara Desert (Tuareg)	Eseber	large straw/leather mats with abstract graphics
S. Africa	Dashiki	loose fitting long robe of brightly colored cotton
Asia		
Central Asia	Carpets	heavy woven wool floor coverings
India	Madras	fine textured, brightly colored cotton or silk cloth
India	Rilli	cotton applique & reverse applique
India	Sari	long cloth used as a garment; significant draping styles
Tibet	Wangden meditation weaving	unique carpet weaving style, used for meditation mats
Tibet	Thangkas	silk applique hangings
China	Sleeve bands	elaborately embroidered sleeves
China	Cheongsam (Qipao)	long dress
Japan	Kimono	long, loose, wide-sleeved robe worn with a broad sash
Korea	Wrapping cloths	traditional dress
S. China (Hmong)	Paj Ntaub	flower cloth, symbolic designs & patterns
Cambodia	Krama	cotton scarf worn around head or hips
Indonesia	Batik (used on sarongs)	intricate wax dyeing method for cloth
Malay	Baju Kurung	loose tunic worn over long skirt
Malay	Kebaya	2 piece costume, tight blouse & batik skirt
Polynesia	Tapa (bark cloth)	various traditional textiles made from bark
Tonga	Tupenu	wrap around skirt-like cloth
Tonga	Ta'ovala or kie kie	decorative wrap worn around waist
Hawaii	Featherwork	cloaks, leis, helmets, etc. made of feathers
Hawaii	Hula skirt	grass skirt
South America		
Andes	Arpillera	3-D art quilts
Maya/Mexico	Huipil	handwoven brocade rectangular outer garment
Aztec/Mexico	Feather weaving	use of fluffy chicken feathers on huipils, etc.
Peru	Feather textiles	an ancient art form, symbolic designs
Andes (Peru/Bolivia)	Manta	rectangular fabric shawl with distinctive weave
North America		
Haiti	Voudou flags (drapo)	sequined, artistic flags
USA	Quilts	layered fabric bed covering decoratively stitched together
USA	Samplers	cloth embroidered with alphabet, designs, poems, etc.
USA	Coverlets	bedspreads
Navajo Nation	Baskets	containers made from interlaced plant or tree materials
Navajo Nation	Blankets	handwoven wool, meaningful designs
Europe		
Scotland	Kilt - plaid/tartan	belted plaid short cloak
Spain	Flamenco dress	low necked dress with frilled skirt
Russia	Shawl	cloth worn as head/neck/shoulder covering
Belgium	Lace	delicate thread fabric made in open weblike pattern
Scandinavia	Tablet weaving	weaving technique using cards to make narrow textiles
Scandinavia	Sprang	stretchy intertwined braid for stockings, hammocks, etc.
Europe - various	Tapestry	heavy woven cloth wall hanging showing scenes

Created by the American Textile History Museum

Additional Information

Bound for America

An Introduction to the American Immigrant Experience 1800s-1920s

Golda Meir, later Prime Minister of Israel, was ten years old when she immigrated from Russia through Ellis Island to Wisconsin with her mother and two sisters, in 1906.

“We were very scared,” she wrote. “Going to America then was almost like going to the moon.”

Although immigrants all share similar experiences, their individual reasons for coming to America and the challenges they face are as diverse as the people themselves. Many emigrated to escape political oppression and religious persecution, but most were simply fleeing poverty. Their plan was to work hard and earn enough to improve the family economic situation back in the homelands. A high number were young men seeking adventure before settling down. Money saved from a few years at work in America would give them a good start. The rapid growth of industry, transportation and commerce that followed the Civil War made America the “Land of Jobs,” in need of a seemingly endless supply of cheap labor.

What They Brought

Most immigrants sold most of what they owned to pay their passage to America. They could only bring what the family could carry and each immigrant had to make hard choices to decide what to bring.

Some immigrants who came to America arrived with only the clothes on their backs. There was no time to pack when the political situation was so dangerous that one had to flee for his life. Africans brought to the New World as slaves were forced to leave everything behind.

