

DISCOVER AMERICA

Teacher Guide



Journey to Ellis Island: Exploring Immigration

Table of **Contents**

3	Themes & Values
	Learning Objectives
4	Key Terms
5	Introduction
7	Lesson
14	Activity: Ellis Island Passport Adventure
16	Resources
17	Images
23	Notes

Key Themes

- Immigration
- Journey and Exploration
- Important American Symbols

Core Values

- Community
- Life
- Faith
- Liberty



Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Identify the Statue of Liberty.
- Identify Ellis Island.
- Define immigration.
- List two reasons why people move to the United States.

Key Terms

- 0 1 **culture:** a way of life that includes the beliefs, customs, traditions, art, food, and language of a group of people.
- 0 2 **efficient:** doing something in a way that saves time and effort.
- 0 3 **immigrant:** someone who moves from their home country to another country to start a new life.
- 0 4 **inspection:** when someone carefully examines every part of something to understand it or ensure it is okay.
- 0 5 **opportunity:** a situation in which it is possible for you to do something that you want to do.

Introduction

TELL Students ✍

Today, we are going on a journey! Have you ever gone on a trip or a journey with your family? What items do you need to take? You may want to bring your favorite stuffed animal, a favorite book, and a suitcase full of clothes. You also need to pack your toothbrush! [Have students pretend to pack a suitcase while you discuss the items you are packing.] Today, our exciting journey will take us to Ellis Island.

ASK Students

Have you heard of Ellis Island?

TELL Students 📷

Ellis Island is a very special place! **[Reference Ellis Island Image]** Imagine that we are going on a big adventure, just like explorers, but instead of traveling far away, we are going to learn about a remarkable spot right here in the United States. Many years ago, Ellis Island was a busy place where people from all around the world came to start new lives in America. **[Reference Statue of Liberty Image]** When they arrived, they were greeted by the Statue of Liberty, a symbol of hope and freedom. This beautiful statue welcomed them with open arms and represented the dreams they had for a better future.

ASK Students

What do you think it felt like for the people arriving at Ellis Island when they first saw the Statue of Liberty?

TELL Students

When the people arriving at Ellis Island first saw the Statue of Liberty, they probably felt a mix of excitement and joy! The statue is so big and beautiful, and it was a symbol of hope for them. They might have felt happy to finally be in America after their long journey. It was like a warm welcome, showing them that they were about to begin a new adventure! As we explore Ellis Island, we'll discover what the island looked like back then, including the large buildings where immigrants went through important inspections and received help from officials. These buildings were filled with many stories, as each person who arrived had their own unique journey to share.

Introduction

TELL Students

We will learn about the different activities that took place there, such as medical and legal inspections, and why Ellis Island holds such an important place in American history. We will also hear inspiring stories about the brave men, women, and children who traveled across the ocean, often facing long and challenging journeys. Think about the excitement and nervousness they must have felt as they stepped onto American soil, ready to begin their new adventures and find new opportunities. Let's watch another episode of Star Spangled Adventures to learn more about Ellis Island!

WATCH ▶

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



Lesson

TELL Students

Do you know what Chef Boyardee and Albert Einstein have in common? **[Reference Chef Boyardee and Albert Einstein Images]** They both came to America as immigrants! An **immigrant** is someone who moves from their home country to a new one to start a new life. People come to America from all over the world for different reasons. Some people move to America because they do not have enough food or jobs. Our country has more freedom, safety, and opportunities than other countries.

ASK Students

What are some reasons that people come to America?

TELL Students

People come to America because it is a wonderful place filled with many opportunities! An **opportunity** is a situation in which you can do something you really want to do. For example, in America, you might have the opportunity to join a sports team, participate in a science fair, or even learn to play a musical instrument. **[Reference Opportunities Image]** These chances help you explore your interests and talents while making new friends along the way!

ASK Students

What kinds of opportunities would you like to explore?

TELL Students

Many of you might want to explore exciting opportunities like joining a sports team, participating in a science fair, or learning a new instrument. These activities can help you grow, discover your interests, and meet new friends along the way! Just like you, the immigrants who came to America had dreams for their futures. They believed that in this new country, they could work hard and make those dreams come true. Some dreamed of starting their own businesses, while others wanted to learn new skills or help their families. When they arrived, they were filled with hope, just like you might feel when you think about trying something new. America is a place where they knew they could put in the effort to reach their goals, whether it was becoming a teacher, a doctor, or even an artist. Just like you can chase your dreams, they believed they could, too, by working hard and seizing the opportunities that America offered.

