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ABSTRACT

Between 1892-1954, over 12 million immigrants passed through Ellis Island (New York) on their way to becoming part of the United States melting pot. Even though the trip was very difficult, people considered the U.S. to be the land of opportunity. What made the U.S. seem so good? This role playing exercise for eighth-grade students states that class members are going to become a poor immigrant family traveling from the Old World to the New World in search of the American dream. Each student creates a portfolio containing: (1) a travel journal; (2) a list of items to help them start a new life; (3) a recipe from their country of origin; and (4) a map of the United States showing where most of the people from their country settled. The journal must include an account of their trip to the United States; their first impression of viewing the Statue of Liberty (New York) and what it meant to them; the process of going through Ellis Island; and the establishment of their new life in the U.S. Implementation of the activity is detailed in a seven step process. The plan lists 11 Web sites, 26 books, a video resource, provides learning advice, evaluation information, a conclusion, and questions for reflection. The teacher notes section defines a role playing activity; cites grade/unit; purpose; educational goals; addresses information; literacy skills; California history/social studies standards; notes the procedure; suggests adaptations for special needs students and extension activities; and provides an evaluation rubric. (BT)

History Social Science



**Schools of California
Online Resources for
Education (SCORE):
Connecting California's
Classrooms to the
World**

The American Mosaic

Eighth Grade Activity by Jaime Boston

SO 034 249

SCORE

**San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools
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The American Mosaic

"Remember, remember always, that all of us... are descended from immigrants and revolutionists."

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Have you ever had to move to a new town or met someone who has just moved to your hometown? Moving can be both an exciting adventure and a scary experience. When the journey involves moving to a new country, it can also be the beginning of a whole new way

of life.

View Teacher Notes

The Task



Between 1892 and 1954, over 12 million immigrants passed through Ellis Island on their way to becoming part of America's "melting pot". Even though the trip was very difficult, people still considered America the land of opportunity. What made America seem so good? When the immigrants arrived there were many things they needed to do including learning the language and American customs. Did Americans always welcome immigrants? How would the answer to (Europe) that question make life in America easier or harder?

You and your classmates are going to become a poor immigrant family traveling from the Old World to the New World in search of the American dream. To keep track of this momentous change in your life, you are going to create a portfolio. The portfolio will contain: (1) a journal of your travels, activities and thoughts, and your new life in America; (2) a list of items (a bundle of belongings) that you will bring to help you start your new life in America, (3) a recipe from your country of origin, and (4) a map of the United States showing where most of the people from your country settled. The journal must include: (1) an account of the trip to America, (2) your impression of your first view of the Statue of Liberty and what it meant to you, (3) the process of going through Ellis Island, and (4) the establishment of your new life in America.

The Process

Your teacher will divide the class into "families" which may consist of several generations. For example, there may be a grandmother, a mother, a father, a teenage son and a young daughter. It depends how many people are in your group. Each person will write their portion of the journal from their character's point of view.

Step 1 - Brainstorm. What do we know? Think about and record all of the things you know about the immigrants who came to America from 1892 to 1945?

- ◆What countries did they come from?
- ◆Why did they come to America?
- ◆Were they welcome here?
- ◆What did they do when they arrived? Where did they live? Jobs? Housing?

Keep a copy of your brainstorm sheet and see what you can add to it at the end of this activity.

Step 2 - Vocabulary. Look up the definition of each of the words below. Keep the list of the words and definitions near your computer.

- immigration
- migration
- quotas
- deportation
- alien
- pauper
- detention center
- emigration
- steerage

Step 3 - Focus questions. What do we need to know? Develop the questions you need to answer in order to complete this project. Here are some sample questions, but you will probably have more.

1. Where is Ellis Island located?
2. When was it in operation as an immigrant processing center?
3. What was the approximate total number of immigrants who passed through Ellis Island?
4. What were the years of Ellis Island's peak immigration period?
5. Did all passengers disembark from the ships at once? Did all passengers have to go through Ellis Island?
6. Some immigrants had to undergo medical inspections at Ellis Island. If the doctors there diagnosed a person as having something wrong with them, they would put a chalk mark on their clothes. Why? Do you feel that immigrants were treated fairly during their Ellis Island inspections?
7. What were the main countries of origin for Ellis Island immigrants?
8. What proportion of Ellis Island immigrants stayed in New York City rather than moving on to other parts of the country?
9. How many Ellis Island immigrants were deported? What were some of the reasons that they were deported?
10. What were some of the reasons that Ellis Island immigrants decided to come to America?
11. What contributions did the immigrants of this time make to America? Are there any famous immigrants?

