

United States Immigration, 1890-1920

Use this activity packet to learn about American immigrants in the 1900s. Answer questions and color the pictures throughout the packet.



Between 1890 and 1920, 20 million immigrants moved to the United States. Immigrants came to America looking for better lives for their families.

Imagine your family is moving to a new country. Are you excited? Scared? It is not easy to leave your old life.

What are five things you would bring if you and your family were moving?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Some immigrants were able to realize their dreams of a better life. But many faced **discrimination**. It was hard to find jobs and homes for many immigrants.



These are historical photos of American immigrants. They are on display at The Mob Museum. Immigrants came to the United States on ships that would dock at Ellis Island in New York City or Angel Island in San Francisco, California. What do you notice about the people in these pictures? Do they look scared? Excited? Happy? Nervous?



*It was hard for immigrants to find good jobs. Some immigrants turned to a life of crime. Some ran lotteries or casinos. Others sold **imported** products like artichokes or tomatoes at **inflated** prices.*

Young children (as young as seven or eight) worked. They helped to earn money for their families. Some immigrant children went to school, but many worked in factories. There they made clothing or paper products.

*Some boys became **newsies**. Newsies sold newspapers on street corners in big cities. They fought each other for the best corner, so they could sell more papers.*

How do you help your family?
Do you do chores or other work to pitch in?



*Three young boys rest outside of their **tenement**. Photo taken in 1890 by Jacob Riis.*



Fortunately, some immigrants were able to find jobs. Some even became police officers. Joseph Petrosino was born in Italy and moved to New York as a child. There he lived with his grandfather.

In 1883, he became the first Italian-American police officer in the

New York Police Department. Police work was different then — there were no police cars or computers!

Push and Pull Factors

There were many reasons why people immigrated to the United States. These reasons are called **push and pull factors**.

Push factors are reasons immigrants were pushed out of the country they lived in. These include starvation, war, and **religious persecution**.

Pull factors are the things that drew them to the United States. These included the opportunity for better jobs, more food, and religious freedom.

Definitions

Discrimination

Treating a person or a group unfairly. Treating them differently based on their race, gender, or religion.

Immigrant

A person who moves to a different country.

Import

A product that is brought into a country to be sold.

Inflate

To increase something until it is not normal, too high.

Newsie

A young boy who sold newspapers on the street corner.

Religious persecution

Being discriminated against, hurt, or punished because of your religious beliefs.

Tenement

An apartment that is not well cared for. Many tenements did not have windows, bathrooms, or heat.

Illustrations by Chase Glogower

THE MOB MUSEUM

National Museum of Organized Crime & Law Enforcement®