Lesson

ASK Students

Now, let's think about our families. Do any of you have a family member who came to America from another country? How do you think their journey might have shaped the opportunities available to you today? Let's share some stories and learn about each other's backgrounds! [Have students discuss their stories with a classmate and then report to the class as you write their responses on the board or paper.]

TELL Students

Our family stories can give us a glimpse into our history. For example, Ellis Island is a significant place in America's immigration history. Originally, it was a location where pirates and bad sailors were punished. **[Reference Ellis Island Image]** However, it changed over time into the first stop for immigrants arriving in America. From 1892 to 1924, millions of immigrants, mostly from Europe, passed through Ellis Island. They came seeking better opportunities, just like we talked about earlier. Imagine the excitement and hope they must have felt as they arrived in a new country, ready to start fresh and explore all the possibilities before them!

ASK Students

As we learn about Ellis Island, think about what it must have been like for those immigrants. What kind of opportunities do you think they were hoping to find?

TELL Students

As we learn about Ellis Island, we can imagine that many immigrants were hoping to find exciting opportunities for a better life. They might have wanted the chance to get a good job, go to school, or start a family in a place where they felt safe and free. **[Reference Family Image]** Some might have dreamed of owning their own businesses or buying a home. Others were probably excited about the chance to meet new friends. For many, America represented a fresh start filled with hope and possibilities!

ASK Students

What do you think the journey was like for immigrants as they traveled to America in search of new opportunities? How do you imagine they made that journey?

Lesson

TELL Students 📷

During the journey, immigrants probably felt a mix of emotions—hope for their new life in America and maybe some sadness about leaving their homes and families behind. They may have wondered what their new life would be like and imagined all the opportunities waiting for them. The journey for those immigrants was likely very exciting but also a little scary. Many immigrants traveled on large ships across the ocean, and the trip could take several weeks! They had to share small spaces with many other people, which sometimes made it crowded and noisy. Before steamboats, traveling to America took almost three months! But with steamboats, it only took ten days. Even though traveling to America was still hard, it was faster and safer than before.

[Reference Steamboat Image]

ASK Students

What do you remember about Robert Fulton and steamboats?

TELL Students

Steamboats made it much easier for more people to travel to America. These big boats could carry a lot of passengers across the ocean, which meant that many families could make the journey together. Some people were able to buy expensive tickets for comfortable rooms on the top deck of the ship. Those rooms had nice views of the ocean and were much quieter, allowing passengers to enjoy their journey. They could walk around, relax, and even enjoy tasty meals! However, many other travelers bought cheaper tickets and had to stay below deck. This part of the ship was often crowded, dark, and noisy, and the motion of the boat made some passengers seasick. But even though it was a challenging experience, everyone was filled with hope for their new life in America.

ASK Students

Can you imagine what it would be like to travel for so long on a ship?

TELL Students 🔑

As more and more people began arriving in America, the government recognized the need to have organized processes for immigration. They wanted to make sure that the journey into a new country was safe and efficient for everyone.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

Efficient means doing something in a way that saves time and effort. When a process is efficient, it works smoothly and quickly, so things get done without wasting resources or causing confusion. To help with this, Ellis Island was built in 1892 as a place to check and process immigrants coming into New York. Ellis Island served as a welcoming center where officials could meet newcomers and ensure that they were healthy and ready to start their new lives. The government created these processes to protect the health and safety of both the immigrants and the people already living in America. They wanted to make sure that those entering the country were able to live and work in their new communities. At Ellis Island, immigrants went through various checks, including health inspections and interviews. This helped the government keep track of who was coming into the country and understand the needs of different communities. It was an important step to help new arrivals feel welcomed and supported as they began their new journeys.

ASK Students

Why do you think it was important for the government to create a special place like Ellis Island for newcomers to America?

TELL Students

Every immigrant had to go through two important inspections when they arrived at Ellis Island. An **inspection** is when someone looks at something carefully in order to make sure it is okay. The first inspection was a medical inspection, which was like a health check-up. Doctors carefully examined each person to look for signs of sickness. **[Reference Check-Up Image]** They wanted to make sure that everyone was healthy and ready to start their new lives in America. Most people passed this medical check and were allowed to continue their journey. However, if someone showed signs of being sick or had a disease, they were taken to the Ellis Island hospital. There, they would receive care and treatment until they got better. This way, the doctors could help keep everyone safe and healthy. It was an important step to ensure that everyone who entered the country was ready to join their new community.