Step 4 - Find out why immigrants left their home country. What things and customs did they bring with them? Many immigrants could only bring a small bundle of belongings with them. What will you take with you and why? If your bundles could only have as many items as would fit inside a modern-day grocery bag, what would you bring? Something to

remind you of your homeland? Something to remind you of your family? Something to entertain you on the voyage? Something you think will be useful to you in America?

Make a list of the items you plan to include. Remember that they must be items that would have existed back then. Be prepared to share and tell why you included these items.

Step 5 - Find out about the Statue of Liberty. What did it represent to new immigrants? How did they feel when they first saw it?

Step 6 - Why were immigrants processed through Ellis Island? Follow the steps that the immigrants took through Ellis Island. Relate the emotions felt by new immigrants at Ellis Island.

Step 7 - How did they begin new lives in America? Did they stay in New York City or move to other areas of our country? What kind of housing could they find? What kind of jobs did they do? What elements of their old life did they keep (food, holidays, games...)? Did they make any significant contributions to the American way of life?



Resources

Web sites:

[The American Immigration Home Page](http://www.bergen.org/AAST/Projects/Immigration/)

<http://www.bergen.org/AAST/Projects/Immigration/>

Students at Academy for the Advancement of Science and Technology created this page. It contains information on the reasons for immigration, who the immigrants to the U.S. were, peaks/waves of immigration, methods of transportation and ports of arrival, process of entering the U.S., destination/places where they settled, treatment/reception by other Americans, effects/impact on America (positive and negative), opportunities for and success of immigrants, degree of assimilation, what did immigrants find distinctive about America, and laws restricting immigration.

California Museum of Photography

http://cmp1.ucr.edu/exhibitions/immigration_id.html

A wonderful collection of historic photographs of Ellis Island.

Ellis Island

<http://www.historychannel.com/community/ellisisle/newworld.html>

The History Channel devotes the following images, text, and sound files to a celebration of the immigrant experience, from the ordeal of Ellis Island to the crucible of New York, gateway to the American Dream.

Ellis Island: through America's Gateway

<http://www.i-channel.com/features/ellis/index.html>

Provides an introduction to the Ellis Island Oral History Project. It contains links to interviews of immigrants from the early 20th century. It contains links to a historical overview, the journey of the immigrants, processing at Ellis Island, Ellis Island today, a cookbook, and the oral history project. Throughout the site are interviews of people from the oral history project.

Ellis Island Photos

<http://www.rockyhill.org/Lower/ellisland/ellisland.html>

Contains photos of Ellis Island from the 1970's prior to its restoration.

The History of Immigrants: Two Sides to the Story

<http://www.owlnet.rice.edu/~marvand>

"Immigration in the U.S. has always been a topic of great controversy through times." This site offers historic and contemporary views on immigration with pros and cons about it.

Immigration at the turn of the 20th century

<http://www.cohums.ohio-state.edu/history/projects/immigration/>

Provides two excellent articles written about immigration. One deals with the changing character of immigration and the other gives a colorful and descriptive account of what life was like for the immigrants who made their way to the United States. It has a chart of what each immigrant earned on the average, broken down by national origin.

Immigration of Ethnic and Religious Groups

<http://www.familytreemaker.com/00000359.html>

Brief immigration summaries about dozens of ethnic and religious groups as well as addresses of contacts and sources. Sift through the commercialization of this huge site to access other useful information on genealogical research.

Liberty State Park

<http://www.libertystatepark.com/index2.htm>

Information about Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty is contained on this commercial park site.

Statue of Liberty Facts, News and Information

<http://www.endex.com/gf/buildings/liberty/liberty.html>

Contains facts, news and information about the statue.

