Lesson 1  Immigration

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
Why do people migrate?
How is urban life different from rural life?

Reading HELPDESK

Content Vocabulary
nativism  hostility toward immigrants by native-born people

Academic Vocabulary
immigrant  one who enters and becomes established in a country other than that of his or her original nationality
ethnic  relating to large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background
TAKING NOTES: Categorizing

ACTIVITY Complete the graphic organizer below by filling in the reasons people left their homelands to immigrate to the United States.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Reasons for Immigrating to United States</th>
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<td>Push Factors</td>
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IT MATTERS BECAUSE...
In the late nineteenth century, a major wave of immigration began. Most immigrants settled in cities, where distinctive ethnic neighborhoods emerged. Some Americans, however, feared that the new immigrants would not adapt to American culture or might be harmful to American society.

Europeans Flood Into America

GUIDING QUESTION How did European immigrants of the late 1800s change American society?

Between 1865 and 1914, nearly 25 million Europeans immigrated to the United States. During the “old” immigration before 1890, most immigrants came from northern and western Europe. By the late 1890s, more than half of all immigrants in the United States were from eastern and southern Europe, including Italy, Greece, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Serbia. This period of immigration is known as “new” immigration.

Europeans immigrated to the United States for many reasons. Many came because U.S. industries had plenty of jobs available. Others had special skills to offer. For example, some Greeks came to Florida to dive for sponges. These immigrants helped create a large Greek community at Tarpon Springs. Europe’s industrial cities, however, also offered plenty of jobs. So economic reasons are not the only ones that tell why people migrated. Many immigrants came to find better jobs that they hoped would let them escape poverty and the restrictions of social class in Europe. Some immigrants moved to avoid forced military service. This service could last for many years in some nations. In places such as Italy, high food prices encouraged people to leave. In Poland and Russia, high populations pushed people to move away. Other immigrants tried to escape religious persecution. This was especially true of Jews living in Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Many of the new immigrants did not have the money to buy land. Instead they settled in American cities and worked mostly in unskilled jobs.
The Atlantic Voyage
The voyage to the United States was often very difficult. Most immigrants booked passage in steerage, the cheapest place to stay on a steamship. Edward Steiner was an Iowa clergyman who posed as an immigrant in order to write a book on immigration. He described steerage as crowded and smelly. He said that the meals did not taste very good, but people still crowded in to get food.

Ellis Island
Most immigrants passed through Ellis Island. This was a tiny island in New York Harbor. A medical examiner who worked there later described how immigrants from different places all came very quickly through the island. About 12 million immigrants passed through Ellis Island between 1892 and 1954.

Diverse Cities
By the 1890s, immigrants made up a large percentage of the population of major cities. New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Detroit all had many immigrants. Immigrants lived in neighborhoods that were often separated into ethnic groups. These neighborhoods included “Little Italy” or the Jewish “Lower East Side” in New York City. There, immigrants spoke their native languages and re-created the churches, synagogues, clubs, and newspapers of their homelands. The arrival of this new wave of immigrants changed the face and size of U.S. cities and its workforce.

PROGRESS CHECK
Explaining How did Edward Steiner describe the immigrant experience of traveling to the United States?

Asian Immigration
GUIDING QUESTION How were the experiences of Asian immigrants different from those of European immigrants?

In the mid-1800s, China had a growing population. It also had a great deal of unemployment, poverty, and starvation. In 1850 the Taiping Rebellion caused such suffering that thousands of Chinese left for the United States. In the early 1860s, Chinese workers emigrated in larger numbers to work on the Central Pacific Railroad. Chinese immigrants settled mainly in western cities. They worked as laborers, servants, skilled tradespeople, or merchants. Because native-born Americans discriminated against them, some Chinese opened their own businesses.

Japanese also began migrating to the United States. Although some came earlier, the number of Japanese immigrants rose greatly between 1900 and 1910. As Japan industrialized, economic problems caused many Japanese to leave their homeland. They left to find new economic opportunities.
Until 1910, Asian immigrants arriving in San Francisco first stopped at a two-story shed at the wharf. In January 1910, California opened a barracks on Angel Island for Asian immigrants. Most Asian immigrants were young men in their teens or twenties. Many had to wait for months for the result of their immigration hearings.

**PROGRESS CHECK**

**Making Generalizations** How did the experiences of immigrating to the United States compare for Chinese and Europeans?

**Nativism Resurges**

**GUIDING QUESTION** Why did nativists oppose immigration?

Eventually, immigration led to increased feelings of **nativism** for many Americans. Nativism is an extreme dislike of immigrants by native-born people. It had surfaced during a wave of Irish immigration in the 1840s and 1850s. By the late 1800s it was focused mainly on Asians, Jews, and eastern Europeans.

Nativists opposed immigration for many reasons. Some feared that the immigration of Catholics from countries such as Ireland, Italy, and Poland would overrun the mostly Protestant United States. Many labor unions argued that immigrants hurt U.S. workers because immigrants would work for low wages. Immigrants would also accept jobs as strikebreakers, or people who work in place of those who are on strike.

**Backlash Against Catholics**

Nativism led to the creation of an anti-Catholic group called the American Protective Association, begun by Henry Bowers in 1887. Its members promised not to hire or vote for Irish Catholics. Later, this included all Catholic immigrants. These immigrants were usually unable to read or write, so they worked at the lowest-paying jobs. They suffered greatly from anti-Catholic discrimination.

**Restrictions on Asian Immigration**

Anti-Chinese feelings sometimes led to racial violence in the West. In the 1870s, an Irish immigrant named Denis Kearney organized the Workingman’s Party of California. Its purpose was to fight Chinese immigration. The party won seats in California’s state government. There, the party tried to stop Chinese immigration.

In 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act. The law stopped Chinese immigration for 10 years and prevented the Chinese already in the country from becoming citizens. The Chinese in the United States organized letter-writing campaigns, but their efforts failed. Congress made the law permanent in 1902. However, it was repealed in 1943.

In October 1906, the San Francisco Board of Education ordered Chinese, Japanese, and Korean children to attend the racially segregated “Oriental School.” The order caused international tension. Japan was upset about the rude treatment of its people.
In response, Theodore Roosevelt proposed a limit on Japanese immigration. He agreed to do this if the school board would take back its segregation order. Roosevelt negotiated an agreement with Japan. Then the San Francisco school board took back its segregation order. This deal became known as the “Gentlemen’s Agreement.” This was because it was not an official treaty. Instead, it depended on the leaders of both countries to uphold the agreement.

PROGRESS CHECK
Explaining How did President Roosevelt respond to Japan’s protests about the treatment of Japanese students?

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