Most immigrants packed a combination of the practical and the sentimental. A man might bring his tools, hoping to find a job in America using the skills that had supported his family in the Old Country.

They all brought articles of clothing for everyday use and for special occasions. Wearing apparel had most likely been made by the women of the family. Many immigrants would put on their best outfits upon arrival at Ellis Island, not only to impress the officials, but also for relatives and friends who awaited them.

They carried the documents that were required, often pinned or sewn onto their clothing. Along with tickets, passports, and landing cards, young people often carried their birth or baptismal certificates. The “proof papers” showed they were 14 years or over and according to state laws, were permitted to work.

Travel

Transporting this human cargo was profitable business for steamship companies. Ship lines posted advertisements that promised the good jobs, free land, and easy money to be found in America. Package deals often included train fares from rural villages to Atlantic ports and a one-way, third-class ocean voyage for

about \$12 (equivalent to about \$150 now). Steamship companies even required antiseptic baths and fumigated the baggage and bodies of all who set sail, quarantining them in company boarding houses until departure. Companies also kept the passenger lists that included health clearance for each emigrant.

Nearly a thousand men, women, and children could be crowded into steerage below the decks for a trip which, depending on season and weather, took from six to 32 days. Most immigrants had come from rural, pre-industrial villages. Having previously worked on hard-scrabble farms and with few job skills, they would now have to adjust to urban environments and new kinds of jobs amid the noise and fast pace of factories. Few could speak English and many had gone into debt to buy a ticket to America.

A network of ethnic support groups insured the survival of each new group of immigrants, as well as protection from hostility which frequently greeted them. Most received help from those who had come before. Someone who spoke their language was usually on hand to recommend a cheap rental in a tenement block within walking distance to the mill or mine. Somebody else knew which particular boss was hiring, and offered to take the new arrival to meet the overseer the next day. This sort of mutual aid helped cushion anxieties immigrants faced in this strange, new world.

New immigrants tended to settle in ethnic neighborhoods and many spent entire lives within their own national groups. Extended families cared for one another's children while the mothers worked. Each group suffered similar problems of adjustment, language barriers, economic hardship, and often, exploitation by bosses.

Each new immigrant group typically experienced discrimination, since new arrivals threatened jobs of previous groups. Employers liked hiring the latest arrivals who, glad to secure any job, were willing to work for the lowest wages. A cheap labor force meant that mill and mine owners could keep production costs down and profits up.

Mill managers generally separated their work force by mixing ethnic and language groups, convinced this would prevent workers from organizing or joining unions to demand higher wages and employee benefits.

Immigrants felt the need for their own place of worship in the new land. They were anxious to have stores to provide them with the foods they had been accustomed to eating. Most ethnic groups opened their own schools or cultural centers so their children would not lose their native language or forget traditional customs. Children of immigrants frequently served as spokespersons for parents, since they were quicker to learn English.

Immigrants generally expected their children to help supplement the family income. Child labor was common, in spite of continual attempts by child protection agencies and many legislators to abolish it. Children worked in mills and mines, sold newspapers on city streets, or took whatever jobs they could get to help sustain their families.

The children of immigrants really grew up in two cultures. Some of their parents never assimilated, refusing to learn English and determined to maintain their original language, dress, and foods in the new world. Their children attended public schools where they learned American values and patriotism. The idea of free education was a strange concept to many who had come from countries where only rich and idle people went to school.

Immigrants carried on their cultural heritages through traditional ethnic festivals and religious celebrations. Although they were generally pleased their children were learning English and becoming Americanized, they did not want them to forget their heritage. Even though life in America was very different, each ethnic group was determined to preserve the old culture through music, crafts, religion, food, and folklore.

Ethnic heritage continues to be passed down from generation to generation, if only through stories told by grandparents. Today's descendants of immigrants are grateful for the traditions they have inherited. America has always been a cultural mosaic: a nation of cultural and racial diversity.

