

A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS

CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR GRADES 7 & 8

In 1951 the immigration historian Oscar Handlin wrote in his book “The Uprooted”: “Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants *were* American history.” Immigrants have provided the labor to build up our nation, transform its culture and define who we are as Americans. Despite the importance of immigrants to our economy, society and culture, the country has not always welcomed immigrants.

Historically, the United States has had an ambivalent attitude toward immigration. While needing a cheap immigrant labor force and, at times, glorifying the beneficial effects of immigration, Americans have also feared that immigrants would take their jobs, marry their children and redefine American identity and culture. In the colonial period, Governor Peter Stuyvesant tried to ban Jews and Quakers from the Dutch colony of New Netherland out of religious prejudice. In the mid-19th century, Irish immigrants became a particular target for discrimination. In 1882 the United States banned almost all Chinese immigration. By 1924 the United States had largely closed the doors to immigration and would not open them again until the late 1960s. As immigration has grown to record numbers in recent years, the debate over who should be allowed to enter has become increasingly contentious.

People have come to these shores for economic opportunity or to escape religious, political or other persecution. Immigrants have tried to transplant their values and culture from their homeland, but by the second generation have usually found themselves adapting to their new circumstances. Upon their arrival, immigrants have had to find a way to earn a living, most as workers, but also as farmers and entrepreneurs. While confronting discrimination in their new land, immigrants have transformed both themselves and America.

To explore the issues newcomers have faced, this curriculum is organized into three units:

Unit I: Arrival explores the immigrants’ journey and the laws that have restricted immigrants’ access to the United States.

Unit II: Complications of Culture will teach students how immigrants adapt to living in the United States and how parents and children confront both the responsibilities and conflicts that occur between them.

Unit III: The Realities of Life and Labor looks at the types of jobs and economic opportunities available to immigrants, and how they organize to improve their economic conditions and start their own businesses.

To download this curriculum, go to: www.cuny.edu/immigrantcurriculum.

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ONLINE LESSONS

The following lessons are available only on the Internet:

1. Introduction and Dutch New York
2. Assimilation and Cultural Clashes
3. The Lawrence Textile Workers Strike

To access them, go to: www.cuny.edu/immigrantcurriculum

A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS CURRICULUM WEB SITE

This curriculum also has a companion Web site. In addition to being able to download copies of the printed lessons in this curriculum, you can also download additional lessons that could not be included in the print version due to space considerations. To help students describe their own immigrant pasts, we have developed models using the lives of CUNY leaders who, through text and video, tell their own stories.

Another feature of the Web site is “Across Continents, Across Time: Literary and Film Resources for an Immigration Curriculum.” Developed by Professor Emeritus Brian Gallagher of LaGuardia Community College, it contains excerpts from literary works and descriptions of sequences from films. It also provides context for each of the twenty-three selections and suggested themes and questions for use in the classroom. These and other features can be accessed at: www.cuny.edu/immigrantcurriculum

Milestones in Immigration History

September 8, 1565 Don Pedro Menendez de Aviles establishes St. Augustine on behalf of Spain on the site of a Timucuan Indian village in present-day Florida. It was the first European settlement in North America.

May 14, 1607 John Smith establishes Jamestown, Va., the first successful English settlement in North America.

November 12, 1609 Henry Hudson anchors his ship, the *Half Moon*, on Manhattan Island as he searches for a passage to Asia.

November 21, 1620 The Mayflower first lands at Provincetown, Mass., on Cape Cod before taking its 102 Pilgrim passengers on to Plymouth.

December 26, 1620 Pilgrims land at Plymouth, Mass.

May 1624 Thirty families sponsored by the Dutch West India Company arrive at the mouth of the Hudson River. They continue northward to found Fort Orange (Albany, N.Y.)

September 7, 1654 The first Jewish immigrants in North America flee Portuguese rule in Brazil and settle in New Netherland (New York). The Dutch West India Company allows them to stay over the opposition of Governor Peter Stuyvesant.

March 4, 1681 Pennsylvania is founded by William Penn, a Quaker. Because of his religious principles, the colony becomes a religious haven.

March 26, 1790 Naturalization Act establishes that only free whites are eligible for citizenship after a residency requirement of two years. This is the first federal law; immigration was previously under the control of the individual states.

June 18, 1798 Naturalization Act requires that each alien residing in the United States must register with the government. It also raises the residency requirement for naturalization to 14 years.

February 10, 1799 Rioters protest the Alien and Sedition Acts, which limited the rights of immigrants and suppressed criticism of the federal government.

April 14, 1802 Naturalization Act establishes the basic requirements for naturalization, including good moral character, allegiance to the Constitution, a formal declaration of intention and witness. It also reduces the residence period for naturalization from 14 years to 5.

March 2, 1819 Steerage Act requires ship captains to keep detailed records of immigrants.

1845–1851 The Irish Potato Famine, caused by potato blight and the failure of the British to provide relief, leads to a massive immigration of Irish to the United States. Between 1841 and 1850, more than 780,000 arrive in America. More than 3.5 million arrived from 1820 to 1880.

January 24, 1848 Gold is discovered at John Sutter's mill, setting off the California gold rush. This leads to the mass immigration of thousands of Chinese to the United States, mostly to the West Coast.

February 2, 1848 The Eagle, an American vessel, brings the first shipload of Chinese workers to San Francisco.

February 27, 1848 Revolutionary activities begin in Germany; the failure of the revolution in 1849 will lead many Germans to immigrate to the United States.

August 1, 1855 Castle Garden in Lower Manhattan is opened as the Emigrant Landing Depot.

June 18, 1858 Burlingame Treaty establishes friendly relations between the United States and China, with the United States granting China "Most Favored Nation" status. It was not ratified until 1868.

May 10, 1869 A golden spike is hammered in place, completing the Transcontinental Railroad and further opening the western United States to settlement.

July 14, 1870 Naturalization Act establishes a system of controls on the naturalization process with penalties for fraudulent practices, and extends the naturalization laws to aliens born in Africa and those of African descent.

March 3, 1875 Immigration Act passes, prohibiting the admission of criminals, prostitutes and involuntary Chinese immigrants, so-called "coolie labor."

1880–1920 More than four million Italian immigrants arrive in the United States.

March 1, 1881 The assassination of Tsar Alexander II sparks a series of pogroms in the Russian Empire, and in response many Jews immigrate to the United States.

May 6, 1882 The first Chinese Exclusion Act bars Chinese laborers from entering the United States, restricts the number and type of Chinese immigrants from entering the country, and bars Chinese immigrants from becoming citizens through naturalization. It is renewed on May 5, 1892, and April 29, 1902.

August 3, 1882 Immigration Act passes, prohibiting the admission of immigrants who are likely to become a public charge, and introduces a 50-cent tax on each immigrant.

December 8, 1885 Supreme Court rules that Congress can levy a “head tax” on immigrants.

May 4, 1886 At the end of a rally for the eight-hour workday at the Haymarket Square in Chicago, policemen open fire in a crowd after a bomb is thrown. Police arrest eight anarchist organizers (six of them German immigrants), who are then found guilty. The eight men are pardoned in 1893, after Illinois Governor Peter Altgeld concludes that they were innocent of the crime. Before the pardon, four are executed and one commits suicide.

August 1886 Stanton Coit organizes the Neighborhood Guild, in New York’s Lower East Side, to serve its immigrant population. It is the first settlement house in the United States.

September 18, 1889 Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr open Hull House in Chicago, one of the most important settlement houses of its time.

March 3, 1891 The Bureau of Immigration is established, the predecessor of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (I.N.S.).

January 1, 1892 Ellis Island opens as the gateway to America for immigrants. Three quarters of newcomers from 1892 to 1932 are inspected here when they enter the port in New York City.

July 1893 Lillian Wald and Mary Brewster move to the Lower East Side and establish a visiting nurse service that will become the Henry Street Settlement.

April 22, 1897 First issue of the Jewish Daily Forward is published. This New York-based Yiddish-language newspaper still thrives.

March 28, 1898 Resolving a lawsuit brought by Wong Kim Ark, a Chinese-American, the Supreme Court determines that children born in the United States are citizens, regardless of parents’ race or nationality.

October 18, 1898 Puerto Rico becomes a United States territory.

1898 The Philippines becomes a U.S. protectorate as a result of the Spanish-American War.

June 15, 1904 More than 1,000 people from the German immigrant neighborhood Kleindeutschland in New York City die when their steamship, the *General Slocum*, bursts into flames while moving up the East River.

1906 The American Jewish Committee, a Jewish rights and advocacy group, is founded by American Jews in response to Russian pogroms.

March 14, 1907 The “Gentlemen’s Agreement” between the United States and Japan limits Japanese immigration to non-laborers and prevents schools in San Francisco from discriminating against students of Japanese descent. Filipinos are recruited to take the place of Japanese in many industries.

April 17, 1907 A record-breaking number of immigrants — 11,747 — are processed on this one day at Ellis Island. In all of 1907 alone, almost 1.25 million immigrants pass through Ellis Island.

November 22, 1909 After a rousing speech at Cooper Union by Clara Lemlich, a young Jewish immigrant, 20,000 women garment workers strike for better wages and union recognition.

March 25, 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire breaks out. The result of dangerous working conditions, the fire kills 146 immigrant women and galvanizes support for the passage of workplace safety legislation.

1913 California enacts an Alien Land Law, which prohibits Asian immigrants from owning land and other forms of property. The law will be strengthened in 1920 and other states will pass similar laws.

February 5, 1917 Congress passes an immigration law, over President Woodrow Wilson’s veto, requiring new immigrants to pass a literacy test in their native language. Immigrants from South Asia and Southeast Asia are barred entirely.

March 2, 1917 The Jones Act, making all Puerto Ricans citizens of the United States, becomes law.

November 5, 1918 Al Smith, the son of immigrants, is elected the first Irish Catholic governor of New York.

1918–1921 Palmer Raids U.S. Attorney General Alexander Mitchell Palmer begins a series of raids on suspected radicals. Tensions increase after bombings by suspected anarchists occur in eight American cities in 1919. Thousands are arrested and imprisoned without charge. Immigrants in particular are targeted. None of the organizations or individuals rounded up or deported are tied to any terrorist activities.

May 19, 1921 Quota Law passed, temporarily limiting immigration to 350,000 annually with quotas favoring northern and western Europeans over southern and eastern Europeans.

May 31, 1921 Murder trial of Italian immigrants Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti begins. Though most of the evidence against them is circumstantial, Sacco and Vanzetti are found guilty of murder and executed on August 23, 1927.

November 13, 1922 *Ozawa v. United States* The Supreme Court rules against a Japanese immigrant who filed for U.S. citizenship based on the argument that the Japanese should be considered “Caucasian.”

May 26, 1924 The National Origins Act of 1924 limits the number of immigrants and favors northern and western Europeans over southern and eastern Europeans, and bans all immigration from East and South Asia.

May 28, 1924 Congress establishes the U.S. Border Patrol.

August 14, 1927 Delegates from several organizations decide to combine, leading to the founding of the League of United Latin American Citizens (L.U.L.A.C.) in 1929.

August 29, 1930 Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) founded.

March 24, 1934 The Tydings McDuffie Act cuts Filipino immigration to a quota of 50 persons per year, and all Filipinos in the United States are reclassified as aliens. The Act establishes the Commonwealth of the Philippines and promises the Philippines independence by 1946.

June 28, 1940 The Alien Registration Act requires the fingerprinting of all aliens in the United States.

June 14, 1940 The Immigration and Naturalization Service (I.N.S.) moves from the Labor Department to the Department of Justice.

February 19, 1942 After the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066, resulting in the internment of 120,000 Japanese and Japanese-Americans.

December 17, 1943 The Chinese Exclusion Act is repealed, making people of Chinese ancestry eligible for U.S. citizenship.

December 28, 1945 The War Brides Act authorizes the limited admission of the wives and children of citizens honorably discharged or serving in the U.S. armed forces during World War II, without regard to quotas or other standards.

July 4, 1946 The Philippines gains independence from the United States.

June 30, 1952 The Immigration and Nationality Act (I.N.A.) of 1952 incorporates most of the existing laws relating to immigration with two major changes: the Asiatic Barred Zone, which banned most Asian immigrants since 1917, is abolished and people from all nations are given the opportunity to enter the United States.

August 7, 1953 Refugee Relief Act makes it easier for immigrants to enter the United States in search of political asylum and eliminates immigrant quotas during emergency situations.

January 1, 1959 Guerrillas led by Fidel Castro overthrow the dictatorship of General Fulgencio Batista in Cuba. Opposition to the Castro regime will lead hundreds of thousands of Cubans to flee their nation.

May 30, 1961 Rafael Trujillo, the longtime dictator of the Dominican Republic, is assassinated; many political activists seek, and are given, asylum in the United States.

September 30, 1962 The National Farm Workers Association, a predecessor of the United Farm Workers and one of the first farm worker groups to transcend racial and ethnic differences, is formed by Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, and others.

November 3, 1964 Patsy Takemoto Mink becomes the first woman of color and Pacific Islander elected to the House of Representatives.

July 1, 1965 The Hart-Celler Immigration Act of 1965 is signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on Liberty Island, eliminating the racist quota system of the National Origins Act of 1924.

September 26, 1971 Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, daughter of Jamaican immigrants, announces she will run for the presidency.

January 21, 1974 The Supreme Court rules that public schools must provide programs to teach students with limited ability to speak and understand English.

May 23, 1975 Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act establishes a program of domestic resettlement assistance for refugees who flee from Cambodia and Vietnam.

March 17, 1980 The Refugee Act defines refugees according to the language of the United Nations Convention and removes Cold War political biases from U.S. refugee policies.

May–September, 1980 Fidel Castro opens the port of Mariel, allowing Cubans to leave the island.

June 15, 1982 In *Plyler v. Doe*, the Supreme Court prohibits public schools from denying education to undocumented immigrants.

Nov. 6, 1986 The Immigration Reform and Control Act is passed by Congress in order to stop illegal immigration from Mexico, seen as a threat to the economy. It criminalizes the act of knowingly hiring an undocumented worker. A one-year amnesty program for illegal aliens who have worked and lived in the United States since January 1982 is established.

November 29, 1990 Immigration Act passes, tripling visas for immigrants with “extraordinary ability” for economic purposes and creating an overall cap of 675,000.

April 29, 1992 Riots break out in Los Angeles over the acquittal of the white police officers accused of assault in the videotaped beating of Rodney King, an African-American. Many of the stores that were destroyed and looted were owned by Korean immigrants.

May 1, 1992 The Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance is formed to organize Asian and Pacific Islander Americans into unions and promote their participation and leadership in the labor movement.

November 8, 1994 Proposition 187 passes in California by a three-to-two margin. It denies schooling and medical services to illegal immigrants, but is never implemented and found unconstitutional by a federal judge in 1998.

August 22, 1996 The Welfare Reform Act places tighter restrictions on legal immigrants’ access to food stamps, welfare and S.S.I. (Supplemental Social Security).

September 30, 1996 The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act tightens border enforcement and raises new barriers to refugees seeking asylum, such as tighter restrictions on food stamps and other social services.

June 2, 1998 California’s Proposition 227 passes, ending bilingual education in the state of California.

January 20, 2001 General Colin Powell, son of Jamaican immigrants, is sworn in as Secretary of State.

June 28, 2001 In *Zadvydas v. Davis*, the Supreme Court rules that the government may not indefinitely detain aliens subject to deportation simply because no other country is willing to accept them.

October 26, 2001 In response to the 9/11 attacks, legislation known as the Patriot Act is passed with little debate, giving federal agencies broad new powers that may impinge upon the civil liberties of citizens and non-citizens.

March 1, 2003 Immigration and Naturalization Services is abolished; its service and benefits functions are moved to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, under the authority of the Department of Homeland Security.

February 25, 2003 Supervision of the Coast Guard is passed from the Department of Transportation to the Department of Homeland Security.

December 1, 2005 The Angel Island Immigration Station Restoration and Preservation Act becomes law, allocating \$15 million to establish a museum and genealogical research center on the island and to help preserve two original structures.

March 25, 2006 More than half a million people rally for expanded rights for immigrants in Los Angeles, part of a nationwide mobilization to oppose restrictive legislation proposed in Congress.

November 7, 2006 Ellen Young, an immigrant from Taiwan, is elected to the New York State Legislature, becoming the first Asian-American woman elected to the State Legislature.

April 24, 2007 Dr. Mathieu Eugene is elected to the New York City Council, becoming the Council’s first Haitian-born member.