

DISCOVER AMERICA

Teacher Guide



Journey to Ellis Island: Exploring Immigration

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Key Themes

- American Freedom and Opportunity
- Immigration
- Journey and Exploration
- Important American Symbols

Core Values

- Community
- Life
- Faith
- Liberty



Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Explain the historical significance of Ellis Island.
- Define immigration.
- Compare and contrast “push” and “pull” factors.
- Analyze the “Transatlantic Journey” and its significance for immigrants.
- Describe what immigrants experienced on the “Transatlantic Journey.”
- List the various nationalities of American immigrants that came through Ellis Island.

Key Terms

- 0 1 **gateway:** something that gives you the opportunity to make progress or to further success in that activity.
- 0 2 **immigrant:** someone who moves from their home country to another country to start a new life.
- 0 3 **pull factor:** something that attracts individuals to a new country like the United States such as employment opportunities, economic prosperity, liberty, security, and the natural beauty of our nation.
- 0 4 **push factor:** something that makes an immigrant want to leave their home country, such as famine, conflict, unemployment, religious oppression, or political instability.
- 0 5 **ship's manifest:** a list detailing everything loaded for a specific sea journey.
- 0 6 **steerage passenger:** a passenger on the lowest level of a boat.

Introduction

ASK Students 📷

What do you know about Chef Boyardee and Albert Einstein? **[Reference Chef Boyardee and Albert Einstein Images]** How are Chef Boyardee and Albert Einstein similar?

TELL Students 🗣️

They were both American immigrants! An **immigrant** is someone who leaves their home country to start a new life in a different one. Remember, the first settlers in America were immigrants too! American immigrants come from various parts of the world and have different reasons for making the journey. The reasons behind their decisions are termed as "push" and "pull" factors. A **push factor** is something that makes someone want to leave their home country. For example, if there is famine, which means not enough food for people to eat, families may feel they have no choice but to leave in search of better living conditions.

ASK Students

What are some examples of push factors that might make people want to leave their home countries, and how do you think these factors can affect families and their decisions to immigrate?

TELL Students

Conflict, like wars or fighting, can also make people leave their homes because they want to find a safe place to live. Unemployment, or not being able to find a job, can be another push factor. When people can not work or provide for their families, they might decide to look for opportunities elsewhere. Sometimes, people leave their home country because they face religious oppression, which means they can't practice their beliefs freely. Political instability, like a government that isn't fair or that causes trouble for its citizens, can also push people to seek a better life in another country.

ASK Students

What do you think are some of the feelings that families might experience when they have to leave their homes due to conflict, unemployment, or other push factors, and how do you think those feelings could influence their journey to a new country?

Introduction

TELL Students

Families might feel scared and uncertain when they have to leave their homes due to conflict, unemployment, or other push factors. These feelings can make their journey to a new country even more challenging, as they seek safety and hope for a better life. On the other hand, pull factors are what attract people to a wonderful country, like the United States! **[Reference American Flag Image]** For example, many people come here because of the promise of good jobs and employment opportunities. The chance to earn money and support their families can be a big draw. Another pull factor is economic prosperity, which means having a strong economy where people can thrive and enjoy a good quality of life. Many people are also attracted to the idea of liberty, or the freedom to express themselves and live their lives as they choose. Safety and security are important pull factors, too. People want to live in a place where they feel safe from harm. Lastly, the natural beauty of America, with its mountains, forests, and parks, can also entice individuals and families to come and explore this diverse and beautiful land. Push factors encourage people to leave their home countries because of difficult circumstances, while pull factors attract them to new countries with the promise of a better life.

ASK Students

What are push and pull factors? How are these factors related to Ellis Island?

