



Teaching Guide

SEGMENT 5, WEBISODE 8

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



Segment Overview

Although most immigrants shared a common belief system and work ethic with established Americans, the newcomers faced strong anti-immigrant sentiment and prejudice and occupied the bottom of the socio-economic scale.

Those who survived the Atlantic journey had to endure the intimidating inspection process at Ellis Island. Many newcomers left the inspection station bound for large cities such as Chicago or for farming communities in the midwest. But almost a third of the immigrants stayed in New York City, packed into tenements and neighborhoods where foreign languages were more common than English.

Angel Island, off the coast of San Francisco, sometimes known as the “Ellis Island of the West,” served as the primary western point of entry for thirty years. Unlike Ellis Island, however, this immigration station also served as a detention center or temporary prison for thousands of Chinese immigrants.

Public policy embraced the “teeming refuse” of foreign lands; however, the reality was somewhat more ambivalent. The strangeness of foreign customs and language, the cost of educating and Americanizing the immigrants and their children, the squalor and crime of the big city pockets of immigrants, and the willingness of the immigrant poor to work for a pittance created a serious backlash against immigration and a resurgence of nativism. Americans, whose ancestors had emigrated just generations before, considered themselves the “true Americans” and felt hostility toward newcomers. Anti-immigrant organizations such as the Know-Nothing party, the Ku Klux Klan, and the Workingmen’s Party formed and flourished to intimidate and often terrorize the foreign born. In 1882, Congress bowed to intense anti-immigration discrimination and fear by passing the first immigration restriction law, the Chinese Exclusion Act, which denied entry to Chinese laborers.

Teacher Directions

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *Coming to America*, small slips of paper and a paper bag to team partners. Students, working with team partners, complete the Student Sheet, filling their paper bag with what they would chose to bring with them to America.
2. In a class discussion, partnerships tell what they put in their sacks and why.



Let's Discuss

Let's Discuss, Cont.



History Sleuth

3. Tell students that the immigrants who came to America had to make these same decisions. They had to leave many people and things behind that were important to them to make the trip. And when they got to America, the dreams that they had did not necessarily come true.

Teacher Directions

1. Distribute a copy of the Student Sheet: *Cartoon Analyzer* and a copy of the Student Sheet: *The Immigrant: The Stranger at our Gate* to each team.

2. Discuss with the students the purpose of political cartoons.

Political cartoons provide a method for presenting a political viewpoint. Making fun of political figures and issues helps put them in perspective, and often gives the reader a humorous way to look at controversial events and ideas. Because the cartoons illustrate an editorial viewpoint, they can anger the reader. Political cartoons use caricature and satire to create humor. Caricature is the exaggeration of personal characteristics. Satire is the use of sarcasm or irony to make fun of somebody or some event. To understand a political cartoon the reader must first understand what the symbols represent and then try to understand the cartoon's overall meaning.

3. Briefly discuss the use of the *Cartoon Analyzer*.
4. Working in pairs, team members use the *Cartoon Analyzer* to identify the symbols and the meaning of the cartoon. Each pair shares its analysis with the other team partnership.
5. Teams share their interpretations of the cartoon with the class. What does the cartoon communicate about many Americans' attitudes towards immigration?

Teacher Directions

1. Students, working in their teams, discuss the following questions.

- Why do you think many Americans opposed immigration in the mid-1800s?
- Does anti-immigration sentiment exist in America today? Explain.
- Are the reasons for this feeling the same as in the mid-1800s? Explain.
- Do immigrants still come to America for the same reasons as in the mid-1800s? What are those reasons?

2. Teams share their responses with the entire class.



What do you
Think?

What Do You Think,
Continued.



3. Students draw a political cartoon expressing their point of view about immigration today. They should determine the message that their cartoons will convey and then choose the symbols and write a caption that will support the overall meaning.

Teacher Directions

Note to the Teacher: Ask each student in advance to bring a photograph or drawing of him/herself to class for this activity. Or students can sign their names on slips of paper. You will need a world map, yarn, and push pins.

1. Display a world map. Students place their photographs (or drawings or signatures) around the world map. Then using the yarn and push pins, they connect their photographs to the country(ies) from which their ancestors originated. After students have completed the activity, the class discusses the resulting web—a graphic representation of their varied heritages—and its patterns of ancestries.
2. Ask the students if they know the stories of their ancestors' immigration to America. How did they feel? What made them come to America? Students who do not know about their ancestors' immigration can speculate about answers to these questions.
3. Ask students.

How did our ancestors move toward personal freedom? How did they move the country toward freedom?

Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

Language Arts — Students read *Jar of Dreams* and/or *The Invisible Thread* by Yoshiko Uchida. Partner Discussion Guides are available for both novels from the Johns Hopkins University Talent Development Middle School Program.

Math/Library — Students analyze immigration statistics to determine the effect of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. Students may also analyze how other measures to limit immigration affected these statistics. Students then chart or graph those numbers.

Science/Library — Students research tuberculosis, which caused new immigrants to be rejected and sent back to their homeland. What caused tuberculosis and why was it feared so? Students note today's reemergence of tuberculosis and why it is becoming resistant to medicines. (In part, this is due



Connections, Cont.

to people not finishing the full course of treatment. Why is it important to take all the medicine in an antibiotic series?)

Library — Students research Ellis Island and Angel Island. The stories of both immigration centers and the newcomers who passed through them are extremely interesting. Web sites and print resources are available for each.

Library — Students research Chinese immigration or more recent Asian newcomers.

Art — Students create posters about specific groups of immigrants to America, such as the Germans, Chinese, or Irish. What customs, foods, words, and other aspects of their heritage did these newcomers bring to the United States that became part of our heritage?

Technology/Library — From what countries do most immigrants come today? Students research this question and the issue of illegal immigration in the United States today.

Coming to America

Coming to America was not an easy decision for immigrants. Many spent all their savings for ship fare. They left family, friends, and home, never to see them again. The immigrants could take very little with them, as space was limited on the ships, and they had to pay by the size and weight of their bundles.

Imagine that you are going to immigrate to America. You can bring with you only a bag of your possessions that weighs no more than ten pounds.

- What would you bring?
- What would you need on the trip?
- What would you take to remind you of home and family in the old world?
- What would you need or want when you got to America?

Write or draw the objects on pieces of paper and place them in a bag to share with class. Be prepared to explain how you chose the contents of your bag and why the items are important to bring to America.



The Immigrant: The Stranger At Our Gate



Emigrant: "Can I come in?"

Uncle Sam: "I 'spose you can; there's no law to keep you out."

The Ram's Horn

Cartoon Analyzer

Visuals

Which of the objects or characters in the cartoon are symbols?

What do you think each symbol means?

Words (not all cartoons include words)

Which words or phrases in the cartoon appear to be the most significant?

Why do you think so?

Describe the action taking place in the cartoon.

Explain the message of the cartoon.

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