America was always a Land of Promise where even the poorest could have the opportunity to work and improve economically. Immigrants came to reinvent themselves and to begin new lives, for in America there was always hope.

Ellis Island

Between 1855 and 1890, immigrants to New York arrived at Castle Garden in the Battery. It has been converted from old Fort Clinton as a receiving station by the New York State Board of Commissioners. So many immigrants were coming by the end of the nineteenth century however that the state agency looked to the federal government for help. The need for more controls and better documentation of immigrants had become obvious. The immigrants also needed protection from *runners*. These petty criminals would grab the *greenhorn's* baggage and lead them to some unsanitary, overpriced boarding house whose owners rewarded them with a couple of dollars for each newcomer. Runners even sold phony railroad and steamboat tickets to new arrivals, and for another advance fee would promise jobs that didn't exist.

There's the Beautiful Lady! Viva La Libertad! Long Live Freedom!

All that America promised was symbolized by the Statue of Liberty, a gift from the French people on this nation's hundredth birthday in 1876. Ten years later, President Grover Cleveland dedicated the statue as *Liberty Enlightening the World*. Later, an immigrant named Emma Lazarus immortalized it in her poem entitled "The New Colossus:"

*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-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*

I
Immigrants crowded up on deck to see *the Beautiful Lady* welcoming them to American shores. Parents held their children up so even the youngest ones would remember the wonderful sight. Some passengers fell to their knees and prayed, while others wept openly. Their first view of the Statue of Liberty seemed to them worth all discomforts they had suffered aboard ship: the crowded conditions, terrible smells, even sickness.

Isle of Hope – Isle of Tears

The federal government immigration processing center opened in 1892 on a 27.5 acre island in New York Harbor. It was established to ensure that the United States would have a work force that was physically and mentally fit. More than 12 million men, women, and children passed through Ellis Island during the peak years of 1892 - 1924. On the busiest day, April 17, 1907, 11,747 were processed through. It is believed that 4 out of 10 of all Americans can trace their ancestry to Ellis Island. Although many immigrants did come through Boston, Baltimore, New Orleans, Galveston, and other U.S. ports, Ellis Island served as the principal process-ing station, with New York the major point of disembarkation from 1892 - 1954. Then, nearly abandoned and derelict for many years, Ellis Island was reopened in 1992 as a national park historical site.

Dr. T. Bruce Anderson, who served as a doctor here from 1919-1922 called it “A place of great happiness and a place of great sorrow. Ellis Island was where the wishes and longings of millions were granted or denied.”

In June of 1897, the first buildings made of wood burned to the ground and by January 1, 1900 had been replaced by a three-story building of fireproof materials at a cost of \$1.5 million. A new dormitory was added in 1910 with two floors containing triple-tiered fold-up beds for those being detained for further examination or awaiting relatives. The dining hall was equipped to feed 1200 at one time and was open all day long, seven days a week. Immigrants’ meals were generally paid for by steamship companies. Cooks attempted to prepare ethnic meals since Scandinav-ians refused to eat pasta and the Italians would not touch oatmeal. One religious sect of Muslim Turks declined any food that had been prepared by *heathens*. In 1911, a kitchen was established to prepare *kosher* meals.

Fifteen medical buildings had been in use since 1892 and besides the hospital, contained a nursery for babies born on Ellis Island, x-ray facilities, labs, contagious disease wards, a surgery station, and even a morgue.

Passing Through the Golden Door

The government’s intent was to accept, rather than reject, immigrants. In the end, only 2% were sent back home. Twenty percent were detained on Ellis Island: single women who had no-one to meet them, those without money, and those who seemed to have health problems requiring further attention by physicians. The bureaucratic system was highly efficient, especially considering the masses that poured in but it was terrifying to the new arrivals who had given up so much to come to America and did not speak English. Families were terrified of being

separated. What would they do if one member could not pass through *the Golden Door*? Should they all return or would they stay in America without Grandmother or one of their children?

