

- When the Statue of Liberty arrived in the United States, much money was required to reassemble it from the pieces it had been shipped in. Ask students to imagine they are living in the United States in 1886 and ask them to write letters convincing people to donate money to help to rebuild the statue.
- Immigrants often settled in areas where other people who had left the same country were already living. What are the benefits of settling in the same place? Can students see any possible challenges facing people who did this? Ask students to create Venn diagrams comparing the experience of living in communities with other immigrants from the same country to the experience of living somewhere new.
- Discuss with students what someone immigrating to the local community would need to know upon arriving and what he or she could expect life in that area to be like. Working in small groups, students can design welcome guides to help orient new immigrants to the area.

## Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- [edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=309](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=309)  
"Where I Come From," a lesson plan for grades 3-5, guides students through a process of exploring their families' roots. This NEH site includes many links for students to explore the culture and current events of their families' countries of origin.
- [ellisland.org](http://ellisland.org)  
The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation web site enables users to search ship manifests for information about immigrants entering the U.S. between 1892 to 1924. Stories of specific immigrant experiences are also detailed.
- [aiisf.org](http://aiisf.org)  
This site provides photographs and a history of the Immigration Station on Angel Island. Of special interest are poems written by detainees and sample questions for completing oral histories. Teacher resources are provided for grades 3-12.

## Suggested Print Resources

- Curlee, Lynn. *Liberty*. Antheneum Books for Young Readers, New York, NY; 2000.
- De Capua, Sarah. *Becoming a Citizen*. Children's Press, New York, NY; 2001.
- Jaspersohn, William. *The Two Brothers*. Vermont Folklife Center, Middlebury, VT; 2000. Based on real events, this story follows the lives of two brothers who each immigrated separately from Prussia and were reunited in America.
- Perez, Amada Irma. *My Diary from Here to There / Mi Diario de Aquí Hasta Allá*. Children's Book Press, San Francisco, CA; 2002. In this bilingual narrative, a young girl records her experiences as her family immigrates to the U.S. from Mexico.

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### TEACHER'S GUIDE

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## Immigration to the U.S.

Grades K-4

Studying history is an essential part of understanding the world we live in today. The history of the United States includes the experiences and accomplishments of diverse peoples, from Native Americans and immigrants to the descendants of European settlers and of Africans brought here by force. Key events such as the Revolutionary War, the writing of the Constitution and the Emancipation Proclamation influenced how the nation developed. The study of history also involves facing painful aspects of the country's past, such as slavery and the treatment of Native Americans. Over time, songs, holidays and other observances have shaped and reflected how Americans see themselves and their country. History provides a framework for interpreting and living in the ever-changing present.



## Program Overview

America has always been a nation of immigration, or—in the words of poet Walt Whitman—“a nation of nations.” Other than Native Americans, everyone in the United States is either an immigrant, or the descendant of immigrants. People seeking a better life in the U.S. for themselves and their families have had many different reasons for immigrating. Some people came from countries where there was not enough food for everyone; others came after being treated unfairly because of their religious or political beliefs. Immigrants often had to make dangerous, unpleasant journeys to get here. In 1885, the French and Americans decided to build a monument celebrating France’s help during the American Revolution. This monument, the Statue of Liberty, stands at the entrance to New York Harbor, and welcomes immigrants to their new country. Today, immigrants continue to bring new customs and traditions to the United States, adding to the rich tapestry of our shared culture.

NOTE: Teachers should be aware that this topic may be sensitive for some students, especially those who are immigrants or not American citizens. Discussion questions and activities should be approached with care.

## Vocabulary

**immigration** — The act of moving to a new country to make a home there.

**immigrant** — Someone who leaves one country in order to make a new home in another.

**discrimination** — The unfair treatment of a person or people because they belong to a particular group.

**open-door policy** — The U.S. government policy, changed in 1882, which let anyone who wanted to immigrate to the U.S. do so.