ASK Students

Can you imagine what it was like to go through a medical check-up when you arrived in a new place?

Lesson

TELL Students

After the medical inspection, the immigrants had to go through a legal inspection. During this inspection, they answered important questions to help officials understand more about them. The officials asked questions like where they were going in America and how much money they had with them. Having enough money was very important because it helped ensure that the immigrants could support themselves while they looked for work. They needed to have enough to live on until they found a job. But if someone didn't have enough money, they could get help from organizations that were there to support new arrivals. Most people passed the legal inspection and were allowed to enter the United States. Only a few people were not allowed to stay, usually because they didn't meet the health or legal requirements. This process helped the government make sure that everyone coming into the country was ready for a fresh start.

ASK Students

How do you think it felt for the immigrants to know that they were coming to a country where they could work hard to achieve their dreams?

TELL Students

After finishing all the necessary steps at Ellis Island, the immigrants were excited and ready to start their new lives in America. They received support from different groups and organizations that were there to help newcomers. These groups provided assistance with finding jobs and places to live, and even learning the English language. Many immigrants found jobs in various fields. Some worked on farms, helping to grow food, while others worked in mines, where they extracted valuable minerals from the Earth. Many found jobs in factories, where they made products that people used every day. **[Reference Farms, Mines, Factories Images]** In addition to working for others, some immigrants took the bold step of starting their own businesses. They opened shops, restaurants, and other services, bringing their unique skills and cultures to their new communities. **Culture** is a way of life that includes the beliefs, customs, traditions, art, food, and language of a group of people. For example, different cultures may have special holidays, unique foods, and different ways of celebrating. Some immigrants worked in construction, helping to build homes and buildings in growing cities. And guess what? A few immigrants became famous for their achievements! They contributed to art, music, science, and sports, making their mark in history.

Lesson

ASK Students

Can you imagine a job or business you would like to have if you were starting fresh in a new country? What exciting things would you want to do?

TELL Students

Now, we are going to learn about a few famous immigrants that you might already know about! One of them is Chef Boyardee, who came to America from Italy in 1914. When he arrived at Ellis Island, he had big dreams of sharing his delicious cooking with others. He worked as a chef at some famous hotels and even had the honor of catering President Woodrow Wilson's wedding!

[Reference Chef Boyardee Image] After gaining experience in the kitchen, Chef Boyardee decided to start selling his own pasta sauce. Today, you can find Chef Boyardee products in grocery stores everywhere, and many families enjoy his tasty meals! Another famous immigrant you may have heard of is Albert Einstein. He was one of the smartest scientists in the world. His ideas were groundbreaking and changed the way we understand the world. **[Reference Einstein Image]** Einstein won a Nobel Prize for his incredible work, and he is still celebrated today for his contributions to science and mathematics. These stories show us how immigrants made positive impacts in our country.

ASK Students

Can you think of any other famous people who came from other countries to America? What do you think their journeys were like? [Provide students with school-approved library books about famous immigrants. In pairs of two, have students review their books and briefly report information to the class.]

TELL Students

When you eat Chef Boyardee pasta or learn about famous scientists like Albert Einstein, take a moment to think about all the brave immigrants who came to America and helped make our country so special. Immigrants came for many different reasons—some were seeking safety, while others were looking for better jobs or a chance to create a better life for their families. No matter their reason, each person made the courageous journey across the ocean, believing that America could offer them new opportunities and hope. They faced many challenges along the way, but their determination helped shape our country into what it is today.

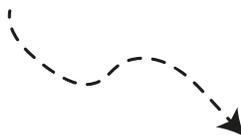
Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

Today, the Statue of Liberty proudly stands near Ellis Island as a symbol of freedom and hope for all who arrive in America. She welcomes newcomers with open arms and represents the spirit of America—a place where dreams can come true. **[Reference Statue of Liberty Image]** Let's watch another Learn More with Liberty to learn more!

WATCH ▶

Learn More with Liberty: [Ellis Island History and Facts](#)





Ellis Island Passport Adventure



Objective

To engage first graders in a hands-on activity to learn about Ellis Island and the immigration process.

