

Ellis Island: Gateway of Dreams

Book and lyrics by Debra Clinton; Music by Jason Marks

Audience: Students in grades 3-12

Curricular Connections:

**Music, Reading, Science, History,
Family, Environment, Social Skills,
Multi-Cultural**

Additional Resources:

Library of Congress: America's Story

http://www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/progress/jb_progress_ellis_1.html

Learn about Annie Moore, the first immigrant to land on Ellis Island in 1892.

Library of Congress:

Prints & Photographs Reading Room

http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/070_immi.html

Selected images of Ellis Island and immigration, ca. 1880 -1920 from the collections of the Library of Congress.

The Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation, Inc.

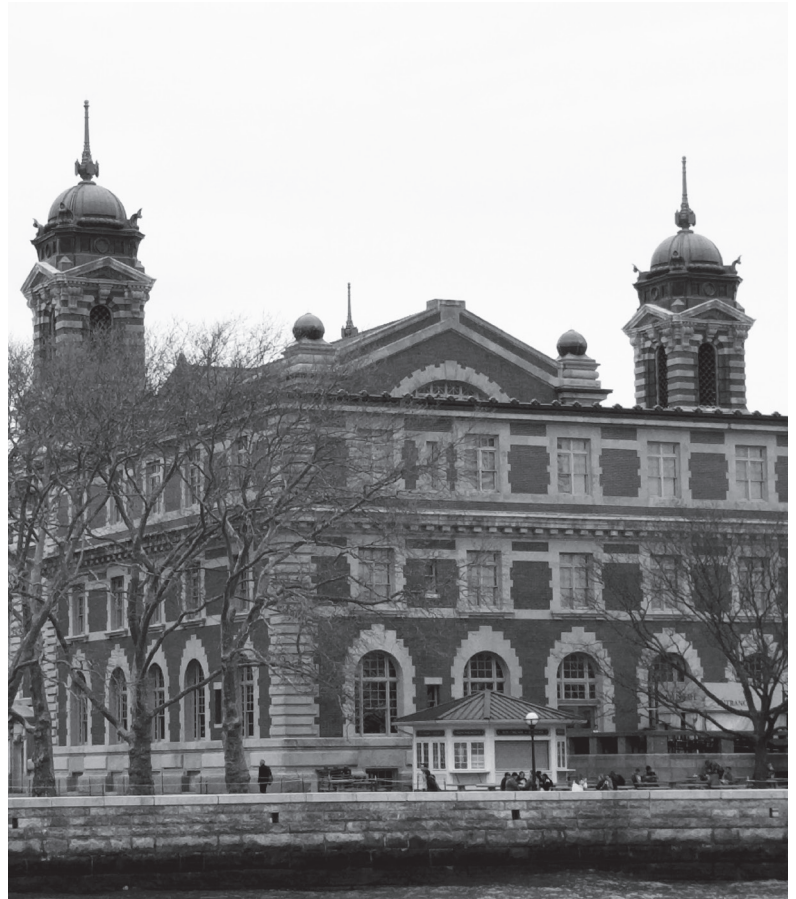
<http://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/>

Learn the history of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

National Park Service: Ellis Island

<https://www.nps.gov/elis/index.htm>

Explore the history of Ellis Island and those who stopped there as they sought the American dream.



Ellis Island was the entry point to the land of dreams for countless immigrants from 1892 to 1954. Some were drawn to America by promises of opportunity and fortune. Others fled lives of poverty and oppression. For all, America promised a new beginning, but one that was filled with risk and uncertainty.

Follow the story of Silvano and Marco from Italy, Claire from Ireland, and Rebecca from Romania - all immigrating to the United States and landing on Ellis Island. Trials, heartbreak, and triumphs mark their quest for a new life in the United States of America.