Only those passengers who had come Third Class were processed on Ellis Island. It was assumed that if one could afford to travel on First or Second Class tickets they were not likely to become *public charges*. These fortunate passengers were given health examinations while still aboard ship and got their papers stamped so as soon as the ship docked in New York they were allowed through.

The majority of immigrants however came by steerage and so had to board the ferry to Ellis Island. *Landing Cards* were immediately pinned on them. These corresponded to the ship's passenger lists and contained information on health conditions aboard.

Put your luggage down here! Men this way! Women and children to that side!

Although most likely feared this was the last they would ever see of their baggage, they followed the orders bellowed out at them. They were directed up to the second floor and as each new arrival climbed the stairs, he or she was scrutinized by several U.S. Public Health physicians for any signs of *loathsome or contagious diseases*, any *strange appearance* such as a limp, cough, or shortness of breath. Any person judged to require closer examination had their clothing marked in blue chalk with a coded initial.

B = Back problems	H = Heart problems
S = Senility	PG = Pregnant
LPC = Likely to become a public charge	E = Epilepsy: deportation
F = Facial rash	SC = Scalp, usually for Favus, a head fungus or lice
L = Lameness	G = Glaucoma
C = Conjunctivitis (a contagious eye disease)	TB = Tuberculosis
CT = Trachoma	
X = Mental deficiency, for which you would later be given an intelligence test and be required to solve simple math puzzles	
X with a circle around it = insanity	

Most of the arrivals got processed within 4 or 5 hours. Once you found a seat on a bench in the *Great Hall*, you waited nervously for your name to be called. Representatives of various ethnic and charitable organizations offered assistance to the lost and confused and passed out milk and doughnuts. Finally, you heard your name called and found yourself sitting at a table opposite an immigration officer, with a translator. They had a list of nearly 30 questions to ask and as you replied to each one, they compared your answer to data on the *ship's manifest*.

What is your name? Contrary to myth, immigration authorities did not intentionally change the original names of immigrants. Some questions were tricky. *Do you have a job in America?* Friends already in America had warned you to reply *no* to that one. After 1885, it was illegal to have a job waiting because that meant you had come to take that job away from an American. Yet you had to convince them that you were capable of finding a job. They'd never let you in if there was the slightest indication

that you might become a *public charge*.

After 1917, immigration law included a literacy requirement. You had to prove you could read in your native language. By the 1920s, there were strict quotas on certain nationalities. You had no way of knowing if your country's quota had already been reached that year.

Where were you born?

Are you married? Where is your husband/wife?

Are you an anarchist?

Have you ever been in jail?

Is someone going to meet you here?

Where are you going in America?

Who paid for your passage over?

What skills do you have?

How much money do you have? Show it to us now. Those who did not have the required \$25 were not cleared, but detained until a friend or relative already in America brought the money.

If you failed to pass inspection, your detention could run into weeks and months, during which time you slept in the dormitory. If a family member had to be hospitalized on Ellis, then you might stay until he/she was well enough to be discharged. Volunteers from the Immigrant Aid Society tried to make life as cheerful as possible for new arrivals during these long waits. For the children, there were games to play and bicycles to ride. A playground had even been set up on the roof. There were concerts every Sunday, English lessons, calisthenics for men, sewing circles for women, and child care classes for new mothers. Five out of every 6 immigrants who were detained were eventually accepted into the U.S.

Bless me! Here I go!

Welcomed to America, immigrants then headed down the *Stairs of Separation* to reclaim their luggage. At what was known as the *Kissing Post*, families wept with joy at being reunited, young women greeted their fiancés, and children were hugged by fathers who had come to America so many years before they now seemed strangers. Here were the service areas: a place to exchange money from the Old Country for American dollars; a telegraph office to send a message to the folks back home; box lunches to buy for a train trip. Here were windows where one could purchase tickets for trains and steamboats going all over the United States. Final destination determined, another card was pinned on the immigrant's lapel: LOWELL, CHICAGO, or ST. LOUIS. Immigrants with less resources generally remained in New York City, and settled into crowded tenements. And finally, the final brief ferry ride to the mainland.