Materials Needed

- Blank passport booklets (folded sheets of paper)
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Stickers
- Pictures of items immigrants may have brought with them (e.g., clothes, toys, household items)
- Optional: Maps, photos, or illustrations of Ellis Island

Introduction

Gather the students and introduce the activity by explaining that they will be going on an exciting journey to Ellis Island, just like the immigrants did long ago. Show them pictures or illustrations of Ellis Island to set the scene.

Passport Creation

Distribute the blank passport booklets to each student. Explain that they will be creating their own passports to document their journey. Have them write their name on the cover and decorate it with drawings or stickers.

Packing for the Journey

Show the students pictures of items immigrants might have packed for their journey to America. Provide them with pictures of these items and have them glue or tape them into their passports. Encourage creativity and discussion about why each item is important.

Boarding the Ship

Transition the students to a designated area in the classroom representing the deck of a steamship. Play some ocean sounds in the background to create atmosphere. As they "board" the ship, remind them to keep their passports handy for inspection.



Ellis Island Passport Adventure



Immigration Inspections

Set up stations in the classroom representing the medical and legal inspections. At the medical inspection station, have a volunteer (or teacher) play the role of a doctor and conduct "check-ups" on the students using toy medical instruments. At the legal inspection station, have another volunteer ask the students questions about their "journey" and "arrival" in America.

Stamping Passports

Provide stickers or stamps at each inspection station for students to mark their passports, indicating that they have passed the inspection.

Exploring Ellis Island

Set up displays around the classroom with pictures, maps, and artifacts related to Ellis Island and the immigration process. Allow students to explore and ask questions about what they see.

Conclusion

Gather the students back together and congratulate them on successfully reaching Ellis Island. Have them share one thing they learned or enjoyed about the activity. Encourage them to keep their passports as a reminder of their journey.

This interactive passport activity will not only teach first graders about Ellis Island and immigration, but also provide a memorable and engaging learning experience.

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



Ellis Island



Credit: Canva Pro.

Statue of Liberty



Credit: Canva Pro.

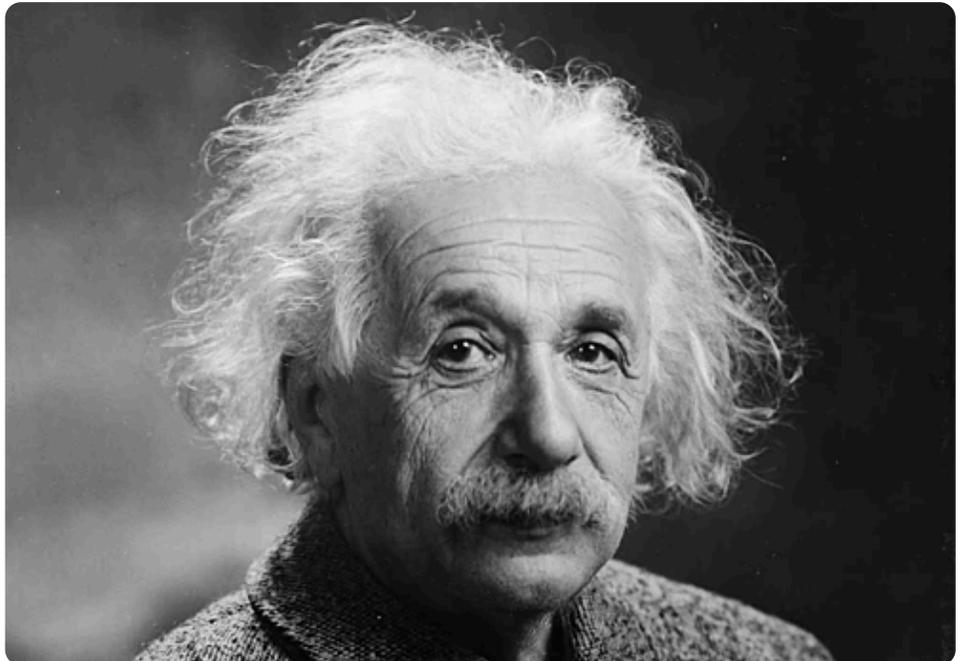
Images

Chef Boyardee



Credit: Chef Boyardee.

Albert Einstein



Credit: Wikipedia.

Images

Opportunities



Credit: Canva Pro.

Family



Credit: Canva Pro.

Images

Steamboat



Credit: Canva Pro.

Check-Up



Credit: Canva Pro.

Images

Farms



Credit: Canva Pro

Mines



Credit: Canva Pro.

Images

Factory



Credit: Canva Pro.

