

**Yale 2012 PIER Summer Institute Global Movement**  
*Sponsored by the Yale Programs in International Educational Resources (PIER)*

**TITLE OF UNIT: Immigration: Experiencing Ellis Island**

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*School: Edgemont Jr./Sr. High School*

*Subject Area: Social Studies 8*

*Grade Level(s): 8*

*Time Frame to Allow for Unit: 2 periods*

**Introduction: Brief Description of the Unit**

This lesson provides students with background of the immigration process at Ellis Island. Students will understand the immigrants' experience through viewing the virtual tour of Ellis Island. Guided questions will be provided to assist student learning and assure active learning.

**Geographic Connections: Related to Summer Institute Themes**

Human movement due to social and political factors.

**Vocabulary: Terms, Concepts and Actors**

**Oppression:**

Definition: the use of authority or power in a burdensome, cruel, or unjust manner.

Context: Immigrants would travel to the U.S. to escape religious and political oppression.

**Surname:**

Definition: Family name, the name that a person has in common with other family members

Context: shortening or changing a families surname was not a common practice at Ellis Island.

**Assimilate:**

Definition: to bring into conformity with the customs, attitudes, etc., of a group, nation, or the like; to adapt or adjust.

Context: Some immigrants would try to assimilate to the culture of the U.S.

**Content Standard(s): New York State Learning Standards**

**Standard 1**

Key Idea [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#)

[Alternate Assessment for Students with Severe Disabilities](#)

**History of the United States and New York**

use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

**Standard 3**

Key Ideas [1](#) - [2](#)

[Alternate Assessment for Students with Severe Disabilities](#)

**Geography**

use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national, and global—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth’s surface.

**Understanding (s)/Goals:**

Students will understand that:

There are push pull factors that lead to migration

Pros and cons immigrating through Ellis island.

Influence of immigration on U.S. culture.

**Essential Question(s) Related to Theme(s):**

What factors caused immigrants to leave their countries for the U.S.?

What was the experience like for immigrants passing through Ellis Island?

**Student Objectives (Outcomes):**

Students will be able to:

Answer and discuss guided and essential questions after viewing the Ellis Island Virtual Tour.

Present family immigration/migration stories relating them to the Ellis Island experience.

### Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

#### Performance Task(s):

- Students will view Virtual Tour of Ellis Island while completing guided questions handout. Discussion and review of handout and virtual tour.
- Extension: Student interview of a family member following guided questions handout. Share stories with class.

#### Other Evidence:

### Stage 3 – Learning Plan

#### Learning Activities:

- Ellis Island Virtual Tour and Guided Question Activity
- Students will search Scholastic Ellis Island Virtual Tour website.
- Students will receive a hard copy handout of the guided questions to complete the activity or the teacher can email a copy to the class with questions and the link provided.
- Virtual tour has a running time of 31 minutes.
- Review virtual tour guided questions as a class (may need to continue on day two)
  - Discuss questions further and allow for follow-up questions
  - Give students the opportunity to fill in correct answers

- Extension:
  - Tour of Ellis Island
  - Family Immigration/Migration Story
    - The students will interview a family member about their immigration/migration story.
    - They will be provided with guided questions for the interview.
    - Share stories with the class and discuss similarities with stories from Ellis Island activity.
    - Mapping activity – students can label a world map tracing each families route to the U.S. and look and the diversity of the grade/class.
  
- Assessment: Completion and review of guided and essential questions.

***Resource List/Bibliography:***

Please be sure to include full titles, authors, and URL addresses with dates accessed.

- Scholastic Ellis Island Virtual Tour
- <http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/immigration/tour/>
  
- The lesson plan will be used for eighth grade resource room classes as well as eighth grade integrated social studies classes as part of the unit on immigration.



7.) What happened to immigrants if they did not pass the initial medical examination?

8.) What type of questions would the inspector ask the immigrants after they had passed the physical?

9.) What were 3 possibilities at the “Stairs of Separation”?

10.) What happened in the Hearing Rooms?

11.) Was there a limit to the amount of bags an immigrant could bring to Ellis Island?

12.) How did inspectors deal with all of the different languages coming through Ellis Island?

13.) Who was the first immigrant to be processed on Ellis Island? On what date?  
From where?

14.) What would be a reason the immigration department would turn away an immigrant and send them home?

15.) What were the doctors looking for when they examined the immigrants?

16.) What happened if immigrants were detained for medical reasons?

17.) What happened if immigrants were detained for legal reasons?

18.) True or False: 20% of immigrants who arrived on Ellis Island were turned away and sent home?

19.) True or False: Shortening a family's surname was common practice on Ellis Island when immigrants arrived.

20.) True or False: Class structure affected the process for arriving immigrants.

21.) Why was this time period at Ellis Island so influential?

22.) Where would family members meet each other?

23.) What happened to Ellis Island after 1924?