"We were lucky," the father of one Jewish immigrant family said later. "We got out of Russia alive. We came with nothing. We left nothing. Here we could live again."

Background Information

Some Numbers from the U. S. Immigration & Naturalization Service:

Immigration is an ongoing process. More immigrants have come to the United States in the last two decades of the twentieth century than came in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century.

- Not all immigrants to America came by choice:
Between 1741 and 1808, 300,000 black slaves were brought from Africa to American ports and sold to the highest bidder.
- Top countries of origin for immigrants who passed through Ellis Island between 1892 and 1954:
Italy= 2.5 million
Austria-Hungary= 2.2 million
Russia= 1.9 million
Germany= 633,000
- 904, 292 immigrants entered the U. S. in 1993. Top countries of origin:
Mexico= 126,561
China= 65,578
Philippines= 63,457
Vietnam= 59,614

The United States is still the chief destination for immigrants, most of whom come from Asia today.

The 4 Waves of Immigration to the United States:

- 1st** 1600s-1775 – Colonists (mostly from Britain) came until the Revolutionary War
- 2nd** 1820s-1870s – 7½ million came until the 1870s economic depression
 - nearly all were from Northern or Western Europe
 - 1/3 were Irish fleeing the 1840s potato famine; lack of money led many to stay where they landed
 - 1/3 were Germans, many of whom had enough money to move on to the farmlands in the Midwest
- 3rd** 1881-1920 – The largest wave: 23½ million came, many from Southern and Eastern Europe and from elsewhere; called the new immigrants (2nd wave called the old)
- 4th** 1965-present - U.S. immigration laws changed to hemisphere, then world quotas, favored relatives of those here and the skilled; amnesty offers made
 - pattern change: more from Asia, W. Indies; fewer from Europe, Canada, and Central America

Before 1920: 30% later returned home from U.S. **Today:** 15% later return home

Immigration Timeline

- 1791** Black revolt in Santo Domingo brings 10,000-20,000 French exiles to the U. S.
- 1798** *Alien and Sedition Act* authorizes expulsion of any foreigners considered to be threat to the United States. Acts induce shiploads of French to return to France and Santo Domingo.
- 1803** British Passenger Act limits number of emigrants to be carried by ships, checking Irish emigration.
- 1807** U. S. Congress prohibits importing of black slaves to America.
- 1812** War against England halts immigration.
- 1814-1860** Wave of immigration: 5,000,000 people arrive in U.S. Sailing packets like *Black Ball Line* now undertake regular service between Liverpool, England and New York.
- 1819** The federal government requires all immigrants to be counted and recorded.
- 1830** Polish Revolution brings refugees from Poland to U.S. Public land in Illinois is allotted to Polish refugees by Congress.
- Many German Jews leave Germany to seek political freedom after German Nationalist Revolutions in 1830 and 1848
- 1837** *Financial Panic*: Nativists assert that immigration lowers wages and generally threatens the American working man.
- 1840** *Cunard Line* founded: begins era of steamship lines designed for transporting large numbers of passengers between Europe and U.S.
- 1841** U.S. President John Tyler formally invites foreigners "to come and settle among us as members of our rapidly growing family."
- 1846-1847** Potato Famine in Ireland brings large scale immigration of Irish fleeing starvation. Many Irish walk from Canadian ports of entry to Boston, Lowell, and other New England towns where manual laborers are being hired. By 1850, one out of every 23 people living in the U.S. will have been born in Ireland.
- French Canadian immigration to New England starts with arrival of skilled blacksmiths, saw mill workers, carpenters. They begin to bring in their families to work in textile mills.
- Native American Party* founded, precursor of anti-immigrant *Know-Nothings*.
- Crop failures in Germany and Holland with loss of land and farm foreclosures bring dispossessed to this country.
- 1848** Revolutions and political upheaval in Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary result in mass emigrations.