TELL Students

Today, we are going to explore the fascinating history of Ellis Island, a significant landmark located in New York Harbor. This island served as the first federal immigration inspection station in the United States. Between 1892 and 1924, more than 12 million immigrants, the majority of whom came from various European countries, passed through its gates in search of new opportunities and a better life. Ellis Island was more than just a processing center; it was a symbol of hope and a fresh start for countless families. Each person who arrived had their own unique story and dreams, and Ellis Island played a crucial role in welcoming them to their new home. Let's dive deeper into the experiences of those who journeyed through Ellis Island and discover why it holds such an important place in American history by watching another episode of Star Spangled Adventures to learn more!

Introduction

WATCH ▶

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon [Ep. 21: Ellis Island](#)



Lesson

TELL Students

Before becoming a gateway to America, Ellis Island was called “Gibbet Island.” Gibbet Island served as a punishment ground for pirates and criminals. **[Reference Gibbet Island Image]** A **gateway** is something that gives you the opportunity to make progress or to further success in that activity. Ellis Island was called the ‘gateway to America’ because it was the place where people entered the country, like how a gate lets you through a fence. Ellis Island is named after its last private owner, Samuel Ellis. In 1808, the state of New York purchased the island from Samuel Ellis’ family, and later it became property of the federal government. **[Reference Samuel Ellis Image]**

ASK Students

Why do you think it’s significant that Ellis Island changed from a place for punishing criminals to a welcoming entry point for immigrants?

TELL Students

In the late 19th century, many immigrants began arriving in America on steamboats. Before steamboats, travelers relied on wind-powered sailing ships. **[Reference Wind-Powered Sailing Ship Image]** The sailing ships took three months to sail from Europe to America. Although the journey was still hard, steamboats drastically reduced travel time to just 10 days. **[Reference Steamboat Image]** Most immigrants that entered the United States through Ellis Island followed the “Transatlantic Journey” across the Atlantic Ocean from Europe. **[Reference Transatlantic Journey Image]**

ASK Students

What is the “Transatlantic Journey?” How did the steamboat transform this journey?

TELL Students

Steamboats changed how people traveled. Because of steamboats, more people could afford to go on trips. Travelers could choose between first or second-class tickets for spacious rooms and meals. Travelers could also purchase cheaper tickets to travel as steerage passengers. **Steerage passengers**, those below deck, endured crowded quarters and often suffered from seasickness during the voyage.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

Please read the paragraph below to learn more about the first person to arrive at Ellis Island.

[Please print and disseminate fifth grade student text.]

Annie Moore, a 17-year-old Irish immigrant, was the first person to arrive at Ellis Island.

Accompanied by her younger brothers, ages 11 and 7, she made history as the first immigrant to set foot on the island. Today, a statue honors the Moore siblings at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum.

ASK Students

What was life like for immigrants when they arrived at Ellis Island?

TELL Students

Please read the following passage to explore what life was like when immigrants arrived at Ellis Island.

When steamboats arrived, they couldn't dock at Ellis Island. They docked in Manhattan.

[Reference Map Area Ellis Island/Manhattan Image] *First and second-class passengers met Ellis Island inspectors on board and began their new lives if no issues arose. Steerage ticket holders faced a longer process. They had to board a ferry to Ellis Island for medical and legal inspections.*

Medical inspections aimed to prevent diseases from spreading. Due to the high number of immigrant arrivals, doctors conducted brief "six-second inspections." They looked for physical signs of illness like fever or unusual behavior. Doctors also checked for trachoma, a disease causing eyelid bumps, which could lead to vision loss and was a common reason for immigration denial.

ASK Students

Why was a "six-second inspection" conducted?

TELL Students

Most immigrants passed medical inspections. Those who didn't were treated at Ellis Island hospitals. Then, immigrants had legal inspections where they answered questions from their ship's manifest. A **ship's manifest** is a list detailing everything loaded for a specific sea journey. The legal inspection also included questions about housing plans, finances, and criminal history.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

The majority of immigrants passed. A few immigrants had to attend hearings to resolve issues. Overall, only two percent were denied entry, half for medical reasons and half for legal issues.