Tenement VR

<http://www.wnet.org/archive/tenement/virtual.html>

Visit two apartments as they appeared at 97 Orchard St., NYC in the 1870's and 1930's.

Books:

Tales of the elders : a memory book of men and women who came to America as immigrants, 1900-1930. Silver Burdett Press, 1993.

The recollections of twelve people who immigrated to the United States during the period of the Great Migration between 1900 and 1930.

Bode. New kids on the block : oral histories of immigrant teens. F. Watts 1989.

Teenage immigrants from various countries recount the emotional experience of fleeing their homelands and adjusting to a new life in the United States.

Bresnick-Perry. Leaving for America. Children's Book Press, 1992.

The author recalls her early years in a small Jewish town in western Russia and the last days there as she and her mother prepare to join her father in the United States.

Brown. The struggle to grow : expansionism and industrialization, 1880-1913. Twenty First Century Books 1993.

Primary source materials present life on the Western frontier, urbanization, immigration, social reformers, and contemporary technology.

Caroli. Immigrants who returned home. Chelsea House, 1990.

Examines the motivations of immigrants from Ireland, Sweden, Asia, and other parts of the world who return to their homelands for political, cultural, economic, and other reasons.

Freedman, Russell. Immigrant kids. Dutton, 1960.

Text and period photographs chronicle the life of immigrant children at home, school, work, and play during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Harvey. Immigrant girl : Becky of Eldridge Street. Holiday House 1987.

Becky, whose family has emigrated from Russia to avoid being persecuted as Jews, finds growing up in New York City in 1910 a vivid and exciting experience.

Hesse. Letters from Rifka. Holt, 1992.

In letters to her cousin, a young Jewish girl chronicles her family's flight from Russia in 1919 and her own experiences when she must be left in Belgium for a while when the others emigrate to America.

Kurelek. They sought a new world: the story of European immigration to North America. Tundra Books, 1985.

Paintings and text describe what immigrants went through to survive in North America.

Lawlor, Veronica. I Was Dreaming to Come to America: Memories from the Ellis Island Oral History Project. Viking, 1995.

In their own words, coupled with hand-painted collage illustrations, immigrants recall their arrival in the United States. Includes brief biographies and facts about the Ellis Island Oral History Project.

Lee. Tracing our Italian roots. J. Muir Publications, 1993.

Depicts the wave of Italian immigration to America at the beginning of the twentieth century, describing the life left behind in Italy and the challenges faced in America. Includes brief discussions of some prominent Italian Americans.

Leighton, Maxine. An Ellis Island Christmas. Puffin, 1994.

Having left Poland and braved ocean storms to join her father in America, Kryisia arrives at Ellis Island on Christmas Eve.

Levine, Ellen. If your name was changed at Ellis Island. Scholastic, 1993.
Describes, in question and answer format, the great migration of immigrants to New York's Ellis Island, from the 1880s to 1914. Features quotes from children and adults who passed through the station.

Levinson, Riki. Watch the stars come out. Dutton, 1985.
Grandma tells about her mama's journey to America by boat, years ago.

Maestro, Betty. Coming to America : the story of immigration. Scholastic, 1996.
Traces the history of immigration to the United States and tells people's reasons for choosing to move to America.

Moscinski. Tracing our Irish roots. J. Muir Publications, 1993.
Describes life in Ireland, the Potato Famine, emigration to America, and the contributions of the Irish Americans to their new land.

Moscinski. Tracing our Polish roots. J. Muir Publications, 1994.
Traces the history of Polish people in America since they first arrived from Poland in the early 1600s, and discusses the many contributions Polish-Americans have made to the arts, science, and business.

Polacco, Patricia. The keeping quilt. Simon & Schuster, 1988.
A homemade quilt ties together the lives of four generations of an immigrant Jewish family, remaining a symbol of their enduring love and faith.

Pryor. The dream jar. Morrow Junior Books, 1996.
After emigrating to America, each member of a Russian family works hard to contribute to the family's dream of someday owning and running a store.

Reef. Ellis Island. Dillon Press, 1991.
Reviews the history of the immigration center where more than twelve million immigrants became new Americans over a sixty-year period.

