

Web Unit Plan

Title: Destination America: Our Hope, Our Future

Description: Students gain an understanding of why people immigrate and what life was like as an immigrant at the turn of the 20th century by traveling back in time. Using primary sources and other data to gain insight into the immigrant experience, students create one fictitious immigrant's experience and share that experience through a digital portfolio of artifacts.

At a Glance

Grade Level: 6–8

Subject sort (for Web site index): Social Studies

Subject(s): History

Topics: Immigration

Higher-Order Thinking Skills: Critical Analysis and Interpretation of Data, Questioning, Assessment and Evaluation of Information, Metacognition

Key Learnings: Push and Pull Factors, Ellis Island, Immigration Quotas

Time Needed: 3 to 4 weeks, 1 hour daily

Background: [From the Classroom in California, United States](#)

Unit Summary

History comes alive for students as they develop immigrant personas and become immigrants who make the journey from Europe to the United States. Throughout this process, students analyze primary source data to create multimedia portfolios that illustrate their experiences. Once on American soil, they participate in a simulation of the Ellis Island immigration station. Students then assume the roles of their immigrants and share their experiences with the class. This exercise in creating historical fiction, based on actual documents, photos, and records, enables students to understand the motivations of immigrants and the challenges they faced. This can be part of a larger immigration unit where students also study the experiences of other immigrant groups, or look at immigration during different time periods or to different countries.

Curriculum Framing Questions

- **Essential Question**
Why take the risk?
- **Unit Questions**
Why do people immigrate?
What was it like for immigrants as they traveled to, arrived at, and lived in a new country?
What are immigration trends and patterns based on data?
- **Content Questions**
Why did immigrants leave their homes to come to the United States between 1870 and 1930?
How did the United States try to restrict immigration between 1870 and 1900?
What is *immigration* and *emigration*?

Assessment Processes

View how a variety of student-centered [assessments](#) are used in the Destination America: Our Hope, Our Future. These assessments help students and teachers set goals; monitor student progress; provide feedback; assess thinking, processes, performances, and products; and reflect on learning throughout the learning cycle.

Instructional Procedures

Prior to Instruction

Compile resources on European immigration to the United States from 1870 through 1930. Select primary source materials to help students uncover patterns and trends as they study the “push” and “pull” factors that influenced immigration. Resources might include government records, economic reports, newspaper articles, ships' registries, diaries, and oral histories. Use a social bookmarking Web site to share resources with students.

Getting Started

Discuss the Essential Question, *Why take the risk?* Engage students in a discussion about experiences in their lives or other people's lives that have motivated them to take a big risk. What were the results of the risk? Was it worth it? This can also be done as an online discussion or using an online whiteboard tool if students have their own computers. They can share and comment on each other's ideas.

After a discussion, have students individually reflect on the question in journals.

Introduction to the Unit

Discuss the question, *Who is an American?* As a group, come up with an operational definition of *American*. To illustrate the rich heritage in the classroom, compile a list of all the countries students represent ethnically. Locate and mark the countries on a world map. This can be done with online maps. Students can also conduct surveys in the school and display the data in maps and charts.

Explain that between 1870 and 1930 approximately 30 million immigrants came to America from all over the world. Many of them were fleeing poverty, oppression, or disease in their native countries. Tell students that they are going to assume the role of a European immigrant who came to the United States during this time.

Share the project, explaining that students will choose an immigration group and use primary source data to research the group's immigration experience, come up with a research question, and collect data to answer their questions. Tell students that, based on their research, they will create an immigrant portfolio, which may include the immigrant's profile, diary entries, letters home, and artifacts to demonstrate why the immigrant left his or her country and describe experiences in the United States. This can be done as a multimedia presentation, a wiki, or a Web site, for example. Provide choices for students throughout the project. During the course of the project, all fictitious immigrants participate in a simulation of an immigration station.