24.) When immigrants were turned away did they have to pay their own way back?

25.) Was there a currency exchange on site?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Interactive Virtual Tour of Ellis Island**

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/immigration/tour/>

**Directions:** View the virtual tour and complete the following questions – The questions are in order of each section of the tour.

1.) What years was Ellis Island operational?

Ans. 1892-1924

2.) How many immigrants passed through Ellis Island?

Ans. 12 million

3.) For what reasons did immigrants come to the United States?

Ans. Economic opportunity, to escape religious and political oppression, to reunite with family members, common desire to build a better life for themselves and their families.

4.) Where did early immigrants come from?

Ans. Southern and eastern Europe – Hungary, Turkey, Greece, Armenia, nearly 4 million from Italy alone.

5.) The registry room was also known as?

Ans. The Great Hall

6.) What took place in the registry room?

Ans. All immigrants were examined and questioned to see if they were fit to enter the country or did they require further review.

7.) What happened to immigrants if they did not pass the initial medical examination?

Ans. They were marked with a piece of chalk and pulled out of line for further examination.

8.) What type of questions would the inspector ask the immigrants after they had passed the physical?

Ans. Where were you born? What's your occupation? How much money do you have? Who paid your passage? Have you ever been convicted of a crime?

9.) What were 3 possibilities at the "Stairs of Separation"?

Ans.

- The isle on the right was for the immigrants who were cleared and traveling further west or south.
- The isle on the left was the path to New York City and points north.
- The center isle was the one to fear, this led to the dormitory or hospital which met a longer stay for days or even weeks.

10.) What happened in the Hearing Rooms?

Ans. Those not passing inspection had a final opportunity to have their case heard before a board of inquiry in one of three hearing rooms.

11.) Was there a limit to the amount of bags an immigrant could bring to Ellis Island?

Ans. Many immigrants traveled to Ellis Island with as many items as they could carry. There were no limitations just whatever they could manage.

12.) How did inspectors deal with all of the different languages coming through Ellis Island?

Ans. Interpreters were hired as well as volunteers from local churches and synagogues.

13.) Who was the first immigrant to be processed on Ellis Island? On what date?  
From where?

Ans. Annie More, January 1<sup>st</sup> 1892, Ireland, She was 15 years old.

14.) What would be a reason the immigration department would turn away an immigrant and send them home?

Ans. Illness and disease, criminal record.

15.) What were the doctors looking for when they examined the immigrants?

Ans. –Were they healthy enough to work to support themselves and their families?

- They wanted to make sure they did not have any infectious diseases they were bringing into the country.

16.) What happened if immigrants were detained for medical reasons?

Ans. The United States Public Health Service would treat many of these patients at little or no cost. This took place in the hospital on site.

17.) What happened if immigrants were detained for legal reasons?

Ans. – They would plead their cases in the hearing rooms to the board of special inquiry.

- 10 minute sessions and friends and relatives could speak on their behalf.
- Recorders and translators were present.
- Not a citizen yet so they were not guaranteed the same rights.

18.) True or False: 20% of immigrants who arrived on Ellis Island were turned away and sent home?

Ans. False – 20% were detained but only 2% were denied entry.

19.) True or False: Shortening a family's surname was common practice on Ellis Island when immigrants arrived.

Ans. False – Names were changed by misspelling by others other than Ellis Island officials. Some immigrants changed their names after entry just to fit in.

20.) True or False: Class structure affected the process for arriving immigrants.

Ans. True

- The concern was for 3<sup>rd</sup> class or steerage.
- The amount of money you could spend on a ticket made a difference.
- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class may not have set foot on Ellis Island; inspection was completed on the ship.

21.) Why was this time period at Ellis Island so influential?

Ans.

- So many different people came to the United States in such a short amount of time and settled all over the country.
- They brought over their own food, tradition, language etc.
- Changed the landscape of America

22.) Where would family members meet each other?

Ans.

- At the bottom of the stairs of separation.
- The Immigrant Aid Society helped reunite people who did not travel together.
- The "Kissing Post" – an area on the first floor of Ellis Island.

23.) What happened to Ellis Island after 1924?

Ans.

- Immigration laws on how immigrants were processed changed.
- Instead of coming to an immigration station like Ellis Island you were processed overseas.

24.) When immigrants were turned away did they have to pay their own way back?

Ans. No, the steamship company was responsible for them until processed or responsible to bring them back if they were denied.

25.) Was there a currency exchange on site?

Ans. Yes

## **Family Immigration Story**

Guided Questions:

1.) Where were you born?

2.) When were you born?

3.) What do you remember about your place of origin?

4.) When did you leave?

5.) How did you travel?

6.) Why did you leave?

7.) What did you take with you?

8.) What do you remember about traveling and settling here? Best moment? Worst moment?  
Funniest? Most memorable?

9.) How often do you go back to your birthplace?

10.) How have you seen the population of migrants changing since you first came over?