

# My Ancestor's Trip to America

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## Standards

- IL.1.C.3c > Compare, contrast and evaluate ideas and information from various sources and genres.
- IL.2.B.2a > Respond to literary material by making inferences, drawing conclusions and comparing it to their own experience, prior knowledge and other texts.
- IL.5.B.4a > Choose and evaluate primary and secondary sources (print and nonprint) for a variety of purposes.
- IL-PTS.3 STANDARD: Diversity: The competent teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.
- IL-PTS.3.I P: TCT uses information about students' families, cultures, and communities as a basis for connecting instruction to students' experiences.
- IL-PTS.3.J P: TCT uses cultural diversity and individual student experiences to enrich instruction.
- IRA.2.13 ...illustrate the importance of giving learners opportunities in all aspects of literacy (e.g., as readers, writers, thinkers, reactors, or responders)
- IRA.5.5 ...provide opportunities for creative and personal responses to literature, including storytelling

## Resources

### Quilted landscape

Author: Strom, Yale. Published: New York : Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, c1996. 80 p. : Summary: Twenty-six young people of

different ages and nationalities describe their experience of leaving their countries and immigrating to the United States. ISBN: 0689800746

### **Dreaming of America : an Ellis Island story**

by Eve Bunting ; illustrated by Ben Stahl. Published: Mahwah, NJ : Troll/BridgeWater Books, c2000. 32 p. Summary: Annie Moore cares for her two younger brothers on board the ship sailing from Ireland to America where she becomes the first immigrant processed through Ellis Island, January 1, 1892, her fifteenth birthday. ISBN: 0816765200

### **New Americans**

### **immigrant interviews**

### **other information**

## **Overview and Rationale**

Students will read and investigate what it was like for young people to leave their homelands to come to the United States. Students will also learn more about their own backgrounds through the investigation of immigrants to the United States. Students will develop reading and writing standards during their investigation of their heritage, as well as learn about the Library of Congress website and how to research primary sources through its use. By reading a story and incorporating students' own ancestral background, the lesson will interest them in learning more about their ancestors' travels to America.

It is important for students to develop a sense of where their ancestors come from so they can then better understand and appreciate other cultures. Through this lesson, students will learn about various experiences of immigrants.

Upon completion of this lesson, students will know how to access the Library of Congress website to research sources. Students will be able to discuss the differences between fictional accounts and primary sources. Students will also compose a journal chronicling their ancestors trip to America, compose a photo album of items that may have been unknown to immigrants, or act out the long journey to America and the first days in America as experienced by immigrants from their ancestors native land.

Students through their presentations will share the experiences of various immigrants.

## **Materials**

The class will use the following items:

- computers
- Quilted Landscape
- Dreaming of America : an Ellis Island story

Students will need the following items:

- pencils
- paper
- possibly video camera
- possibly digital camera

## **Procedure**

Anticipatory Set: the classroom will have various pictures of immigrants who have made the journey to the United States. The day before the lesson is set to begin, the teacher will ask the students to find out from relatives what country their ancestors immigrated from to America. The day of the lesson, the teacher will begin the lesson by asking students what they found out about their ancestors. The teacher will ask what the longest trip is the students have ever taken and discuss as a class what that experience was like for them. The class will also discuss what the word immigrant means to the class not only the actual meaning but the feelings the class has when hearing the word.

1. To begin the lesson, the teacher will introduce the book, Dreaming of America : an Ellis Island Story to the class. First, they will look through the pictures to determine if they can predict where the main character is from before immigrating to America. The teacher will then read the story to the class.
2. Upon completion of reading the story the class will discuss what feelings the character went through on the journey as well as the experiences on the journey. The teacher will revisit what the students said about their longest journey and discuss with the students how it might have compared to their journey and how they would have felt coming to a strange new country.

3. The teacher will then introduce the concept of primary sources by reading two or three passages from the book Quilted Landscape . The class will then discuss the differences between fiction and primary sources.
4. The class will then get into groups of three or four based on their ancestors native land and move to the computer center.
5. The Library of Congress website will then be introduced as another source of primary sources. The students will log into [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov) and as a class will navigate a view of the sections found on the website to access sources dealing with immigration.
6. The groups will then be instructed to research primary sources involving interviews and information about immigrants from their ancestors homeland and their travels to the United States. Each person will be required to access at least two primary sources.
7. Students then must compare and contrast the story read with the experiences found in their primary sources in a written assignment as well as complete one of the following options:
  - individually write a journal chronicling their journey as an immigrant to America and their first experiences once in America
  - individually create a photo album of sorts using the computer showing things found in America that might be strange to immigrants seeing them for the first time
    - as a group act out the trip to America and the first experiences their ancestors may have had in America.
8. Students will then present their assignments to the class.
9. Students as a class will then discuss the differences and similarities of the immigrants researched. The class will also discuss their experience researching primary sources using the LOC website.

Adaptations/enrichments for students with special needs:

- students may dictate their journal into a tape recorder before actually writing it out
- students may use computers instead of writing out assignments by hand
- students may use PowerPoint to present their photo album or comparison of the two types of sources
- students may also interview immigrants they know and incorporate their interviews in their presentations
- students may take digital pictures to use in their photo album
- students may make a video instead of a computerized photo album

Students then must compare and contrast the story read with the experiences found in their primary sources in a written assignment as well as complete one of the following options:

- individually write a journal chronicling their journey as an immigrant to America and their first experiences once in America
- individually create a photo album of sorts using the computer showing things found in America that might be strange to immigrants seeing them for the first time
- as a group act out the trip to America and the first experiences their ancestors may have had in America.

Students will then present their assignments to the class.

Students as a class will then discuss the differences and similarities of the immigrants researched.

The class will also discuss their experience researching primary sources using the LOC website.