Reimers. A land of immigrants. Chelsea House Publishers, 1996.
Looks at the immigrant experience in America, from the Native Americans, to the Pilgrims, to the Irish and German influx in the 19th century, to the present day "melting pot" that is called America.

Sagan. Tracing our Jewish roots. J. Muir Publications. 1993.
Traces the history of Jews, especially those from Eastern Europe, in the United States, their experiences as immigrants, and their contributions to American culture.

Sandin, Joan. The long way to a new land. Harper & Row, 1981.
Carl Erik journeys with his family from Sweden to America during the famine of 1868.

Sandler, Martin W. Immigrants. HarperCollins, 1995.
Photographs, illustrations, and text show what it was like for people to leave their homes and immigrate to the United States.

Silver. Tracing our German roots. J. Muir Publications, 1993.
Germans came to America in the late 1600s and have helped shape our culture through the arts, business, and science.

Stein, R. Conrad. Ellis Island. Childrens Press, 1992.
Describes the history, closing, and restoration of the Ellis Island immigration center and depicts the experiences of the immigrants who came to Ellis Island at the turn of the twentieth century.

Watson: The butterfly seeds. Tambourine Books 1995.
When his family comes to America, Jake brings special seeds that produce a wonderful reminder of his grandfather.

Videos:

Multicultural Peoples of North America Video Series, Schlessinger Media. 15 vol. Set 30 min. each. Applicable titles are: German Americans, Greek Americans, Irish Americans, Italian Americans, Jewish Americans, and Polish Americans.

Learning Advice:



You will be working as a "family". Just like in a real family, everything you do (or don't do) impacts everybody else. It is important that you do your part to help the family. Everyone must contribute. Keep all your notes and materials in a folder or binder so that you do not lose anything. If you are having trouble finding what you need, ask your "family" for help. Try brainstorming possible solutions as a team. If you run into trouble ask: "What other methods/materials could we try? Did any other team run into that problem? How did they solve it? Who could we ask? Who is good at doing that?" Use as many resources as possible - information comes in many shapes and forms.

Evaluation:

Each group will produce a portfolio containing:

- Research notes including vocabulary and definitions
- Map showing distribution of immigrants in U.S. by 1930
- Journal documenting journey to America and settling in new home.
- List of items contained in immigrant's "bundle"

Journal

- Adequately covers subject matter
- Uses variety of resources.
- Correct grammar and spelling - makes few or no mechanical errors.
- Develops the assigned topic in an interesting and imaginative way
- Demonstrates a logical plan or organization and coherence in the development of ideas .
- Shows skillful use of sentence variety
- Uses specific, vivid language

Cooperative Learning Group Participation

- Worked well with teammates
- Contributed to team effort
- Did fair share of work

Self evaluation:

- Did you do your best?
- Did you work hard, enjoy the project, and feel good about what you completed?
- Did you contribute to the group's project?
- Did you finish your work on time?
- If you had to do it again, would you do anything differently?

Conclusion:



Immigrants are still coming to America today. Since World War II nearly 9 million immigrants have come to America to find a better life for themselves and their children. In this search, they encounter the same problems and hardships that faced those who entered through Ellis Island at the turn of the century. In the future, it may be up to you to decide whether we keep the welcome mat out or lock the doors.

Reflection:



- Which part of this activity was the most successful for you?
- What advice would you offer to a class that is just beginning this activity?
- How would you feel about immigrating to another country?
- What could you do to help an immigrant family in your community?

Look at your original brainstorm sheet. What can you add to it now?

Teacher notes

Grade/Unit: Grade 8, Unit 12

Purpose: Students will learn about the immigrant experience in America during the late 19th and early 20th century. They will explore our country's pride in its multicultural heritage and its historical ambivalence toward immigrants and immigration in general.

Goals:

Students should be able to:

- give reasons why people emigrated (and continue to do so) to the United States.
- identify some of the places from which people emigrated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- identify some of the contributions made by immigrants.
- identify patterns of immigration throughout America's history;
- explain procedures immigrants followed at Ellis Island;
- recognize the symbolism of the Statue of Liberty in the immigrant experience;
- describe life and work in America at the turn of the century.
- give examples of policies and laws that sought to limit immigration.

