

Finding Reliable Information in the 21st Century: Immigration Research

Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- understand different types of sources of information
- identify bias and reliability
- find a variety of reliable information
- develop and support research including appropriate citations
- appreciate historical patterns and connections between curriculum and current events
- actively participate in a democratic system as informed citizens

Directions:

- 1) In each box on your research chart, choose ONE immigrant group.
- 2) Locate at least one print source per group to answer the research questions.
- 3) For the third box, pick any group that you have not already chosen. Write the name of that group in the provided space and use the library print sources.
- 4) For the last box, labeled "Modern," you may choose any immigrant group post 1950. Write the name of that group in the provided space. Locate reliable print or digital sources to answer the questions for your modern group.
- 5) Use the Bibliography page to cite all of your sources in correct Turabian format.
- 6) At the completion of your research, answer the synthesis questions following your research chart and complete the semantic map.
- 7) Compose letter to congressional representative.

Directions: Fill in the bibliographic information for each source you use in the boxes below in correct Turabian format.

BIBLIOGRPAHY

JEWISH or ITALIAN source(s)

CHINESE or JAPANESE source(s)

GROUP OF YOUR CHOICE source(s)

MODERN (post 1950) source(s)

Directions: Pick four immigrant groups to research. Circle your choices on this page and fill them in on the next page. Then fill in 3-5 bullet points of information per box for each group. Additionally, you should have one primary source quote for each immigrant group. This quote from an immigrant can be categorized into any of the boxes but it must be highlighted before you submit your work.

	What push factors contributed to their decision to leave their home country?	Where did they settle? Why did they choose that area?	What was their experience in America? What hardships did they face?
Jewish OR Italian			
Chinese OR Japanese			

	What push factors contributed to their decision to leave their home country?	Where did they settle? Why did they choose that area?	What was their experience in America? What hardships did they face?
<p>YOUR CHOICE</p> <p>(you choose any group not done already from our library books and fill-in below)</p> <hr/>			
<p>MODERN</p> <p>(you choose any post-1950 immigration group and fill-in below)</p> <hr/>			

Synthesis Questions

Synthesis means looking at the parts of something and then combining them together to form a new whole. Synthesizing information can help you to recognize the “big idea” of a large amount of information. Answer the questions below using your research and knowledge of immigration.

- 1.) What similarities can you find with historical U.S. immigration policies we have learned about, and those you came across in your research of a modern immigrant group? What differences?

- 2.) Can you identify any historical patterns when looking at where immigrants have settled over time?

- 3.) Are push and pull factors the same today as they were in the late 1800s and early 1900s?

SEMANTIC MAP

A semantic map is a visual that helps to identify important ideas, people, concepts, vocab, etc. and how these things can connect to each other. Create your own semantic map below using your research and knowledge of immigration.

DONE?

Use the checklist below to be sure you have completed all portions of this assignment.

CHECKLIST

- Selected immigrant groups are circled or filled in on research chart (four)
- Bibliography for all sources used for each group is completed in correct Turabian format
- Reliable sources used for modern immigrant group (see teacher if unsure)
- 3-5 bullet points of research per box completed
- One primary source quote that is highlighted per group
- Synthesis questions answered
- Semantic map drawn

Immigration Research: Writing Your Congressman!

One of the many benefits of our type of government is that it allows citizens to participate. Even though you are not yet able to vote, you are not powerless! You can always contact your local, state, or federal representatives with a question, concern, or opinion that you may have. Open, responsive, democratic government was, and continues to be, one of the pull factors concerning immigration.

Now that you have completed your research on the important topic of immigration, you are going to write a letter to your congressman. Although you will have some freedom in what you write, you must follow the guidelines below. This assignment will be graded and a copy of your letter will be mailed to the congressman.