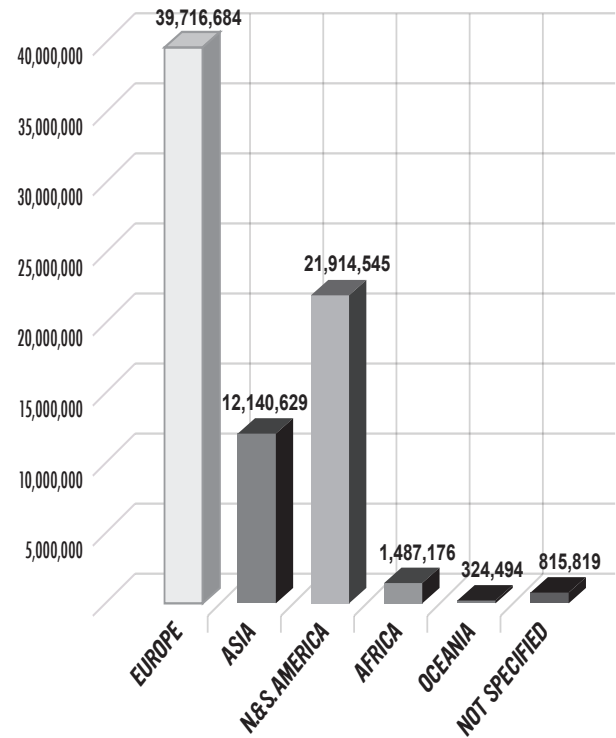
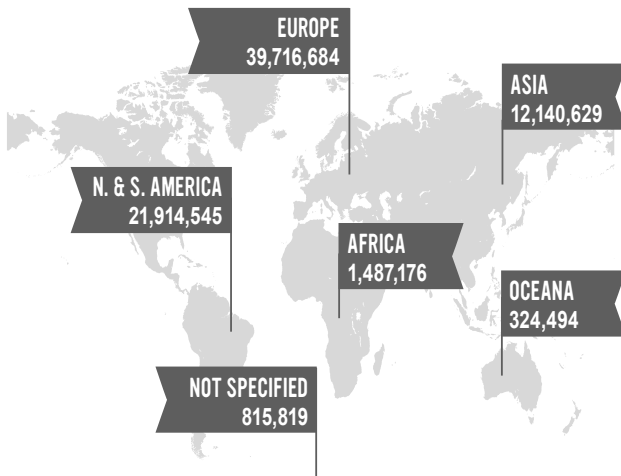
Ellis Island: Gateway of Dreams portrays an important era in American history - one that makes us who we are today - a nation of immigrants.

Filling the Melting Pot: Immigration in America

Analyze the following data and answer the questions below. *Data courtesy of the US Department of Homeland Security.*

Immigrants by Region

This chart and map show the number of legal immigrants who came to America from each region from 1820 - 2010.



		Region of last residence					
		EUROPE	ASIA	N. & S. AMERICA	AFRICA	OCEANIA	NOT SPECIFIED
50-year periods	1820–1869	6,388,708	90,698	306,513	617	377	203,122
	1870–1919	23,024,946	836,136	2,255,534	16,759	51,755	49,637
	1920–1969	6,015,679	674,952	4,745,814	51,998	62,411	13,656
	1970–2010	4,287,351	10,538,843	14,606,684	1,417,802	209,951	549,404

Immigration is complex. Many things affect immigration trends. What are some reasons why immigration from Europe far outpaced immigration from other areas from 1820 - 2010?

Look at the table above. What trends over time do you notice?

Based on current events, what future immigration trends might we see?

Quick math: According to the data, how many total legal immigrants came to the US from 1820 - 2010?

Look Ahead

EXCERPT FROM **LOOK AHEAD:**

*I don't know what to expect.
I don't know how to survive.
The future is a question.
Will I make a life and thrive or simply fail and disappear?
Look ahead.*

*I can see her standing proudly
with her lamp held high for me.
It's as though she's saying "welcome"
this is where you ought to be.
It's a place you won't be hungry,
it's a place you can be free!
It's a land where you can have a chance
to find security.*

*So yes I've left my home,
turned my back on all I know.
Turning loved ones into memories
because I chose to go.
My life fits inside a bag of cloth, I'm standing here alone,
and anything that happens, happens to me on my own.*

*I can fail or I can fly,
I can be famous or afraid,
will I wish that I had stayed?
Look ahead!
Look ahead!
Look ahead!*

INSIDE A BAG OF CLOTH

The song says, "My life fits inside a bag of cloth." Imagine leaving your home forever with just a bag of belongings. What would you take with you? Inside the bag below, list 5 - 10 items you would bring along, and discuss the importance of those items as a class.



em-i-grate (verb)

To leave one's own country to settle permanently in another.