ASK Students

What happened during the medical and legal investigations?

TELL Students

After passing their inspections, immigrants were ready to start their new lives in America. While some immigrants found work in farming, mining, or factories, others pursued entrepreneurship, construction, and even achieved celebrity status! Please read the following passage about a famous American immigrant:

Hector Boiardi's original first name was Ettore, and was later changed to Hector Boyardee. He arrived at Ellis Island in 1914. He started as a chef at New York's Plaza Hotel. Hector eventually became head chef and later worked at the Greenbrier Hotel in West Virginia. He even catered President Woodrow Wilson's wedding. Inspired by his success, he opened his own restaurant in Cleveland, where his Italian pasta dishes gained immense popularity. To share his creations with more people, he began selling his pasta sauce in cleaned milk bottles. This led to the establishment of the Chef Boyardee company, known for its well-known products available in stores today!

ASK Students

How did Chef Boyardee make the most of his opportunity in America? Which other famous immigrant did you learn about earlier?

TELL Students

Yes! Albert Einstein is another famous American immigrant, and his name is recorded in the passenger logs at Ellis Island, marking a significant moment in his journey to the United States.

[Reference Einstein Image] Born in Germany, Einstein left his home country to seek greater freedom for his scientific ideas and to escape the political turmoil of his time. He is widely regarded as one of history's most accomplished physicists, best known for developing the theory of relativity, which changed our understanding of space, time, and gravity.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

His groundbreaking work earned him the Nobel Prize in 1921, and his discoveries have had a lasting impact on science. His journey and accomplishments continue to inspire people around the world to pursue their dreams.

ASK Students

Why is Ellis Island important? How did immigrants contribute to American history?

TELL Students

Immigrants came to America for different reasons. But, they all made the brave journey. They knew that our country offered opportunities for a good life. Today, the Statue of Liberty stands near Ellis Island. It represents the spirit of America. **[Reference Statue of Liberty Image]** Please read the following passage to learn more about the Statue of Liberty and its significance to immigrants from different nationalities.

The Statue of Liberty is an important symbol for immigrants who sought refuge and opportunity in the United States. For immigrants arriving at Ellis Island, the sight of Lady Liberty welcomed them with the promise of freedom and a better life. The statue's torch, representing enlightenment, offered hope to those seeking a brighter future. At the feet of the Statue of Liberty are broken shackles to commemorate the end of slavery in America. Regardless of their nationality, immigrants found hope in the Statue of Liberty, knowing that they were welcomed with open arms to a land of opportunity and liberty.

ASK Students

What does the Statue of Liberty mean to you? Turn to your neighbor and discuss the freedom and opportunities available in our country. [Give students five minutes to discuss with a neighbor and then discuss as a class.]

TELL Students

The Statue of Liberty is a powerful symbol of freedom and hope. Gifted to the United States by France in 1886, she stands on Liberty Island in New York Harbor, welcoming newcomers arriving by sea. The statue represents the ideals of liberty, democracy, and the pursuit of happiness. Lady Liberty holds a torch in one hand, which signifies enlightenment and the idea of shining a light on the path to freedom.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

In her other hand, she carries a tablet inscribed with the date of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776, reminding people of the importance of liberty and justice. For immigrants arriving in America, the Statue of Liberty has long been a symbol of hope, as she represents the opportunity for a new beginning and the chance to build a better life. Her presence continues to inspire people around the world to seek freedom and equality.



Ellis Island Nationality Chart



Objective

To learn about the diverse nationalities of people who immigrated through Ellis Island.

Materials Needed

- Ellis Island Nationality Chart (blank chart with columns for nationality, number of immigrants, and notable contributions)
- Information sources (approved books, websites, videos) about Ellis Island and immigration
- Markers or colored pencils

Introduction

- Begin by discussing the concept of immigration and “push” and “pull” factors.
- Remind students that Ellis Island was a significant immigration station in the United States, where millions of immigrants from various countries arrived to start new lives.
- Ask students to review what they learned about Ellis Island today.

