



Immigration over Time Lesson Plan

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STANDARDS:

National Standards for United States History

- Era 4: Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)
 - Standard 2C: The student understands how antebellum immigration changed American society.
- Era 6: The Development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)
 - Standard 2A: The student understands the sources and experiences of the new immigrants.

LESSONS:

Compare different ports in the United States (New York, Philadelphia, New Orleans, San Francisco, etc.).

Locate passenger lists from a variety of US ports during the time frame being studied. Students can choose to find ships that arrived in the US on their birthday over a span of years. Or have the class look at passenger lists from the current date over different years.

- Have students look at the records to compare:
 - Volume of immigrants arriving each day
 - Immigrants' religion, ethnicity, language, place of origin, occupation
 - Types of ships arriving at each port
- Use other records such as historical newspapers and historical narratives to learn more about the ships and immigrants arriving in the United States.

Research how antebellum immigrants were different from earlier immigrants.

Look at passenger lists from the same day in 1820 and 1850. Compare and contrast the immigrants aboard the ships as well as the ships used and conditions aboard.

- Questions to steer discussion include:
 - What types of immigrants came in the 1820s? What type came in the 1850s?
 - Where were the immigrants coming from?
 - What were the immigrants' religion, ethnicity, language and occupation?
 - Why were the immigrants leaving their home country?
 - What did they plan to do once they arrived? Did they have a job line up? Did they have family in the area?
 - What was different about the immigrants arriving in the 1850s compares to those arriving in the 1820s?

Compare the conditions aboard ships during the 1850s.

Study historical narratives about ships during this time. Compare passenger lists from ports on both sides of the United States. Locate historical newspapers about ships arriving at port and historical narratives to read firsthand accounts about the conditions aboard these vessels.

- Questions to steer discussion include:
 - How many people were arriving on each ship? How big were the ships? How much space did each person have?
 - What food and exercise did the passengers receive?
 - What could people bring with them on their journey?
 - What types of sickness were found on the ships?
 - How many people died before they made it to America?
 - Were the conditions for those arriving at ports on the East and West coasts?

Write a narrative about an immigrant.

Have students research a famous immigrant, an immigrant from their own families or an immigrant with a similar name to them. Locate the immigrant on passenger lists, census records, naturalization records, etc. Have students write short narratives about their subject's life. Ideas include:

- Reason for leaving home country
- Their voyage to America
- First impressions of America
- Their new life in the United States

Learn about the immigrants in your own family.

Do students have stories about their ancestors to share?

- Find old photographs of immigrants
- Conduct interviews with immigrant ancestors or those that knew them
- Locate family histories about the immigrant ancestor
- Find the immigrant in original sources: census records, passenger lists, etc.
- Share a tradition from their immigrant ancestor's past: family recipe, holiday, etc.