Information Literacy Skills:

1. Locate information from a variety of resources to obtain historical data
2. Consider multiple perspectives

3. Draw upon diverse sources for historical learning
4. Formulate questions to focus the inquiry
5. Access information presented in images, documents, and oral interviews

H/SS Standards:

Length: 3 weeks approximately 1 1/2 hrs. per day

8.12 Students analyze the transformation of the American economy and the changing social and political conditions in the United States in response to the Industrial Revolution, in terms of:

- the location and effects of urbanization, renewed immigration, and industrialization (e.g., effects on social fabric of cities, wealth and economic opportunity, and the conservation movement)
- the new sources of large-scale immigration and the contribution of immigrants to the building of cities and the economy; the ways in which new social and economic patterns encouraged assimilation of newcomers into the mainstream amidst growing cultural diversity; and the new wave of nativism

Procedure:

Divide the class into "families" of between four to six students. Each student will assume the character of one of the family members. The families may be multi-generational and extended. Each family will be responsible for turning in a portfolio. Families should come from one of the major immigrant groups of the time: Scandinavian, Irish, German, Polish, Italian, Greek, or Russian (Jewish).

Team members should work in pairs or individually to find one or two elements of the assignment information ("Jigsaw" - to see a description of this learning method go to http://www.newhorizons.org/trm_atriskinstr.html#jigsaw or <http://volcano.und.nodak.edu/vwdocs/msh/lc/is/cl.html>.) The team can then share all the information that they have found to individually create their journals and bundles.

Adaptations:

Special needs students will be accommodated throughout this unit because they will be working team. The gifted/talented student will be challenged and probably assume leadership role, while academically average, learning disabled and LEP students all will

have their role to play. A student weak in researching skills (due to language barrier or to learning disability) still can gather information with teacher assistance and teammate

assistance. The assignment could be further modified for the LEP student who is, in fact, a recent immigrant, by having him/her chronicle the family's own immigration experiences.

Extensions:

America has been described as a "nation of immigrants" because, everybody (except for Native Americans) came to this country from somewhere else. Research your own family and construct a family tree that traces your ancestry back to 1900 (or as far as you can). Did anyone in your family emigrate to America during the 20th century? If so, find out where they entered the country and what type of inspection or interview they had to undergo. How does their immigrant experience compare to the Ellis Island experience?

Research the history of our immigration laws, then write an essay in which you compare anti-immigrant sentiment to the debates over illegal immigration taking place today. Explain the dichotomy of America priding itself on being a "melting pot," and its long history of opposing immigration to the United States?

Interview a recent immigrant to our country. Compare their experience with that of immigrants of 100 years ago.

Create a "mosaic" collage of images that depicts some aspect of the immigration experience.

Try some liberating math problems using this web site.

Brain Busters

<http://www.nettech.org/District20/PS48/brain.htm>

A selection of 10 math problems featuring facts about the Statue of Liberty

Our multi-ethnic culture has been referred to as the "American Mosaic". Create a "mosaic" collage of images representing the various ethnic groups that immigrated to the U. S. during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Evaluation Rubric:

Excellent:

Portfolio is complete, organized and neat.
Information in the journal and items selected for bundles reflect sound research and accurate content knowledge.
Shows creativity and imagination.
Show synthesis and integration of historical resources and concepts.

Good:

Portfolio is adequate but is missing some elements of organization or neatness.
Information in the journal and items selected for bundles reflects some content knowledge and adequate research.
Shows some synthesis and integration of historical resources and concepts.

Fair:

Portfolio needs minor reinforcement or revisions.
Information in the journal and items selected for bundles reflects weak content knowledge and research, misinformed inferences, hypothesis and conclusions.
Shows little synthesis and integration of historical resources and concepts.

Poor:

Portfolio is incomplete.
Information in the journal and items selected for bundles reflects a lack of content knowledge and inadequate research.
Shows no integration of historical resources and concepts.

Unacceptable:

No project completed

Graphics:

Missliberty
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/worldheritage/misslib.gif>
Stars
<http://www.sherylsgraphics.com/>
Flagwav2
<http://www.free-market.net>

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