

Activities

□ Activity 1: The Immigrant Experience

In this activity, you will explore the lives of immigrants. In Option 1, you'll read some letters from immigrants to learn more about the "push" and "pull" factors that led people to leave their home countries and seek new opportunities in America. In Option 2, you'll watch a video about immigrants coming to the United States through Ellis Island in New York. Read both options, and talk to a parent about which one you would like to complete.

Option 1

Immigrants were both encouraged to leave their home countries by "push" factors and drawn to America by "pull" factors that influenced their decisions to relocate. In this option, you'll read some letters from Polish immigrants from the 1890s and explore the push and pull factors that they experienced.

Johnstown Area Heritage Association: Education Center

www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/2455/

Visit the Johnstown Area Heritage Association's Education Center to read letters from Polish immigrants that show how people were pushed by factors at home and pulled by opportunities in America. Please read the following letters, and any additional letters that you have time to explore:

- Johann Bonkowski to his family in Poland
- August Gar to his parents in Poland
- M. Goodstein to his aunt in Poland
- Kazimiz Graboski to his parents regarding his sister's trip to America
- Julian Kszeszowski to a friend on work in America
- Joseph and Josephine Lipinski to her sister and brother-in-law

As you read, look for factors that may have been pushing immigrants away from their home country and factors that may have drawn them to America. On the activity page, write down the evidence of push and pull factors that you find.

Option 2

Watch the video at the following web link and take notes as you watch, pausing the video as needed. You should record 8-10 facts and statistics related to immigrants arriving at Ellis Island. Afterward, share your notes with a parent.

Immigrants at Ellis Island

www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/9286/

Activities

Activity 1: The Immigrant Experience

In the two options for this activity, your child will explore the lives of immigrants. In Option 1, he will read letters from immigrants and compare push and pull factors. In Option 2, he will watch a video about immigrants' experiences coming to the United States through Ellis Island. Talk to your child about which option he should complete.

Option 1

In this option, your child will read letters from immigrants to the United States and identify push and pull factors for immigration on the activity page.

Your child may identify a variety of factors on the activity page. In terms of push factors, some letter writers mention theft in their home countries, poverty, small town gossip, and the restrictions on young people.

In terms of pull factors, people mention the freedom of city life, the ability to earn a good living quickly, and the quality of life in America.

Optional Extension

www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/2456/

These letters from pre-Civil War Irish immigrants might make an interesting contrast if your child is interested in comparing immigration experiences in different eras or between immigrants from different parts of Europe.

Option 2

In this option, your child will watch a video about immigrants arriving to Ellis Island and then record 8-10 facts and statistics he learned from the video. He could have recorded statistics related to when Ellis Island opened and closed, the number of people who came through the facility, or the percentage of Americans descended from immigrants who went through Ellis Island. He may have also noted information about how the passengers in ships' first and second class cabins were treated differently than those in steerage, the processing steps that immigrants went through, and the challenges some immigrants faced due to medical or legal inspections.