Research

- Divide the students into small groups.
- Provide each group with access to information sources about Ellis Island and immigration.
- Instruct the groups to research and identify different nationalities of people who immigrated through Ellis Island.
- Encourage students to take notes on the number of immigrants from each nationality and any notable contributions or achievements made by immigrants from those countries.

Creating the Ellis Island Nationality Chart

- Provide each group with a blank Ellis Island Nationality Chart.
- Instruct the students to fill in the chart with the nationalities they researched, along with the corresponding number of immigrants and notable contributions.
- Encourage creativity in decorating and organizing the chart with colorful markers or colored pencils.



Ellis Island Nationality Chart



Presentation

- After completing the charts, allow each group to present their findings to the class.
- As each group presents, discuss the significance of the nationalities represented, the diversity of immigrants at Ellis Island, and the contributions they made to American society.
- Encourage students to ask questions and engage in discussions about the information presented.

Reflection

- Facilitate a brief class discussion about what students learned from the activity.
- Encourage students to consider how immigration has shaped American culture and society.

Push and Pull Factors

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Instructions: Read each scenario carefully and determine whether it describes a push factor, a pull factor, or both. Write "P" for push, "Pu" for pull, or "P/Pu" for both push and pull factors.

1. *Scenario:* Maria's family lives in a country where there is ongoing political unrest and frequent violence. They fear for their safety and want to find a safer place to live.

Factor: _____

2. *Scenario:* John's family lives in a region where the land has become infertile due to a severe drought. They struggle to grow enough food to feed their family and are facing starvation.

Factor: _____

3. *Scenario:* Mei's family hears about a country across the ocean where there are many job opportunities, and people can earn higher wages. They decide to move there in search of better economic prospects.

Factor: _____

4. *Scenario:* Carlos' family belongs to a religious minority group in their country, and they face discrimination and persecution because of their beliefs. They decide to leave their homeland in search of religious freedom.

Factor: _____

5. *Scenario:* Emily's family learns about a country where children have access to free education, and there are many opportunities for them to pursue their dreams and ambitions. They decide to immigrate there to provide a better future for their children.

Factor: _____

Push and Pull Factors

6. Scenario: Ahmed's family lives in a country where there are strict government controls on the economy, and it's challenging to start a business or become financially independent. They decide to move to a country with more economic freedom.

Factor: _____

7. Scenario: Sofia's family lives in a region where natural disasters, such as earthquakes and hurricanes, frequently occur. They decide to move to a safer area where the risk of such disasters is lower.

Factor: _____

8. Scenario: David's family lives in a small town with limited access to healthcare facilities and educational opportunities. They decide to move to a larger city where they can access better services and amenities.

Factor: _____

9. Scenario: Fatima's family learns about a country where people have the freedom to express their opinions and participate in democratic processes.

Factor: _____

10. Scenario: Juan's family lives in a country with high levels of pollution and environmental degradation. They decide to move to a country with stricter environmental regulations and cleaner air and water.

Factor: _____

Push and Pull Factors Answer Key

1. Factor: P (Push)
2. Factor: P (Push)
3. Factor: Pu (Pull)
4. Factor: P (Push)
5. Factor: Pu (Pull)
6. Factor: Pu (Pull)
7. Factor: P (Push)
8. Factor: Pu (Pull)
9. Factor: Pu (Pull)
10. Factor: P (Push)

Student Text

Please read the following paragraphs to learn more.

Annie Moore, a 17-year-old Irish immigrant, was the first person to arrive at Ellis Island. Accompanied by her younger brothers, ages 11 and 7, she made history as the first immigrant to set foot on the island. Today, a statue honors the Moore siblings at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum.