"Jacob's parents emigrated from Austria."

im-mi-grate (verb)

To come to live permanently in a foreign country.

"My mother immigrated to America from Great Britain."

An Immigrant's Hopes and Fears

Answer the following on the back of this sheet:

List the hopes and fears mentioned in this song. What would be your greatest fear if you had to immigrate to a new country? What would be your greatest hope?

Pretend you are one of the immigrants from the play. Write a letter home from New York City. What would you tell your family?

Push and Pull Factors in Immigration

PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

People migrate because of push and pull factors. These factors either entice people to a new country or place (pull), or drive them away from their current homes (push). Push and pull factors are sometimes economic, political, cultural, environmental, or a combination of these.

A CASE STUDY

The character, Rebecca, in *Ellis Island: Gateway of Dreams* was from Romania. Using internet and other social studies resources, research the history of Romania during the early 20th century.

What was happening in Romania that may have “pushed” people like Rebecca to leave?

What was happening in America during that same time period that may have resulted in a “pull” to come?



Four immigrants and their belongings.
LC-USZC4-5584: Library of Congress Prints
and Photographs Division
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3g05584>

Classify each of the following as a factor that “pushes” people to leave their homeland, or as a factor that “pulls” immigrants to a new land. Place them on the chart below.

famine, drought, crop failure

religious freedom

peace

violence and crime

good health care

natural disasters

unemployment

fertile land

war or revolution

job opportunities

search for adventure

political fear

religious persecution

good infrastructure (safe water, good roads)

PUSH FACTORS

PULL FACTORS

An Immigrant's Tale

There are as many tales of immigration to America as there are immigrants. Both images below portray immigrants coming to America from Europe on ocean steamers, yet they are very different.

What details do you notice in each image?

Which image is more appealing?

Which image is more realistic? Create a caption for each image.

Images courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC.



Choose one of the immigrants from the play: Silvano, Marco, Claire, or Rebecca. Think about that immigrant's hopes, dreams, and fears. Write a sequel to the immigrant's story from the play *Ellis Island: Gateway of Dreams*.

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Virginia Repertory Theatre Presents...

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Book and lyrics by Debra Clinton
Music by Jason Marks

Virginia Repertory Theatre
Nathaniel Shaw, Artistic Director
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Theater Etiquette



Clap, but know when to do so.

You should clap after a play, act, or song, or right before intermission. If you loved the show, you can give a "standing ovation" at the end. That's when you stand up while applauding.

It's quiet time (sort of).

If the play makes you laugh or cry, that is fine, but you can chat with your friends afterwards. Show the actors respect and quiet they need to focus on their roles. Being quiet allows the rest of the audience to concentrate on the play.

Behind the Curtains

Many people with different skills and talents work together to make a production such as *Ellis Island: Gateway of Dreams* come to life. Can you match these theater jobs with their descriptions?

set designer

a person who plays a role or character in stage plays, motion pictures, television broadcasts, etc.

playwright

a person who creates the look of each character by designing clothes and accessories the actors will wear in performance.

stage manager

this person's job is to pull together all the pieces and parts of a play – the script, actors, set, costumes, lighting and sound, and music to create a production.

actor

this job focuses on using light to create effects that match the mood of various scenes in a performance.

costume designer

this person is a writer of scripts for plays. The script tells a story through the actions and words of the characters.

lighting designer

this person creates the physical surroundings of a play, including any scenery, furniture, or props used throughout the play.

director

this person helps the director and helps organize the actors, designers, stage crew, and technicians throughout the production of a play.