Guidelines:

First Paragraph

- Summarize what you have learned about immigration (push factors, pull factors, hardships, etc.)
- Including interesting facts/statistics that you may have found in your research
- You may include brief personal family stories of immigration

Second Paragraph

- Identify connections that can be made between historical and modern immigrant groups (see your synthesis questions)
- Is there anything that you have learned about immigration that would be relevant or important for a congressman to know?
- You may include your personal thoughts/opinions

- **Typed, 12 point font, single spaced**
- **Business letter format (see reverse side of this sheet)**
- **A polite, respectful tone**
- **No slang, contractions or abbreviations**
- **Proofread, spell and grammar check before submission**

Pelham Middle School
28 Franklin Place
Pelham, NY 10803

Date (month day, year)

Congressman Elliot L. Engel
6 Gramatan Avenue, Suite 205
Mount Vernon, NY 10550

Dear Congressman Engel:

Your first paragraph _____

_____.

Your second paragraph _____

_____.

Thank you very much for reading my thoughts about immigration.

Sincerely,

Your first and last name
Eighth Grade Student
Pelham Middle School

Name _____

Letter Organizer

Directions: Below is graphic organizer to help you construct your letter to the congressman. Once you've completed the organizer, begin writing. Use what you have written but be sure to include transitions and other connectors to make it read like a letter.

Dear Congressman Engel:

First Paragraph	
In 2-3 sentences introduce yourself and in general what you have been learning in class.	My name is... _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Summarize what you have learned about immigration (push factors, pull factors, hardships, etc.) Be specific!	In my research _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
You may include brief personal family stories of immigration	_____ _____ _____

Second Paragraph	
<p>Identify connections that can be made between historical and modern immigrant groups (see your synthesis questions)</p>	<p>Through my research, I have been able to see connections....</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Is there anything that you have learned about immigration that would be relevant or important for a congressman to know?</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>You may include your personal thoughts/opinions if you would like.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Sincerely,

Pelham Middle School
28 Franklin Place
Pelham, NY 10803

September 30th 2015

Congressman Elliot L. Engel
6 Gramatan Avenue, Suite 205
Mount Vernon, NY 10550

Dear Congressman Engel:

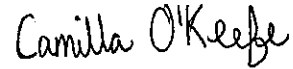
I am aware that you are a very busy man and may not have time to read my letter. So far in 8th grade Honors Social Studies, we have been learning about immigration. We have been learning why they came to America, where they settled, and how they were treated. We were able to choose different groups of immigrants, and we then had to research them. Many immigrant groups left their countries because many bad things were happening. In China, there was poverty and famine because of many civil wars. In Vietnam, there was a lot of poverty because of many war. Many Chinese dreamed about getting rich. Italians left because of famine, poverty, and wars. I found many interesting, yet horrible facts about different groups of immigrants. I found out that Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. This was the first time banned a certain group of immigrants just because of their ethnicity, this was racial discrimination, and the United States government, sadly, supported this. It is also sad to see how some other immigrant groups were treated. My great-great grandparents came from a small town in Italy, and decided to come to America, and move to Massachusetts. I found out that Italians would be looked down on in school just because they are Italian. They would also be called insulting words like "Wop" or "dago". I am also part Irish, and I found out that Irish people would be treated badly as well. When I was doing my research, I realized there was a connection between historical and modern immigration. Most of the modern and historical immigrants were leaving their country because of poverty, and wars. For example, the Chinese and Vietnamese left because of wars, like the Fall of Saigon in Vietnam.

There are many similarities between different immigrant groups. Many immigrants left because they were very poor. Some would dream to just have a regular job, and some to become fabulously wealthy. In a diary excerpt from a boy from China, it says, "a cousin...told us strange tales of men becoming...rich overnight by finding gold in riverbeds." This little boy was talking about his cousin in America. Many Chinese fled to America in hopes of success and wealth. Italians would leave because of wars, poverty, famine, and in search of new jobs. Just like Italians, Irish would flee because of poverty, jobs, and mostly because of famine. In the 1840's, there was a famine, known as the Irish Potato Famine, where some sort of bacteria would infect the potatoes. This would be very hard to eat for peasants, and it would be very hard to sell them. This left many people in a famine, and poverty, because with no potatoes to eat or sell, they would not be able to eat and sell potatoes. With no potatoes to sell, they could not afford to buy any other food. In Vietnam, there was also a lot of poverty and wars. I think that you should know that our Congress passed an act called the Chinese Exclusion Act. This act did not allow any Chinese people to enter our country just because they were Chinese. It is very upsetting how our government would ban people from our country just because of their ethnicity. It is very sad, because for a while, our government supported