Order of the Star-Spangled Banner or the *Know-Nothing Party*, a nativist organization against foreigners, particularly Irish Catholics, gains political strength.

- 1855** Castle Garden opened in former fort at Battery Park. New York City officials to process immigrants.
- Know-Nothing Party* reaches political peak with election of six governors, domination of several state legislatures and sizable delegation in Congress.
- 1861-1864** Large numbers of immigrants fight on both sides during Civil War.
- Political change resulting from unification of Italy (1861) leads to exploitation of peasants and discontent, which will spur emigration from Italy
- 1862** *Homestead Act* passed with no distinction between Americans and aliens claiming free land in the west. Immigrants, especially Scandinavians, take full advantage of this opportunity and settle throughout the Midwest.
- 1864** *Contract Labor Law* passed to encourage importation of workers needed during the Civil War.
- 1865** Mill owners send agents to Quebec to recruit workers.
- 13th Amendment to U. S. Constitution abolishes slavery.
- 1868** *Burlingame Treaty* promises "Most favored nation" status between U. S. and China. Citizens of both nations have reciprocal immigration privileges. U. S. gets cheap labor and Chinese obtain right to reside, travel and be educated in America.
- 1869** Transcontinental railway, constructed mostly by Chinese and Irish laborers, opens, linking this country from coast to coast.
- 1870s** U.S. has economic depression, but Germany and Britain's economies improve, reducing their immigration to the U.S.
- Russia revolks freedom of worship and draft exemptions for all, which stimulates emigration of Russian Jews.
- 1875** The first federal restrictions on immigration enacted. Prostitutes and convicts banned from entry into the United States.
- 1877** *Sand Lot Riots* in San Francisco: 21 Chinese killed.
- 1881** Czar Alexander II assassinated; pogroms (massacres of Russian Jews) follow.
- 1882** The first *Chinese Exclusion Act* prevents entry of most immigrants from China. 10 year moratorium on Chinese laborers. This is first federal law to mandate entry of an ethnic group.
- General Immigration Law* bans paupers and other "undesirables."
- Anti-Semitism in Russia brings rise in Jewish immigration to U. S.
- 1885** *Foran Act* prohibits importing of contract labor. Workers who received job con-

tracts prior to immigrating, will be sent back for taking that job away from an American. Skilled laborers, needed by industry, are exempt, as are artists, lecturers, and domestic servants.

- 1886** President Grover Cleveland dedicates the Statue of Liberty
- 1889** *Oklahoma Land Rush* provides free government lands for settlement
- 1890s** Polish immigrants arrive in large numbers, fleeing hunger and political pressure. Greeks arrive, fleeing agricultural depression
- 1891** U. S. Congress assumes control of immigration policy and procedures. Health requirements now strictly monitored
- Pogroms* or Jewish genocide ordered by Czar bring Jews in from Russia and Lithuania in large numbers over the next few years.
- 1892** First federal immigration station opens on Ellis Island. Immigrants with tuberculosis, trachoma, and other "loathsome diseases" are denied entry.
- Chinese Exclusion Law* of 1882 is extended.
- 1894** *Immigration Restriction League* organized; emphasizes differences between "old" (Northern & Western Europeans) and "new" (Southern & Eastern European) immigrants, with "superiority" of those earlier immigrants.
- Beginning of Armenian immigration when Turkish government demands that Christian Armenians convert to Islam or leave country.
- 1897** Plan to require Literary Test for immigrants is vetoed by President Cleveland.
- Greeks defected in war with Turkey, are occupied, and forced to pay taxes to Turkey. Greeks steadily immigrate to U.S. through the 1920s.
- 1902** *Geary Act* extends *Exclusion Act of 1882* excluding Chinese laborers and adds restrictions that all Chinese residents must obtain certificate of residency or face deportation.
- 1903** Following assassination of President McKinley by an American-born anarchist, Congress expands list of immigrants to be banned entry to include anarchists and other political radicals, as well as polygamists.
- 1905** *Japanese and Korean Exclusion League* formed by organized labor to protest influx of *coolies*.
- 1907** *Gentlemen's Agreement* with Japan: Japanese Government to deny passports to laborers going directly from Japan to U. S.. Aimed at keeping agricultural workers from finding jobs and settling on the West Coast.
- Congress bans people with physical or mental defects who might not be able to make a living in the U. S. Also includes people with TB and orphans.
- 1910** Immigration officials require newly arrived immigrants to prove they have \$25 before they can be processed for entry to the U. S.

