

DISCOVER AMERICA

Course 21 - 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.



Ellis Island - Fourth Grade

Key Terms

- 01 **gateway:** something that gives you the opportunity to make progress or to further success in that activity.
- 02 **immigrant:** someone who moves from their home country to another country to start a new life.
- 03 **immigrant aid society:** an organization designed to help immigrants.
- 04 **inspection:** when someone carefully examines every part of something to understand it or ensure it is okay.
- 05 **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.
- 06 **push factor:** something that makes an immigrant want to leave their home country, such as famine, conflict, unemployment, religious oppression, or political instability.
- 07 **ship's manifest:** a list detailing everything loaded for a specific sea journey.
- 08 **steerage passenger:** a passenger on the lowest level of a boat.

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Introduction

TELL Students

What do you know about Chef Boyardee and Albert Einstein? How are Chef Boyardee and Albert Einstein similar? 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 diverse reasons for making the journey.

The reasons behind their decisions are termed as "push" and "pull" factors. A push factor is something that makes an immigrant want to leave their home country, such as famine, conflict, unemployment, religious oppression, or political instability. A pull factor is what attracts individuals to a new country like the United States! Pull factors include employment opportunities, economic prosperity, liberty, security, and the natural beauty of our nation.

ASK Students

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

TELL Students

Today, we are going to learn about Ellis Island. It is situated in New York Harbor and served as the first federal immigration inspection station. From 1892 to 1924, over 12 million immigrants, mostly from European nations, entered the United States through Ellis Island. Let's watch another episode of Star Spangled Adventures to learn more about Ellis Island!

WATCH

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon Ep. 21: Ellis Island



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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. A gateway is something that gives you the opportunity to make progress or to further success in that activity. Ellis Island is named after its last private owner, Samuel Ellis. In 1808, the state of New York purchased the island from Samuel Ellis’s family, and later it became property of the federal government.

In the late 19th century, many immigrants began arriving in America on steamboats. Before steamboats, travelers relied on wind-powered sailing ships. 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.

Most immigrants that entered the United States through Ellis Island followed the Transatlantic Journey across the Atlantic Ocean from Europe.

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

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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Lesson

ASK Students

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

TELL Students

When steamships arrived, they couldn't dock at Ellis Island. They docked in Manhattan. First and second-class passengers met Ellis Island inspectors onboard and began their new lives if there were no issues. 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 "6-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 "6-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. 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

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Lesson

immigrants found work in farming, mining, or factories, others pursued business, construction, and even achieved celebrity status! Please read the following passage about a famous American immigrant:

Hector Boiardi was originally from Piacenza, Italy. 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 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 convenient and delicious 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?



Nobel Prize

TELL Students

Yes! Albert Einstein is another famous American immigrant. His name is even recorded in Ellis Island's passenger logs. Einstein is known as one of history's most accomplished physicists and was awarded the Nobel Prize for his groundbreaking work.

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 on Ellis Island. The Statue of Liberty is an important symbol for immigrants from diverse nationalities who sought refuge and opportunity in the United States. For immigrants arriving at

Ellis Island - Fourth Grade

Lesson

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. The tablet at the statue's feet, inscribed with the date of the Declaration of Independence, symbolized democracy and equality. Regardless of their nationality, immigrants found solace 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.



Statue of Liberty

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Student Text

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Ellis Island Immigration Simulation

Objective: To simulate the experience of immigrants arriving at Ellis Island and understand the challenges they faced during the immigration process.

Materials Needed:

- large open space (such as a classroom or gym)
- chairs or benches arranged in rows to simulate the interior of a ship
- tables set up as inspection stations
- signs or labels for different stations (e.g., medical Inspection, legal Inspection)
- question cards with sample questions asked during inspections
- immigrant identification cards (optional)
- timer or stopwatch

Introduction:

- Gather students in the designated area and explain that they will be participating in a simulation of the immigration process at Ellis Island.
- Briefly discuss the historical context of Ellis Island and its significance as an immigration gateway to the United States.

Set Up:

- Arrange chairs or benches in rows to represent the crowded conditions aboard a steamboat. Remind students that steerage passengers were on lower decks that were crowded.
- Place tables at various stations around the room to represent the different inspection processes immigrants underwent at Ellis Island.
- Assign roles to each student. Roles include immigrants, inspectors, interpreters, and officials.

Immigration Simulation:

- Divide the students into groups, with each group representing a different wave of

immigrants arriving at Ellis Island (e.g., Italian immigrants, Irish immigrants, Eastern European immigrants).

- Instruct the "immigrants" to line up and enter the simulation area, where they will proceed through the various inspection stations.
- At each station, students playing the role of inspectors will ask questions and conduct inspections based on the sample question cards provided.
- Encourage role-playing and interaction between the students to make the simulation more realistic.

Inspection Stations:

- Medical Inspection: Inspectors check for signs of illness and disease, using props such as flashlights and bandages.
- Legal Inspection: Inspectors ask questions about the immigrant's background, family, occupation, and plans for living in the United States.
- Interpreter Station: Students playing the role of interpreters help translate questions and answers for immigrants who do not speak English.
- Processing Station: Officials review immigrants' documents and decide whether they are eligible to enter the United States.

Debriefing:

- After all groups have completed the simulation, gather students for a debriefing discussion.
- Reflect on the experience and discuss the challenges faced by immigrants during the immigration process.
- Encourage students to share their thoughts and feelings about the simulation and what they learned about Ellis Island.

Reflection:

- Have each student write a reflection on their experience participating in the Ellis Island simulation.
- Ask students to consider how the simulation helped them understand the immigrant experience and the importance of Ellis Island in American history.

Optional Extension Activity:

- Create a classroom display showcasing immigrant stories, photos, and artifacts related to Ellis Island.

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Virtual Tour and Immigration Assignment

Objective: To explore the history of Ellis Island and gain an understanding of the immigration process during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Instructions:

Virtual Tour of Ellis Island:

- Use a computer or tablet to take a virtual tour of Ellis Island. There are many online resources available that provide interactive tours of the island and its immigration facilities. Use an online resource that your teacher or parent provides.
- As you explore, pay close attention to the different buildings, checkpoints, and areas where immigrants underwent medical and legal inspections.

Research Immigration Stories:

- Choose one immigrant story from Ellis Island to research. You can find these stories in books, articles, or online resources.
- Learn about the immigrant's journey to America, their experiences at Ellis Island, and their life in the United States after immigrating.
- Take notes on important details such as the immigrant's name, country of origin, reasons for immigrating, and challenges they faced.

Create an Immigration Story:

- Using the information gathered from your research, write a fictional immigration story based on the experiences of the immigrant you chose.
- Include details about their background, the journey to America, the inspection process at Ellis Island, and their hopes for the future in the United States.
- Be creative and use descriptive language to bring the immigrant's story to life.
- Consider the significance of Ellis Island in American history and how immigration has shaped the country.
- Think about how the stories of immigrants from the past can help us better understand and appreciate the diversity of America today.

Optional Extension:

- Create a visual representation of Ellis Island, such as a diorama or poster, to display in the classroom.
- Research your own family's immigration history and share it with the class, if possible.

Remember to take your time with each step of the assignment and ask your teacher if you have any questions or need assistance. Have fun exploring the fascinating history of Ellis Island!

Ellis Island - Fourth Grade Resource List

<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/>