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Student Text

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Resources

- <https://www.nps.gov/media/video/view.htm?id=4BA86258-4024-4710-9329-40BDA66102EF>
- <https://www.history.com/topics/immigration/ellis-island>
- <https://www.nps.gov/elis/learn/education/eie-series.htm>
- <https://daily.jstor.org/the-curious-history-of-ellis-island/>
- <https://www.history.com/news/9-things-you-may-not-know-about-ellis-island>
- <https://daily.jstor.org/the-curious-history-of-ellis-island/>
- <https://www.nps.gov/media/video/view.htm?id=36C0B1E7-431E-48BB-9D5E-8E98E0C2E0DE>
- <https://www.nps.gov/media/video/view.htm?id=E5F6E193-4342-4F94-9523-8C13B4A7A7AB>
- <https://www.nps.gov/media/video/view.htm?id=8B7E4516-0E9D-4C91-8C86-78D4E1D8E805>
- <https://www.chefboyardee.com/articles/hector-boiardi-chefs-resume>
- <https://www.chefboyardee.com/articles/chef-boyardee-restaurant-your-table>
- <https://www.statueofliberty.org/discover/famous-passengers/>
- <https://www.discovermagazine.com/the-sciences/a-century-ago-einsteins-first-trip-to-the-u-s-ended-in-a-pr-disaster>
- <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/physics/1921/einstein/biographical/>

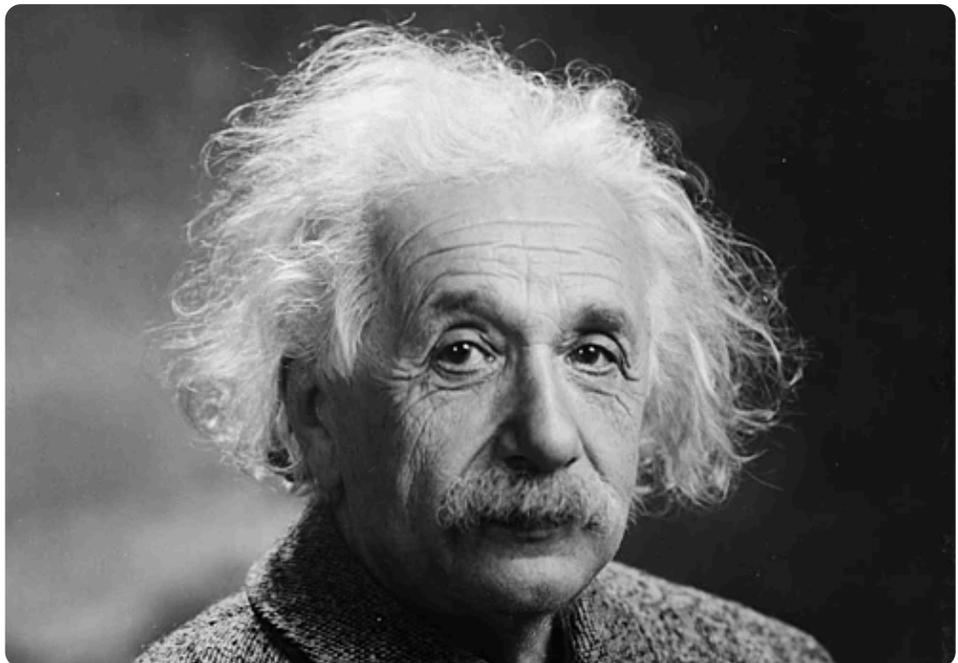
Images

Chef Boyardee



Credit: Chef Boyardee.

Albert Einstein



Credit: Wikipedia.

Images

American Flag



Credit: Canva Pro.

Gibbet Island



Credit: Canva Pro

Images

Samuel Ellis



Credit: History.com

Wind- Powered Sailing



Credit: Canva Pro

Images

Steamboat



Credit: Canva Pro.

Transatlantic Journey



Credit: Canva Pro

Images

Map Area Ellis Island/Manhattan]



Credit: Canva Pro.

Statue of Liberty



Credit: Canva Pro.