- Political unrest and economic hardship in Portugal brings large number of Portuguese to America.
- 1913** California legislature passes *Alien Land Law*, designating Japanese as *aliens ineligible for citizenship* and barring them from owning agricultural lands in state.
- 1914-1918** World War I slows immigration though millions are waiting to come
- 1914** Panama Canal opens.
- 1915** Armenians emigrate, fleeing genocide under Ottoman Empire.
- 1917** Literary test becomes requirement. All immigrants sixteen years and older must prove that they can read in some language.
- World War I fears result in persecution of German immigrants. Russian Revolution fuels fears of communism.
- Distrust of foreigners and revival of nativism, including fringe groups like Ku Klux Klan, follows the War.
- Puerto Ricans are designated American citizens.
- 1919-1921** *Red Scare* leads to large scale deportation. Thousands of immigrants are deported as anarchists, communists, and political enemies during anti-foreign *Palmer Raids*, implemented by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer and Chief of Investigation J. Edgar Hoover.
- 1921** *Emergency Quota Act* passed by Congress in 1922, sets ruling that immigration from every country be restricted to 2% of the number of foreign-born from that country, based on figures from the latest U. S. census. Limits European immigration to 357, 802, favoring those from Northern Europe and sometimes, separating families.
- Irish Free State created after hundreds of years of domination by Great Britain.
- 1924** Congress passes the *Oriental Exclusion Act*, banning Asians from entry and *National Origins Act* or the *Johnson-Reed Act*, now basing quotas on *Census of 1890*: Immigration from each country is now limited to 2% of people from that particular nation who were in the U. S. by 1890. This all but bans immigration from southern and eastern Europe.
- Native Americans are made U. S. citizens
- 1929-1930** President Hoover orders stricter enforcement on banning any immigrants likely to become *public charges*.
- 1933** Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany. Many Europeans, especially educated Jews, manage to get out before World War II begins.
- 1934** *Philippine Independence Act* restricts Filipino immigration to annual quota of 50.
- 1939-1945** Six million European Jews are systematically eliminated under the *Nazis Third Reich*.

- 1942** Internment of Americans of Japanese descent by U. S. government, fearing espionage and sabotage. Most remain in detention camps for duration of the war.
- 1943** Congress lifts ban on Chinese immigrants.(China an ally in WW II).
- 1945** Large scale Puerto Rican migration to escape poverty on island begins. Most first settle in New York *barrios*.
- 1946** *War Brides Act* provides for admission of foreign-born wives of American servicemen.
- 1948** *Displaced Persons Act* (amended in 1950) allows entry of 400,000 World War II refugees in four year period. This supersedes previous annual quotas on immigrants from specific countries. New wave of Greek immigrants arrive under this act.
- 1952** The *McCarren-Walter Immigration & Naturalization Act* codifies national quota system, although Asians are now permitted naturalization. Gives preference to any immigrants with relatives already living in the U. S., and those with work skills.
- President Truman called Act discriminatory "making English and Irish better citizens than Americans with Polish, greek or Italian names."
- Puerto Rico receives Commonwealth status and Puerto Ricans arrive in great numbers. As American citizens, they are *migrants*, able to travel back and forth between the mainland and their Caribbean island.
- 1954** Ellis Island closes.
- 1953-1957** *Refugee Relief Act* and *Refugee Escape Acts* allow thousands of non-quota immigrants to enter U. S.. Specifically grants visas to some 5000 Hungarians following 1956 uprising against Soviet Union. President Eisenhower invites 30,000 more Hungarians to enter on parole. In 1957, special legislation enacted to admit the Hungarians.
- 1958** Senators John Pastore of Rhode Island & John F. Kennedy from MA cosponsor *Azorean Refugee Act* to offer unrestricted visas to Portuguese earthquake victims.
- 1959** Fidel Castro achieves successful communist revolution in Cuba.
- 1960** *World Refugee Act* opens entry to more nationalities.
- Cubans flee Castro government; are paroled into U. S., as refugees.
- 1962** The *Migration and Refugee Assistance Act*, passed by Congress under President John F. Kennedy, makes it easier for refugees to immigrate to the United States.
- Congress grants special permission for admission of refugees from Hong Kong.
- 1965** *Immigration and Nationality Act*, (effective July 1, 1968) abolishes quota system based on national origin but sets limit of 170,000 from countries outside Western