Immigration Waves

Show an interactive timeline of different waves of immigration at [The Peopling of America*](#) Web site. Focus students on the waves of immigration that occurred during the nineteenth century. Looking at the data, discuss the patterns that they see and

what may have caused these. Introduce the idea that migration has two parts—*emigration* (leaving a place) and *immigration* (entering a place).

Discuss how the factors that influenced migration in the latter half of the nineteenth century included *pushing* factors (such as economic depression; climactic conditions, such as drought; social unrest; and overpopulation), and *pulling* factors (such as government incentives, personal opportunity, and free expression).

Have students begin thinking about the country of origin they would like to study. Introduce students to the human face of immigration through Seymour Rechtzeit's story at [Scholastic's Immigration Page](#)* or other stories at [Family Histories](#)* on the Ellis Island Web site.

Interviews

To begin exploring the Unit Question, *Why do people immigrate?* have students interview someone with direct or indirect (such as second generation) experiences as an immigrant. Students may be able to interview family members or coworkers of family members. You may be able to arrange interviews with a local immigrant group advocacy organization. Interviews can be by phone or web conferencing if interviewees are not local. When arranging the interviews, ask interviewees to bring any artifacts related to their immigration experience. During the interviews, students should find out as much as they can about the person's origins and record the responses in journals. Questions might include, *Where did you/your ancestors come from? When did you/they come to this country? Why did you/they leave their country? How did you travel here?*

Students can practice interviewing peers before the immigrant interviews. Also prior to the interviews, have some sample artifacts on hand to demonstrate how to collect data from artifacts. Use the [Artifacts Analysis Worksheet](#)*, from the National Archives, to conduct a mini-lesson. Explain that artifacts are qualitative data, and they can include items such as photographs, war medals, old letters, and documents. As students examine the artifacts, they can uncover information about someone's life and the past as they group, sort, and classify the information.

After the interviews, have students share information and compare for similarities and differences.

The Research Process

Identify Questions

Have students, individually, in pairs, or small groups, select a national origin. Encourage them to choose national origins from which they descended or would like to learn more about. Choices may include German, Irish, Scandinavian, Hungarian, Italian, Greek, Turkish, Russian, Czech, Slovak, or Polish.

Provide time for students to conduct exploratory research on their immigration group to generate questions and choose a research question(s) before uncovering more details about the immigrants' experiences. Example research questions include, *Why did Turkish immigrants come to the United States? Or, What was it like to be an immigrant from Ireland?*

Provide the following Web sites as good places for students to start gathering immigrant information:

- [Immigration: The Living Mosaic of People, Culture, and Hope*](#)
- [Immigration, Library of Congress*](#)

See Resources for a list of other useful Web sites to get started.

Collect Data

Once students establish the questions they want to answer, they need to determine what types of data will give them the information they need to draw meaningful conclusions.

Guide this process by sharing the types of data that students can consider, and point out the advantages and disadvantages of different data sources. Data may include original records, government reports, photographs, diaries, newspaper articles, oral histories, maps, and birth certificates, for example. Data may also include secondary data that has been collected and compiled by others, such as government reports, ship records, or museum collections. Emphasize to students that they should use a variety of primary and secondary sources so they can get different perspectives.

Before students begin their data collection, discuss how they can collect, analyze, and interpret data. They can consider the following questions:

- What kinds of data are most convincing?
- How can you find meaning in a collection of information?
- What kinds of sources tell us about the past?
- How do we organize a lot of information so we can think about what it means?
- What kinds of questions can be answered with data?

