

Module 6: A Nation Grows - 1877 to the 1900s
Topic 2 Content: Immigration to the United States Notes

Introduction



Immigration to the United States

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Instructions



Immigration occurred in waves during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. Click ***Prior to 1871*** to begin your exploration of immigration to the United States.

Now that you have learned about immigration during the late Nineteenth Century, click ***1871 to 1921*** to explore immigration to the United States during the early Twentieth Century.

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Germany

Germany

German Farmers

German Population Density, 1872

Prior to 1871, Germans immigrated to America in search of land and religious freedom. Many Germans became skilled entrepreneurs and brewers, or worked in textile and steel mills.

Immigrants from Germany began entering the country prior to 1871. Germans wanted to take advantage of land and religious freedom because in Germany, a shortage of land existed, and religious and political oppression ensued. Many Germans resided in American cities and became skilled entrepreneurs and brewers, or worked in the textile and steel mills.

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Great Britain



Great Britain

English leaving Liverpool, 1902

Immigration to the United States from Great Britain increased in 1851. British immigrants were not attracted to any particular destination or occupation.

British immigration to the United States significantly increased in 1851, with the peak of immigrants coming in 1880. The influx of English immigration ceased around 1893. British immigrants were not attracted to any particular destination or any particular occupation. Rather, most people immigrated because of deteriorating conditions and a slowing industry in Great Britain.

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Ireland



Ireland

Irish in Kansas City, 1909



Irish immigration greatly increased in the 1820s, with the largest wave coming between 1820 and 1860. During this time, Irish immigrants escaped from the Great Irish Famine by traveling to America.

Irish immigration greatly increased in the 1820s and did not slow until the 1940s. Irish immigrants favored large cities because they could create their own ethnic communities. The Irish came to America to fill labor positions in the textile factories or steel mills. The largest wave of immigration occurred from 1820 until 1860. During this time, the Great Irish Famine occurred in Ireland, which resulted in starvation and disease due to the failure of potato crops.

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Scandinavian



Scandinavia

A Scandinavian Homesteader, 1898



In the 1840s, there was a wave of economic migration from the countries making up Scandinavia. The majority of the Scandinavian immigrants farmed, logged, or worked in mines.

Menu

In the 1840s, a wave of Scandinavian immigrants immigrated to the United States for religious freedom and to pursue economic opportunities. Scandinavians of Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland saw the United States as the land of liberty. Once in the United States, the majority of Scandinavian immigrants farmed, logged, or worked in mines. Scandinavians in the larger cities worked in textile factories and steel mills.

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Italy



Italy

Italian Laborers in New York, 1910

The peak of Italian immigration occurred between 1890 and 1917. Most Italians who came to America became laborers in textile and steel factories. The Italians lived in ethnic neighborhoods and often brought their money back to Italy.

From 1890 until 1917, more than four million Italians migrated to America. Italians left Italy due to political and social unrest, and a failing economy. Most Italians who traveled to the United States became laborers in larger cities that had textile and steel factories. The immigrants would reside in ethnic neighborhoods known as "Little Italy." Many Italians would travel back to Italy using the money they earned in America, and would help their families who had stayed in their native country. Immigrants who repeatedly made trips to their homeland earned the nickname "birds of passage."

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Greece

Greece

Greeks boarding passenger ships that carried them to American-bound steamships, 1910

Greek immigration to the United States peaked in the 1890s. Seeking economic opportunity, Greeks migrated to America to work as laborers.

Greek immigration to the United States peaked in the 1890s. Like the Italians, many Greek immigrants were “birds of passage.” Most Greek immigration occurred for economic purposes.

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Poland



Poland

Polish Immigrant Family

Polish immigration occurred after 1871 and continued until 1914. Escaping poverty and starvation, the Polish worked in industry, farmed, and in coal mines.

Polish immigrants settled in cities and became drawn to industry jobs. The largest wave of Polish immigration occurred after 1871, and continued until 1914. Many Polish immigrants wanted to escape poverty and starvation in Poland. In America, they worked in industry or coal mines, or farmed.

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Russia

Russia

Russian Bankers, 1916

Russian Housing, 1910

From 1881 until 1910, Russians immigrated to America to avoid famine, political unrest, and religious oppression. Russians found work as entrepreneurs and in the coal mines.

With Russia on the verge of overpopulation, widespread famine, political unrest, and religious oppression, many Russians immigrated to America at the end of the Nineteenth Century. Starting in 1881, Russian immigrants entered the United States at a rate of 10,000 per year. The rate of immigration did not slow until 1910. In America, many Russians lived in large cities and became entrepreneurs. Poor Russian immigrants found work in eastern coal mines.

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Hungary and Yugoslavia

Hungary and Yugoslavia

Garment makers, 1915

Hungarian and Yugoslavian immigrants migrated to America around the end of the Nineteenth Century. Many of the Hungarian and Yugoslavian immigrants worked in the mining industry. In larger cities, these immigrants worked in textile mills.

Around the end of the Nineteenth Century, about 1.7 million Hungarian and Yugoslavian citizens immigrated to America in search of economic opportunities. The majority of the immigrants represented the poorest segment of the population. Many worked in the mining industry.

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China and Japan

China and Japan

Chinese Laborers, 1881

In the early Nineteenth Century, Chinese immigrants came to America to help build the Transcontinental Railroad. From 1868 until 1911, Japanese immigrants came to America in search of economic opportunity.

Menu

Early in the Nineteenth Century, many Chinese people immigrated to America to work on the Transcontinental Railroad. Other Chinese immigrants worked in mines. The Chinese were discriminated against at every level of society.

The main wave of Japanese immigration occurred from 1868 until 1911, with more than 400,000 Japanese citizens migrating to America. Japanese migrated to America to avoid rapid urbanization and agricultural decline in Japan. Most Japanese immigrants searched for better economic opportunity.