**steerage** — The lower part of a boat where cargo is usually kept.

**monument** — A structure built to recognize and honor a person, event or idea.

**tablet** — A slab of stone or wood carved—or inscribed—with words and dates.

**pedestal** — The base of a statue.

**immigration quotas** — The number of immigrants allowed to enter the U.S. from each part of the world.

**citizen** — Someone who shares the legal privileges and responsibilities of belonging to a particular country.

**illegal or undocumented immigrants** — People who immigrate without having the proper legal papers.

## Pre-viewing Discussion

- Students can brainstorm what comes to mind when they hear the word “immigration.” According to students, what is an immigrant? Why do people immigrate? From which countries do people immigrate to the U.S.?
- Help students to brainstorm all of the things people may leave behind when they move to a new country, from their friends and family to their language. What do students think would be the hardest adjustment to make? Why? What other challenges do these people face?
- Encourage students to discuss their experiences with being in a new place for the first time. How did it feel to be “the new kid”? How did other people treat them? How did they learn how they were expected to behave?
- Show students a picture of the Statue of Liberty. What do students know about the statue’s history? What does the statue represent to them?

## Focus Questions

1. Who was Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi?
2. During the 1800s, what reasons did immigrants have for deciding to come to the U.S.?
3. Over the last 200 years, why have immigrants been welcomed to the United States? Why did some Americans treat immigrants badly?
4. What was the boat ride across the Atlantic like for Europeans immigrating to America?
5. Why was the Statue of Liberty built?
6. What used to happen at Ellis Island?
7. Why might immigrants not be allowed to enter the U.S.?
8. Who was Emma Lazarus?
9. How do laws control immigration?
10. What must immigrants do to become American citizens?

## Follow-up Discussion

- When immigrants arrived at Ellis Island, they were inspected by doctors and asked many personal questions. Discuss with students what they think the reasons for this were. If students were in charge of immigration, what criteria would they use to decide when people can enter the U.S.?
- Many immigrants have experienced discrimination upon arriving in the U.S. Discuss with students why people might be unwelcoming towards immigrants. Do students think this is fair? How would they treat a child who enters their school after just moving to this country?

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- Ask students to imagine they are immigrants just arriving by boat in New York Harbor. What do they feel when they see the Statue of Liberty? What questions would they have? What would they want to know about their new country? What would be their greatest hopes and fears?

## Follow-up Activities

- Invite immigrants or naturalized citizens to visit your class and discuss their experiences with coming to the United States. Prepare for the visit by asking students to think of questions they want to ask the immigrants, such as why they (or their families) decided to immigrate and how they felt as they arrived in the U.S. Encourage visitors to bring pictures or artifacts from their countries of origin. After the visits, students can create a class bulletin board using the information they learned.
- Introduce students to the history of immigration in their local community or state. What groups immigrated to this area? How do the influences of various groups show up in local celebrations, language, foods, clothing, lifestyles, etc.? Students could complete a regional time line or make a bulletin board displaying immigrant influences on local culture.
- Show students pictures of immigrants arriving at Ellis Island during the early 20th century ([cmp1.ucr.edu/exhibitions/immigration\\_id.html](http://cmp1.ucr.edu/exhibitions/immigration_id.html)). Help students to imagine what it might have been like to arrive at Ellis Island as immigrants during this time. As an extension, students can write letters “home” describing their arrivals in the United States.
- Emma Lazarus’ poem “The New Colossus,” inscribed at the base of the Statue of Liberty, welcomes immigrants to the United States. Have students write their own poems welcoming new immigrants. With older students, consider sharing the whole poem and discussing its meaning.
- Share with students how Angel Island, the “Ellis Island of the West,” served as the entry point for immigrants from Asian countries from 1910-1940. Immigrants often had to stay on Angel Island for a while before being allowed into the U.S. Have students find out more information about Angel Island and draw pictures about what it might have been like to arrive there.
- Share Ellen Levine’s *If Your Name Was Changed at Ellis Island* with your students (Scholastic Inc., 1993). This book describes the procedures immigrants went through at Ellis Island between 1892 and 1914. Ask students to identify the steps of what happened to an immigrant upon arrival. As a follow-up, students can write and illustrate their own books about what to expect when arriving at Ellis Island.

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