banning people who have no choice but to flee because of horrid wars and their horrible communist government. Our Congress sadly discriminated Chinese, and many of the Chinese who were fleeing their country did nothing wrong to our government. Italians would also be discriminated, but it would be American citizens who would discriminate them. An Italian boy who moved to America said he "didn't like to go to the grocer...chokes me up with greeting 'Hellow, you little dago!" A poor little boy was insulted by adults, and then be called horrible names. This really shows us that we should not judge anyone, because we do not know their situation. It was very sad to find all of these facts, and it made me feel empathy for my ancestors who came from Italy and Ireland. Thank you for taking the time away from your busy life to read my letter.

Thank you very much for reading my thoughts about immigration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Camilla O'Keefe".

Camilla O'Keefe
8th Grade Student
Pelham Middle School

Pelham Middle School
28 Franklin Place
Pelham, NY 10803

September 30, 2015

Congressman Elliot L. Engel
6 Gramatan Avenue, Suite 205
Mount Vernon, NY 10550

Dear Congressman Engel:

In school, our social studies class has been learning about immigration from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. We have discussed the harsh conditions that caused people to leave their homes to come to America, but also the attraction of a democratic government, freedom of religion and job opportunities that attracted people to come here. When arriving in America, immigrants faced a rough time at Ellis Island, Angel Island or any immigration, center getting inspected and tested before let into our country. But, for all the shocking and horrible stories you hear did you know that the immigration rate in our country was 98%? That just goes to show that the United States must have wanted immigrants to come here. I know that I am here today because members of my family left Russia to avoid pogroms. Which segues into my next point, that people today are still trying to leave their home countries to avoid persecution and are trying to come here.

I am aware that under whatever new president is elected, you are probably going to have to vote on at least one, maybe more immigration bills. I believe that all people should be accepted into this country but should come in, in a safe, legal way. I believe that the United States as a whole should be accepting more than 10,000 syrian refugees but that these refugees should be carefully background checked and then made sure that they have basic skills in order for them to be able to get a job instead of living off of government welfare. Since our country is supposed to be the most free and excepting country 10,000 refugees isn't enough. As for the immigration crisis south of the border, I think that illegal immigrants that have either committed a crime or do not have any family with them or any job should be deported but given an opportunity to come back legally. Illegal immigrants that have had kids here should be allowed to stay here with their kids but should be made to have to become legal citizens and acquire basic skills in order to get a job.

Thank you very much for reading my thoughts about immigration.

Sincerely,

Daniel Tahbaz
Eighth Grade Student
Pelham Middle School

28 Franklin Place
Pelham, NY 1803

Date 10/1/15

Congressman Elliot L. Engel
6 Gramatan Avenue, Suite 205
Mount Vernon, NY 10550

Dear Congressman Engel:

These past few weeks I have learned many things about immigration and I am writing to you to share some of what I have learned and some of my thoughts on the subject. I have learned about push and pull factors. Push factors are reasons why so many immigrants in countries all over the world have left their homelands and pull factors are the reasons why they have chosen to move to the United States. I have also learned about the many hardships immigrants faced upon arriving in the U.S, such as discrimination and prejudice. Some examples of these push factors were wars, which caused people to flee their countries to escape, lack of opportunity and jobs, oppressive or corrupt governments, religious persecution, famine and starvation, disease, overpopulation (which limited opportunity) and racial or ethnic tensions. For example, Italian peasant farmers were forced to leave home because there was no work and tremendous poverty, many Irish left to escape starvation due to the Potato Famine, Jews from Europe left to escape religious persecution like the pogroms that took place in Russia, the Japanese left their homes for job opportunities and better wages, the Germans left for freedom from the government and opportunity beyond a life on the farm and many of these same push factors existed into the modern era and continue up to and including today. Today, Mexicans are driven out of their homeland by extreme poverty and leave in search of opportunities for themselves and their children. Many Cubans fled Cuba in the recent past to escape the oppressive government of Fidel Castro. Doves of Koreans left their homeland beginning in the 1950's because of the Korean War and in search of business opportunities and people of the Jewish faith were forced out of Europe in the 20th Century due to the Holocaust. So why did these immigrant groups choose to come to America? They did so because America was and is a land of freedom, a land of economic opportunity and a land of religious and political tolerance. For example, the Italians chose the U.S. for jobs created by the industrialization of the American cities. Religious tolerance was a pull factor for groups like the Russian Jews and work on the farms was a pull for groups such as the Mexicans. Many of these pull factors remain the same today. I have also learned about the hardships many immigrant groups faced after arriving in America. For example, after making the long journey to Ellis Island, European Immigrants were processed, examined medically and questioned to determine if they would be allowed into the County; many were not. Then after settling in East and Midwest in industrialized cities such as

N.Y., Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago (where the demand for factory workers was high) many were met with prejudice and hate and were pressured to assimilate in order to get work. Similarly, many Asian immigrants were processed through Angel Island in San Francisco and also met with great hardship. They were held in filthy buildings (sometimes for weeks) and were the victims of extreme prejudice by Americans who feared they were "changing" America. Chinese workers were paid lower wages than whites for the same work and were often victims of violence. Many immigrants (much like some immigrants still today) were desperate for work and took any job they could find no matter how low the wages or terrible the working conditions. Some worked in sweatshops which were hot, crowded and dangerous and others, like the Japanese, took the work that no Americans wanted, such as work on the sugar plantations of Hawaii. This is much like the Mexican workers of today who work picking fruit in the hot sun in California; a job no American wants to do.

This brings me to the point of my letter which is that, in almost 125 years since the wave of "new immigrants" arrived in the U.S., not enough has changed for the better. Sadly, it seems U.S. immigration policy and people's attitudes have not improved much over time. What I mean is that, although U.S. politicians say they are proud to live in a land founded by immigrants, they also talk now (just as they did then) about the immigrant threat to the country and the economy in ways that seem to fuel prejudice against immigrants. Specifically, after 1890, when a wave of immigrants flooded into America, pressure from those who resented these immigrants, feared them and were prejudiced against them, led the government to enact restrictive legislation to limit the number of immigrants, some of which was extremely biased and discriminatory. One such example was the Chinese Exclusion Act which banned Chinese immigrants for ten years! In later years, even before WWII, Japanese Americans were called a foreign "Yellow Peril" and a threat to the United States. Laws were passed against them preventing them from owning land (even though most were loyal Americans) and they were looked upon with suspicion even though they had done nothing wrong. So today, when I hear the Presidential candidates on the news talking about passing harsher and more restrictive immigration laws, I worry about where this will lead. The very same ignorance and fear that immigrants will take all of the jobs and destroy the American culture and economy which existed then, seems to exist now. The same arguments, which targeted individual ethnic groups like the Chinese and Japanese, are the ones we hear today about the Mexicans. The push for discriminatory laws that target individual groups like the Chinese Exclusion Act are no different than the arguments being made by politicians like Donald Trump who are saying that the U.S. should build a wall to keep out the Mexicans and that we should deport millions of Mexicans who are already here! Also, back then the experience of the wealthy immigrants was very different from the poor immigrant and this too does not appear to have changed. For example, back then the US immigration policy favored the wealthy and educated who, when arriving at Ellis Island had a much easier time getting into the US. The wealthy and educated were barely given a second look which is the case for certain

modern immigrant groups, like the Koreans. Koreans immigrants were considered more desirable because they are seen as being able to contribute more. Specifically, large numbers of Koreans came to the U.S. after the 1950's as a result of the Korean War. However, unlike the treatment of the poor Chinese and Japanese, this group of Koreans were allowed in easily because they were doctors and nurses or had backgrounds in science and technology. Today about 1/3 of Korean immigrants own their own businesses and many have had great success. They run successful small businesses such as neighborhood groceries, liquor stores, dry cleaners, fast-food places and nail salons. In fact, by the end of the 1980s, Korean Americans had achieved the highest business-ownership rate of all racial and ethnic groups, proving that immigrants can contribute greatly to the American economy if they are given the opportunity to prosper. Therefore, I ask that you keep these things in mind when called upon to pass your vote on any immigration legislation presented to you.

