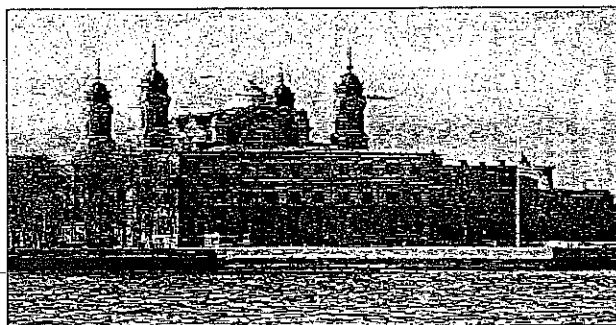


Immigrants in the 1900s

People from all over the world have been coming to America for thousands of years. Some of these immigrants were seeking a better life, and America offered them a home free of religious or other persecution (harsh punishment), and a chance at the "American Dream". Immigrants that came to the shores of America during the early 1900s had to pass through Ellis Island before they could start their American adventure, which was full of many hardships, challenges, and joys.

Most immigrants traveling to America in the early 1900s were not rich enough to afford first-class or second-class passage. Instead, they were piled into the steerage area of ships in order to cross the ocean. Living conditions on these ships were less than ideal. In fact, it was downright gross and scary. There were little, if any, windows in the steerage section of the ship. It was dreary and dark. Plus, it smelled really bad. There were not enough toilets and garbage was rarely taken care of. Steerage was just one big open area; families or individuals didn't have their own rooms or spaces, so everyone was crowded in with one another. No one was taking baths or showers, and people were getting sea sick. These awful conditions were actually the spur that started one of America's first immigration laws, but it was hard to enforce if ships had humane conditions for steerage immigrants. Once the ship arrived in America, which could take anywhere from one week to over a month, immigrants had to be processed. If an immigrant was fortunate enough to have the money to be a first-class or second-class ticketed customer, they were looked at on board and then shuffled on directly to New York. However, the steerage immigrants had an entirely different experience. These immigrants were processed through Ellis Island, which was still relatively new (it was built in 1892).

Immigrants in Ellis Island had to stand in lines for hours, waiting to be poked and prodded by doctors searching for any contagious disease, mental health issues, or physical problems. After clearing the medical portion, immigrants stood in lines again to be asked a variety of questions. Workers asked many questions, from if they had a way to make money to if they were a criminal. Keep in mind, too, that immigrants were lucky if they found an Ellis Island worker who actually spoke their own language. Can you imagine trying to answer questions when you don't speak the language? If, after the end of their very long day in Ellis Island, an immigrant was deemed suitable, they could continue on to begin their life in America. Unfortunately, if the immigrant was denied entrance, they were sent back to steerage to endure a trip back home.



Immigrants Today

Immigrants coming to America today find themselves in the middle of a controversial topic. Controversial means that many people disagree on a solution or outcome. While immigrants still come to America seeking similar things that immigrants in the 1900s were seeking, there are more laws and regulations that America keeps up in regards to immigration.

Immigration today is not only controversial, but it can be confusing. For example, if an immigrant in the early 1900s passed their Ellis Island examination, they were able to start their American life. It was hard work, no doubt, and many returned home after realizing that America was hardly the golden place they expected. However, today, there are categories that immigrants must fit into.

Sometimes, immigrants ask America if they can come to the country as a refugee. A refugee is someone who is leaving their country to escape war or persecution. The refugee must apply with America before they even leave their home country. Once the refugee is approved, they need to find funds (or grants from America) to get from their home to America. After arriving in America, refugees typically get hooked up with a refugee organization that can help them find housing, get their children into schools, and navigate this new world in America.

Other times, immigrants come to America and seek permanent citizenship. Gaining Legal Permanent Residence, or getting their "green card", means that the immigrant is now able to get a social security card and other benefits that Americans get. For example, someone with permanent residence can apply for scholarships to attend college or start their own business.

Just as in the past, when immigrants come to America they must undergo a medical examination. This medical examination consists of a physical examination, an evaluation, and blood tests. In addition to this examination, new immigrants must undergo an interview and have their paperwork thoroughly inspected for authenticity.



You might hear your parents or even people on television talking about immigration and immigration reform, which means adapting and making new rules that regulate who can immigrate into our country. It can be confusing, but one thing is certain: people still want to come to America, just as they have for thousands of years.

Immigrants in the 1900s

Set 4

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer each question using evidence from the text to support your answer.

1. Determine the meaning of the phrase, "less than ideal" as used in paragraph 2.

2. Summarize the conditions of the trip for passengers that traveled in the steerage area of the ships.

3. Using details from the text, infer what one of the first immigration laws mentioned in the 2nd paragraph referred to.

Immigrants in the 1900s

Set 4

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer each question using evidence from the text to support your answer.

4. Compare and contrast the experience of the first and second class passengers with that of the steerage passengers once they reached Ellis Island.

5. Determine the main idea of paragraph 3. Explain how you know this is the main idea.

6. According to the text, what were the two possible outcomes of the inspection at Ellis Island?

Immigrants Today

Set 4

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer each question using evidence from the text to support your answer.

1. Summarize the refugee process detailed in the passage.

2. According to the text, what are some benefits of permanent residence?

3. Compare and contrast the two ways present day immigrants can enter the United States of America.

Immigrants Today

Set 4

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer each question using evidence from the text to support your answer.

4. What details from the text support the idea that refugees must undergo a lengthy process?

5. What detail from paragraph 2 allows the reader to infer that some immigrants were not happy in America?

6. Determine the main idea of paragraph-5. Explain how you know this is the main idea.

Paired Comprehension

Set 4

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer each question using evidence from the text to support your answer.

1. Compare and contrast immigrants of the 1900s with present day immigrants using information from both texts.

2. What details about the immigrant process is included in *Immigrants in the 1900s* and not in *Immigrants Today*?

Paired Comprehension

Set 4

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer each question using evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. Using details from the text, explain how having money or access to funds could be helpful to both immigrants of the 1900s and immigrants today.

4. Compare and contrast the process when immigrants arrived in the past to the process when they arrive today.

Would you rather?

Set 4

Would you rather be an immigrant in the 1900s or an immigrant in present times? Use details from the text in your opinion essay.