Distribute the [Data Collection Plan](#) to help students begin planning how they conduct their research. Once students have figured out the type of data they are going to use, they can seek answers to their questions with the appropriate data sources. For example:

Question	Information Needed	Kind of Data	Where to Find It
Why did Irish immigrants come to the United States?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conditions in Ireland that caused people to leave• What they expected to find in the United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Previously collected data about economic conditions in Ireland• Diaries of immigrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Web• Town historical museum

As students conduct research, they will keep a [Research Log](#) to track the data they use and how they use it. Reinforce specific research skills. This can be done with mini lessons or modeling. For example, when students are reading immigrant diaries or looking at other primary source data, they should think critically about the source and reliability of the data, by asking questions such as:

- Is the author credible?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Does the bias of the author need to be considered? Does the content need to be objective?

- Why was this document/object written or made?
- Is the data relevant and suitable to the project?
- How does this source help answer the research questions?
- How does evidence from this source alter or fit into existing interpretations of the past?

As students collect data, they formulate an individual immigrant's experience based on actual experiences of that particular immigrant group. Notes may be collected in a journal or on the [Research Log](#). The Research Log may be created and accessed as an online collaborative document.

Analyze Data

When students collect data, they look for trends in order to create a portfolio that represents a *typical* immigrant from a particular immigration group. Since students will primarily use qualitative data, teach them how to code and categorize the data to help with their interpretation of the data. As they analyze data, they can look for common themes in order to best represent a typical immigrant's experience. Demonstrate the following techniques.

Analyzing Qualitative Data

1. Read through all the data to get a general impression of the topics that are addressed. Take notes on possible themes or repeated words or phrases.
2. Based on the reading of the data and the research question, identify some categories of terms and keywords that appear throughout the data. For example: push and pull factors, feelings about immigrating, and immigration challenges.
3. Create a coding system that will help identify the places where the keywords and categories of words appear. Use color-coding, abbreviations, or symbols. Codes should be easy to remember, record, and identify in the data.
4. Code data by going through the data and marking the relevant sections with the appropriate codes.
5. Revise codes. After coding some of the data, divide or combine some categories as needed to be more efficient or descriptive.
6. Count instances of different keywords and record the numbers in a spreadsheet for quantitative analysis.
7. Pull out the data into the categories established earlier.
8. Create diagrams and charts, such as flow charts, Venn diagrams, and hierarchical charts, to show the relationships among the categories.

Understanding Maps

Students will undoubtedly come across maps in their immigration research. You may want to review map-reading strategies with a mini lesson. Showing an immigration map, explain the LLLP Strategy to read a map: Legend, Labels, Location, and Patterns. Maps may be theme-based, such as a type of map that shows the number of immigrants from a particular area. With these types of map, students can identify patterns and see how the maps support or contradict other information from their research.

Analyzing Photos

Photos are another useful primary source that can provide information. Using a photo from the [American Memory collection](#)*, demonstrate how to analyze photos to get information. Use the [Photo Analysis Worksheet](#)* from the National Archives to explain how to observe, ask questions, and draw inferences from photos. Students

can compare photos in order to make generalizations based on commonalities of the photos.

Draw Conclusions

Once students have researched and collected data on an immigrant group, they are ready to synthesize their research by creating a fictitious immigrant's experience. Based on prevailing trends, they create a portfolio of a typical immigrant's experience. The portfolio may include:

- A Persona (this can be written as a diary):
 - Name
 - Age
 - Family history
 - Occupation and work experience
 - Education
 - Health history
 - Description of life in the old country
 - Push factors and personal reasons for wanting to leave the old country
 - Pull factors, and personal reasons for wanting to enter the United States
 - Plans once in the United States

- Letters Home
Students can share their immigration experience with family members back in their countries. They do this by writing letters to relatives or friends in their old country. In their letters, each student should share details and feelings about the crossing, Ellis Island processing procedures, first impressions of the new country, challenges faced by new immigrants, and so forth. Have students get peer feedback before final revisions are made to their letters. Letters may be done as blogs with students commenting on each other's experiences from the point of view of their immigrant persona.

After students have been through the immigration process, revisit the Curriculum-Framing Questions: *Why take the risk? What was it like for immigrants as they traveled to, arrived at, and lived in the United States?* and *How did the immigration experience differ for different immigrant groups?* As a class, discuss students' answers to these questions and how their answers may have changed with their new perspectives.

- Documents
Students can prepare for their journey to the United States by creating fictitious documents, such as birth certificates, passports, health records, and so forth. You may want to prepare templates for these in advance.

Share Findings

Portfolio

Have students combine their work into an electronic portfolio about their immigrant's immigration experience. The portfolio may be presented as a multimedia presentation, a Web site, or a wiki for example. The [student example](#) shows a portfolio as a wiki. The portfolio can be used to support an oral presentation, in which each immigrant dresses in character and tells his or her personal immigration story, based on their research. These can be recorded and turned into podcasts, displayed on an interactive online map, or shared on a blog, for example.

Once the different immigrant groups have been represented, students can draw comparisons by classifying and displaying information visually in graphs, tables, or charts across immigrant groups, identifying similarities and differences. For example, categories may include: *push and pull factors, challenges, types of jobs*, and so forth.

Immigration Station Simulation

Through this simulation experience, students learn about European immigrants' first stop in America—Ellis Island—through a simulation. Because this takes quite a bit of organizing, you may choose to teach about the Ellis Island experience without doing the simulation. Many Web sites provide a detailed look at the immigration station, including the following:

- [Interactive Tour of Ellis Island*](#)
- [History Channel*](#)
- [Ellis Island Museum: The Immigrant Experience*](#)

In preparation for the simulation, ask other adults to act as immigration inspectors. Set up a room with different areas, such as a waiting room, medical inspection area, interrogation area, detaining area, money exchange booth, and cafeteria.

Be sure that each student is familiar with the character he or she will be portraying. Explain to students that they will be going through a mock physical and psychological medical inspection where a doctor will look for medical and physical defects, and for signs of disease. Students will be interrogated by a legal inspector. If granted permission to enter the United States, the students will be administered the Loyalty Oath, or they will be deported.

Wrapping Up

Have students revisit the Essential Question, *Why take the risk?* and respond in their journals based on their research and experiences.

Prerequisite Skills

Differentiated Instruction

Resource Student

- Make modifications as dictated in the student's IEP
- Preselect Web sites and other research material appropriate for the student's reading level
- Assist the student with note-taking techniques by making photocopies and having the student first highlight important information and then record that information in note style
- Set up heterogeneous groups

Gifted Student

- Have the student compare the immigration experiences at Ellis Island and Angel Island
- Call on the student to assist with setting up the simulation to help make it a realistic experience
- Have the student read the book *Letters from Rifka*, about a young girl's immigration experience

English Language Learner

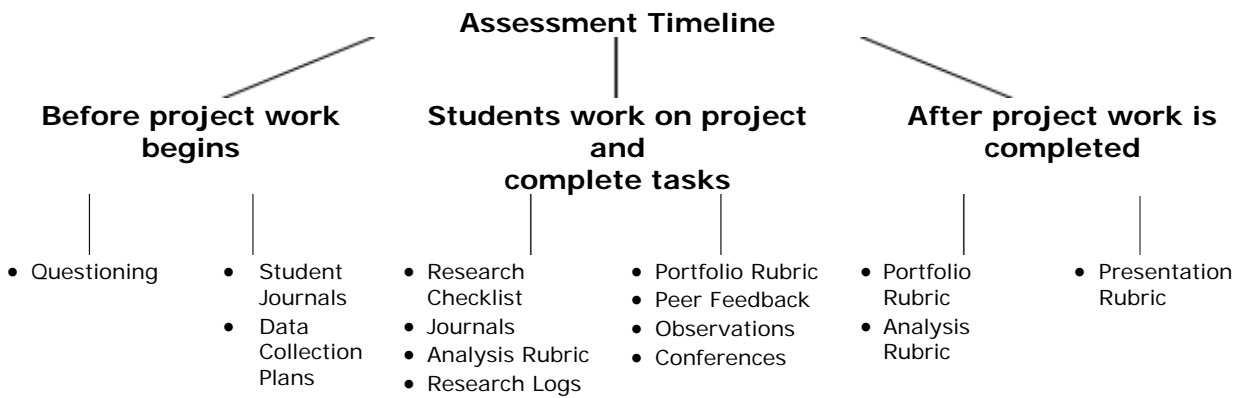
- Create templates to help the student with the immigrant profile
- Review the interrogation questions with the student before the simulation
- If possible, have the student share immigration stories and call upon the student as a resource and “expert”
- Set up heterogeneous groups