Hemisphere and 120,000 from Western nations; limit of 20,000 from any one foreign nation. Immigrants without relatives already in U. S. had to prove they were willing to take jobs that American workers would not do.

- 1970s** Need for political asylum determines admission to the U. S. Southeast Asians, including Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese, forced by war to flee their homelands, find refuge here.
- 1975** Congress passes the *Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act*
- 1986** The *Immigration Reform and Control Act* or *Simpson-Rodino Bill* makes it possible for some illegal aliens living in the U. S. since 1982 to become American citizens. Attempts to curb employment of undocumented workers. Yet, some 2 million illegal immigrants are granted amnesty.
- 1990** Immigration Act is passed which adds to the 1965 *Immigrant and Nationality Acts* by focusing on reuniting families and addresses skills needed for employment in U. S..

(Multiple sources include John F. Kennedy, *A Nation of Immigrants*, pp.88-94).

Suggested Readings and Sources for Immigration Studies

Note: **T** designates Teacher Resource

S signifies resources particularly appropriate for elementary and middle school students

V indicates Video

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A Stitch in Time: Coming to America

Connections to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

History and Social Science

Core Knowledge:

The United States

4. Expansion, Reform, and Economic Growth (1800-1861)

5. The Advent of Modern America (1865-1920)

History Strand, Learning Standard 1: Chronology and Cause

History Strand, Learning Standard 2: Historical Understanding

History Strand, Learning Standard 3: Research, Evidence, and Point of View

History Strand, Learning Standard 4: Society, Diversity, Commonality, and the Individual

History Strand, Learning Standard 5: Interdisciplinary Learning: Religion, Ethics, Philosophy, and Literature in History

Geography Strand, Learning Standard 8: Places and Regions of the World

Geography Strand, Learning Standard 9: The Effects of Geography

Economics Strand, Learning Standard 11: Fundamental Economic Concepts

Economics Strand, Learning Standard 12: Economic Reasoning

Economics Strand, Learning Standard 13: American and Massachusetts Economic History

English Language Arts

Language Strand, Learning Standard 2: Students will pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions and interviews in order to acquire new knowledge

Language Strand, Learning Standard 3: Students will make oral presentations that demonstrate appropriate considerations of audience, purpose, and the information to be conveyed

Language Strand, Learning Standard 8: Students will decode accurately and understand new words encountered in their reading materials, drawing on a variety of strategies as needed, and then use these words accurately in speaking and writing

Language Strand, Learning Standard 9: Students will identify the basic facts and essential ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed

Language Strand, Learning Standard 13: Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structure, elements, and meaning of nonfiction or informational material and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding

Arts

Arts Discipline: Theatre

Standard 1: Acting: Students will develop acting skills to portray characters who interact in improvised and scripted scenes

Standard 6: Purposes and Meanings in the Arts: Students will describe the purposes for which works of dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and architecture were and are created, and, where appropriate, interpret their meanings

Standard 10: Interdisciplinary Connections: Students will use knowledge of the arts and cultural resources in the study of the arts, English language arts, foreign languages, health, history and social science, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering