

Unit: Lowell and the Industrial Revolution

Author: Barbara Duggan: 8th Grade, Valatie, NY

Lesson Topic: Immigration

Grade Level: Middle School

State Standards:

Class Time: 90 minutes

Objectives:

- Students will develop an opinion on immigration laws.
- Students will empathize with the immigrant experience
- Students will understand the immigrant experience

Prerequisite knowledge/Background Information:

In this 90 minute lesson plan, students will begin by expressing their opinion on immigration laws, assume the roles of various ethnic groups hoping to immigrate to the US in 1925, complete a ship's manifest for that year based on an "identity" they are given, and experience the acceptance or rejection of their passage request. In closing, students have the opportunity to discuss personal feelings, to brainstorm a definition of "prejudice" based on this activity and to revisit their earlier opinion on immigration laws/quotas.

For Teacher: Beginning in 1875, the United States began passing laws restricting who was legally allowed entry into the country. Potential immigrants were asked to complete a manifest (or questionnaire) before being allowed to board ships for passage to America. Steamship companies could deny passage to any individuals they felt would not be admitted at their destination port. Many people who wished to come to the United States were never allowed to board a ship. This group is not counted among the 250,000 who were deported from Ellis Island.

Materials:

- Opinion ballot on quotas
- QuickTime movie clip (2 min, 12 sec) http://www.ellisland.com/media/IHIT_1.mov
- Ethnic identity cards (one per student), punched and with yarn to hang around neck (uses 8 1/2" x 11" cardstock, cut in half). Suggestions for these are included...be sure to include an ethnic/occupation/age mix to distribute to students.
- Copies of Ship's Manifest (attached)
- 3 adults to act as steamship agents (do this ahead!)
- "Denial of Passage" sheets for agents to use(attached)
- Red and blue markers (for agents)
- Blackboard/whiteboard for note taking
- 4 attached word documents on suggested identity examples, opinion and identity template, ship's manifest and passage denial

Procedure:

1. Begin lesson by asking students to vote on this question: "In your opinion, should the United States pass laws on who is allowed to enter our country?"
2. Pass out an opinion ballot to each student, have each student put their name at the top and circle "yes" or "no" on the pre-activity line. Collect cards.
3. Show 2 minute QuickTime movie clip http://www.ellisland.com/media/IHIT_1.mov
This clip shows the destination that many immigrants hoped to reach when they left their homes for a better life.
4. Read the following aloud to class and have transparency of it overhead:
 - o "Beginning in 1875, the United States began passing laws restricting who was legally allowed entry into the country. Potential immigrants were asked to complete a manifest (or questionnaire) before being allowed to board steamships for passage to America. Today, each of you will receive an ethnic identity of a person from 1925 who might have wanted to come to America. Using this information, you will each fill out a Ship's Manifest."
5. Hand out ethnic identity cards and a ship's manifest to each student. Go over explanation of how to fill out the manifest. When all the students have completed this task, have them place their cards around their necks and walk around the room getting to know each other's new identity. Students keep the cards on throughout the activity.
6. Set up three desks in front for the processing centers and assign 3 (non-smiling) adult volunteers to act as agents for the steamship lines. Students bring their completed manifests and wait in one of 3 lines for processing.
7. Agents are already familiar with the reasons for denying passage and have their "Denial of Passage" sheets as reference, along with red and blue markers.
8. If a student is denied passage, the agent draws a large red X across the manifest and the student is sent home (corner of room). If a student is offered passage, the agent draws a blue check in the upper right corner and student is sent on board (opposite corner of room).
 - o (To add variation, some students may have "bribe" money beyond the \$25 they need and may offer it to the agent if they feel they may not be accepted. This may or may not change the mind of the agent.)
9. After all students have been processed, count the numbers in each corner and record on the board. Responding to their rejection or acceptance, encourage students to summarize/brainstorm their feelings on the board (joy, relief, anger, sadness, frustration, disbelief, fear, shock, acceptance...) What is the next step for each of them? What if part of the family was denied passage? What if there is no home to go back to anymore? Other questions?
10. Hand back earlier immigration ballot cards and have students vote again on the same question: "In your opinion, should the United States pass laws on who is allowed to enter our country? Answer on the post-activity line. Discuss.
11. In closing, come up with a brief definition of "prejudice" based on this activity.

Assessment

SHIP'S MANIFEST (1925)

Notice to all persons wishing to travel to the United States of America:

Answer all questions truthfully. Persons who are dishonest will be denied passage by this Steamship Line, or deported upon arrival.

Name: _____

Age: _____

Sex: **M** **F**

Trade/Occupation: _____

Nationality: _____

Family: _____

Can you read and write? **YES** **NO**
(If you have a T or J in your last name, circle NO. If not, circle YES.)

Do you have \$25? **YES** **NO**
(If you were born in January or February, circle NO. If not, circle YES.)

Are you a polygamist (have more than one wife)? **YES** **NO**
(If you were born in August, circle YES. If not, circle NO.)

Are you an anarchist (political radical)? **YES** **NO**
(If you are wearing any red today, circle YES. If not, circle NO)

How is your health? **TRACHOMA** **TUBERCULOSIS** **OKAY**
(If you were born in April, you have TRACHOMA, an eye disease. Circle it.
If you were born in August, you have TUBERCULOSIS, a lung disease. Circle it.
Otherwise, you are OKAY. Circle it.)

Denial of passage criteria (for agents to use)

Trade: laborer

Nationality: Chinese, Italian, Polish, Greek, Russian

Family: orphans

Read/write: If over 16, must be able to read and write

OPINION BALLOT

Name: _____

“In your opinion, should the United States pass laws on who is allowed to enter our country?”

Pre-Activity

YES

NO

Post-Activity

YES

NO

O

O

IDENTITY CARD

Name: _____

Age: _____ years _____ months

Sex: M F

Trade/Occupation: _____

Nationality: _____

Family: _____