Thank you very much for reading my thoughts about immigration.

Sincerely,

Taylor Goche

Taylor Goche
Eighth Grade Student
Pelham Middle School

Pelham Middle School
28 Franklin Place
Pelham, NY 10803

October 1, 2015

Congressman Elliot L. Engel
6 Gramatan Avenue, Suite 205
Mount Vernon, NY 10550

Dear Congressman Engel,

Over the past few years, immigration has become uncontrollable. Now, a new crisis has arisen in Europe, and an estimated 80 million people are attempting to get to a better life in Europe, with only a lucky percentage of them actually be admitted as they wished. In 8th grade social studies, we've been learning about immigration. We've learned about different major immigrant movements, the factors attributing to the thousands of migrants coming to the United States. I know from my parents stories what it is like to leave one's home, why people immigrate, as I am a first generation American citizen, with parents coming from Europe. This letter was designed to be an assignment attempting to show us how, and to actually connect us to our freedoms and rights of speech, expression, and petition.

With the new immigration crisis, comes the question, "What do we do now?". The world is too small for the seven billion people inhabiting it not to do something. It is the world's obligation to help the immigrants running from airstrikes, corruption, and death. With ISIS on one side, Assad and Putin on another, and us in between, America's airstrikes are a major cause of this crisis. And we should own up and help. President Obama stated a short time ago that America would take in 10,000 immigrants in 2016. *10,000 immigrants. 10,000.* I am Hungarian, and was in Hungary in August. I know that before the fence went up, an average of between 2.5 thousand and 5 thousand immigrants were coming in to Hungary. *Daily.* Obama has said that he would take in two or three days worth of immigrants. It is true, we must be careful, we can't just let anyone into America. But if smaller nations such as Hungary were expected to register and take in thousands of people who didn't even want to stay in Hungary, Hungary didn't cause this! Why should they and not us? They were thrust into this in the same way that they were invaded by the Turkish armies centuries ago, and the Mongols before that. They were in the middle of the armies' paths. It is the same situation now with immigration. Meanwhile, America is standing by and taking in two or three day's worth of helpless, poor, wretched souls. America is one of the most hoped for destinations. We aren't opening opportunities for those who are just trying to get a better life for their children, and their families. Yes, one could argue that a major part of the immigrants is teenaged boys, but do they not have a right to live just the same as everyone else? Are they not human too? They are leaving what they know, who they know, everything they cared about, because in a few years, every single one of them will have to face a choice. Assad's army, ISIS, or death.

Who are these people anyway, with the ability to dictate whether or not the less powerful are allowed to live or die, ordering them to choose between a living death, or a dead death. To let them all into these countries, to let them have access to a better life, we must find a way to do it. Presidents and chancellors, prime ministers, monarchs, warlords... they do not have divine right! There is no reason for ISIS to be allowed to do this, but they are, so we adapt, and help who we can. In the 21st century, the world is truly very small. We can no longer just be *citizens of America*, or *citizens of Hungary*, *Syrians*, *Germans*, *Chinese*, *French*, *Canadians*... In this small world, we have to consider ourselves *world citizens* as well. Not in the cheesy sense, where everyone lives in peace, and we have solved all of the problems, but in the way that humans have to think interdependently. There is no other way out. I may be American, but I am also Hungarian, French, and Human. I care.

I wish you continued success.

Sincerely,

Matyas Spunberg
Grade 8
Pelham Middle School
Pelham, New York