Credits

Karen March participated in the Intel® Teach Program, which resulted in this idea for a classroom project. A team of teachers expanded the plan into the example you see here.

THINGS YOU NEED

Assessment Plan



Teacher questioning throughout the unit engages students in discussions and encourages students to think at higher-levels. Students develop data collection plans to monitor their progress. They keep journals and research logs to record their research findings and note any questions they develop. The journals and logs can be collected and used as a way to keep informed about the progress of students and any difficulties they are having. Journal entries can serve as a springboard for class discussions. The [Research Process Checklist](#) sets expectations for the research process and helps guide the research process. During the project, the teacher can conduct informal observations and hold student conferences to check progress and provide feedback on research logs. The [Analysis Rubric](#) is used throughout the project to assess critical thinking skills. The [Portfolio Rubric](#) is used as a final assessment of the portfolio. Students and teacher use the [Presentation Rubric](#) to assess final presentations.

Content Standards and Objectives

Targeted Content Standards and Benchmarks United States National History Standards

The Development of Industrial America (1870-1900)

Standard 2: Massive immigration after 1870 and how new social patterns, conflicts, and ideas of national unity developed amid growing cultural diversity.

Standard 2A: The student understands the sources and experiences of the new immigrants.

- Trace patterns of immigrant settlement in different regions of the country and how new immigrants helped produce a composite American culture that transcended group boundaries. [Reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration]
- Assess the challenges, opportunities, and contributions of different immigrant groups. [Examine historical perspectives]

Arizona Academic Standards

- Examine the reasons why people emigrated from their homelands to settle in the United States during the late nineteenth century.
- Formulate questions that can be answered by historical study and research data.
- Construct and interpret historical data displayed in graphs, tables, and charts.
- Determine the credibility and bias of primary and secondary sources.
- Analyze cause-and-effect relationships between and among individuals and/or historical events

Student Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Ask meaningful questions about the experiences and characteristics of immigrants that can be answered by primary sources and historical data.
- Conduct original research through interviews and observation, and analyze a variety of virtual and physical primary sources.
- Effectively record and display data in ways that show trends and patterns related to immigration.
- Use primary sources and available data to draw conclusions that describe the immigrant experience.

Technology and Resources

Printed Materials

Immigration/Ellis Island

- Freedman, R. (1992). *Immigrant kids*. New York: Scholastic.
- Hesse, K. (1993). *Letters from Rifka*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children.
- Lawlor, V. (1995). *I was dreaming to come to America, memories from the Ellis Island oral history project*. New York: Puffin Books.
- Levine, E. (1993). *If your name was changed at Ellis Island*. New York: Scholastic.
- Sandler, M. (1995). *Immigrants: A Library of Congress book*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Stein, C. (1992). *Ellis Island*. New York: Children's Press.
- Takaki, R. (1989). *Strangers from a different shore*. New York: Little Brown & Co.
- Thompson, G. (1997). *You are there: Immigrants coming to America*. New York: Children's Press.
- Young, D. (2000). *Saving America's treasures*. Washington, DC: National Geographic.

