

Immigrant Experience Project

In this project, you will be investigating the experiences of immigrants coming to America during the four decades surrounding 1900. The first part of the project will involve reading your text to get an idea of what the stages of the immigrant experience were:

Stage. The immigrant experience can be broken down into the following stages (See stages of the immigrant experience template):

1. The trip (from departure to the experience on board ship) - p. 256
2. Arrival (what happened when the immigrant first arrived - what official procedures the immigrants had to go through) - 256-7
3. Living conditions 264-265
4. Working conditions 244-5
5. Becoming an American/Maintaining an ethnic identity (and the tension between the two) 257-258, 263
6. The experience of prejudice 258-9

Investigation

This step will involve investigating a series of exhibits that depict various aspects of the immigrant experience, from leaving one's native country, to arrival, to life as a new American.

As you examine each photograph, please complete the Immigrant Immigrant Experience Record for that photo as described below:

- Indicate which stage of the immigrant experience each picture describes on your immigrant experience template. Exhibits with two pictures should be considered in separate entries.
- What can be learned from the caption. This is fairly straightforward. What does the caption tell you about the immigrant experience? Please put this in your own words. There are some photos with no caption. This space will be blank for these photos.
- What can be learned from the exhibit itself? In this section, you are being asked to look at the photo through the eyes of a historian. What does the photo suggest about the immediate experience of the people involved? What does it suggest about their daily lives? What does it suggest about their dreams and aspirations? What does it suggest about their beliefs and fears? Look carefully at what the photo reveals and use your historical imagination. This is the most important part of the template for completing the project.
- How and to what extent does this exhibit represent the three responses to diversity (exclusion, assimilation, pluralism) we discussed in section 1? This will be more obvious in some exhibits than others, so don't worry if there are some exhibits that you feel don't provide enough information to answer this question. For those that do, explain the evidence that the exhibit provides that suggests the response you have observed.

When the investigation is complete, please complete the following:

Write a diary in which you imagine that you are an immigrant in America at the turn of the 20th century. Your diary entries should be inspired by the exhibits and what you know about the life of immigrants from reading and discussions in class. Each entry must be directly inspired by one or more of the pictures. Your entries should explain what is going on and how you feel about it. Please remember to describe both what happened to you in this situation, how it made you feel (scared, angry, sad, happy etc.) and why it made you feel that way. Your diary must have **at least** four entries (you can do more), and each entry must be at least 100 words in length. Please indicate the sources that inspired each experience parenthetically (each experience may well be inspired by more than one source). Please be as historically creative as you can (but avoid being silly). Without using the words exclusion, assimilation and pluralism, your diary should give the reader an idea of which of these responses to diversity your immigrant believes was the most influential on their experience in America.

Your immigrant diary will be graded based upon the following criteria:

- How effectively have you used the available evidence?
- How well have you engaged your historical imagination (as informed by the photos and what you have learned in class and from the text book) to empathize with the experiences of immigrants at this time?
- How thorough and detailed is each of your entries?
- How effectively did your journal reflect your immigrant's experience of one of the three responses to diversity discussed in class? (Again, your immigrant would not have used these terms, but a historian reading your immigrant's diary should be able to tell which responses was the most significant to the immigrant's overall experience.)
- How seriously did you take this assignment? Neatness, presentation and creativity will all factor into this.

The diary is not considered formal writing and will not be graded based on mechanics or grammar. The diary is worth 100 points and the completed (20 entries) Immigrant Experience Record 25 points. Extra credit will possibly be awarded to students who go above and beyond the requirements of the assignment.

The project is due on: _____

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Description of the Stages of the Immigrant Experience

Using the text, briefly describe each of the six stages of the immigrant experience (you may use bullets if you wish). Be prepared to share your findings with the class.

Stage	Description
1. The trip (from departure to the experience on board ship) - p. 256	
2. Arrival (what happened when the immigrant first arrived - what official procedures the immigrants had to go through) - 256-7	
3. Living conditions 264-265	
4. Working conditions 244-5	
5. Becoming an American/ Maintaining an ethnic identity (and the tension between the two) 257-258, 263	
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