Angel Island

- Angel Island Association. (2001). *A teacher's guide to Angel Island immigration station*. Tiburon, CA: Angel Island Association.
- Chetin, H. (1982). *Angel Island prisoner 1927*. Berkeley, CA: New Seed Press.
- Lai, H. (1980). *Island: Poetry and history of Chinese immigrants on Angel Island, 1910–1940*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.
- McCunn, R. (1979). *An illustrated history of Chinese in America*. San Francisco: Design Enterprises.
- McCunn, R. (1988). *Chinese American portraits*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.
- Yung, J. (1986). *Chinese women of America*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.
- Yung, J. (1982). *Unbound feet: A social history of Chinese women in San Francisco*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Publisher.

Internet Resources

Immigration/Ellis Island

- Ellis Island: The Immigrant Experience
www.ellisland.org/Immexp*
Information on Ellis Island, including an interactive timeline, family stories, and ship records
- Scholastic Immigration
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/immigration/seymour>*
The story of an immigrant's journey from Poland
- Immigration: The Living Mosaic of People, Culture, and Hope
<http://library.thinkquest.org/20619>*
A WebQuest that explores the history of different immigrant groups
- Immigration, The Library of Congress
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/features/immig/introduction.html>*
An overview of immigration to the United States by groups that arrived in the greatest numbers
- Scholastic's Interactive Tour of Ellis Island
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/immigration/tour>*
An audio, video, and pictorial tour of Ellis Island
- History Channel
www.historychannel.com/ellisland/index2.html*
The History Channel's online exhibit of Ellis Island
- Interact Simulations
www.highsmith.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Production/Search.jsp?catalogId=10050&storeId=10001&langId=-1&N=796*
The immigration simulation, Gateway, is available from Interact Simulations
- Destination American
www.pbs.org/destinationamerica/usim.html*
Overview of US Immigration with personal stories and links to other resources
- Digital History
www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/italian_immigration.cfm*
Online exhibition on immigration

Photo Collections/Primary Sources

- The New York Public Library's Digital Gallery, Ellis Island
http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/dgkeywordsearchresult.cfm?keyword=col_id:165&so=title*
Immigration photos, 1902–1913

- American Memory Collection on Immigration
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem>*
A searchable database of original photos and documents
- The National Archives: Docs Teach
<http://docsteach.org/documents>*
Photos and original documents
- 19th Century America
www.teacheroz.com/19thcent.htm*
Primary source documents arranged by categories (look at Immigrant Workers for the Industrial Machine or City Life in the 19th Century, includes maps, photos, and documents. Documents on the 20th century are at www.teacheroz.com/20thcent.htm*)
- A Chronology of U. S. Historical Documents
<http://www.law.ou.edu/hist/>*
Site with regularly updated documents from the 1215 Magna Carta to Barak Obama's State of the Union speech in 2010.
- EuroDocs: Online Sources for European History
http://eudocs.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Main_Page
Selected transcriptions, facsimiles, and translations of documents arranged by European country.

Data Collection

- National Archives
www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets*
Document analysis worksheets
- Library of Congress Analysis Tools
www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html*
Primary source analysis suggestions
- U.S. Census Bureau
www.census.gov*
Census records that date back to 1850
- UN Data
<http://data.un.org/>*
An extensive resource of international data on a wide variety of topics
- The World Fact Book
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>*
A site supported by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency with information about 287 world entities

Angel Island

- Angel Island Immigration
www.angelisland.org*
Historical and current information about Angel Island
- Angel Island Poetry and Photographs
www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/a_f/angel/angel.htm*
Information about the poems found on the walls of Angel Island
- Angel Island Immigration History
www.angel-island.com/history.html*
Stories from immigrants who were detained at Angel Island

Current Information on Immigration

- Center for Immigration Studies
www.cis.org*
Research and policy analysis of the impacts of immigration on the United States
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis*
Information about services and programs offered

Technology—Hardware

- Internet connection for persona research

Technology—Software

- Multimedia software for creating slideshow presentation
- Internet browser
- Videoconferencing software if needed