

## **The New Immigrants**

Some 334,203 immigrants arrived in the United States in 1886, the year of the Statue of Liberty's dedication. A Cuban revolutionary, Jose Marti, wrote: "Irishmen, Poles, Italians, Czechs, Germans freed from tyranny or want – all hail the monument of Liberty because to them it seems to incarnate [represent] their own uplifting."

The immigrants who would catch a glimpse of the statue would mainly come from eastern and southern Europe.

In 1900, 14 percent of the American population was foreign born, compared to 8 percent a century later. Passports were unnecessary and the cost of crossing the Atlantic was just \$10 in steerage.

European immigration to the United States greatly increased after the Civil War, reaching 5.2 million in the 1880s then surging to 8.2 million in the first decade of the 20th century. Between 1882 and 1914, approximately 20 million immigrants came to the United States. In 1907 alone, 1.285 million arrived. By 1900, New York City had as many Irish residents as Dublin. It had more Italians than any city outside Rome and more Poles than any city except Warsaw. It had more Jews than any other city in the world, as well as sizeable numbers of Slavs, Lithuanians, Chinese, and Scandinavians.

Unlike earlier immigrants, who mainly came from northern and western Europe, the "new immigrants" came largely from southern and eastern Europe. Largely Catholic and Jewish in religion, the new immigrants came from the Balkans, Italy, Poland, and Russia.

## DOCUMENT A (Modified)

The Chinese, if permitted freely to enter this country, would create race conflicts which would finally result in great public disturbance. The Caucasians will not tolerate the Mongolian.... But this is not alone a race, labor, and political question. It is one which involves our civilization....

*Source: This excerpt is from a resolution by the American Federation of Labor (a large industrial union) to Congress, "Some Reasons For Chinese Exclusion, Meat vs. Rice: American Manhood Against Asiatic Coolieism," 1902.*

## DOCUMENT B

# GRANITE CITY AMERICANIZATION SCHOOLS

Monday  
and  
Thursday  
Evenings  
7:30 p. m.



Underwood & Underwood

These two men are brothers, one is an American Citizen and the other has just come to this country with their old mother. See the difference in the way they dress and look. America is a great country. In America everybody has a chance. Everybody who comes to America from the old country ought to learn the American language and become an American citizen. If the people that come to America do not become Americans, this country will soon be like the old country.

Beginning  
Monday,  
September  
the 27th,  
1920

**SCHOOLS:**

HIGH SCHOOL, 20TH AND D STREETS LINCOLN PLACE, 917 PACIFIC AVENUE	LIBERTY SCHOOL, 20TH AND O STREETS MADISON SCHOOL, 1322 MADISON AVENUE
--	---

**Keep America Great.****Become an American  
Citizen****Learn The Language.**

Press Record Publishing Co. 1834 D St., Granite City, Ill

—file 27671/44, Americanization files, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85  
Source: *Teaching With Documents: Using Primary Sources From the National Archives*,  
National Archives Trust Fund Board (adapted)

*Many towns, cities, and states sponsored night schools where recent immigrants could learn American customs and how to speak English.*

### **DOCUMENT C (Modified)**

Immigration not only furnishes [provides] the greater portion of our criminals, it is also seriously affecting the morals of the native population. It is disease and not health which is contagious. Most foreigners bring with them European ideas of the Sabbath [the holy day], and the result is sadly seen in all our cities, where it is being transformed from a holy day into a holiday. But by far the most effective method for corrupting popular morals is the liquor traffic, and this is chiefly carried on by foreigners....

Source: This excerpt is from *Our Country*, by Reverend Josiah Strong, 1885.

morals – ethics, standards of right and wrong.

### **DOCUMENT D (Modified)**

The qualities of the American people...are moral far more than intellectual, and it is on the moral qualities of the English-speaking race that our history, our victories, and all our future rest. There is only one way in which you can lower those qualities or weaken those characteristics, and that is by breeding them out. If a lower race mixes with a higher in enough numbers, history teaches us that the lower race will prevail. The lower race will absorb the higher....

We are exposed to but a single danger, and that is by changing the quality of our race and citizenship through the mixing of races whose traditions and beliefs are wholly alien to ours.... The time has certainly come...to restrict those immigrants.

Source: Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts made this statement in 1891. The occasion was a debate in the U.S. Senate over a proposed Literacy Act that would restrict future American immigration to those who could read and write.

prevail – win out; succeed

## Guiding Questions

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Document A

1. Close reading: What nativist arguments are stated in this document?
2. Sourcing: Consider the source of the statement. What unstated concern do you suspect is the primary reason why this group opposed Chinese immigration?

### Document B

3. Close reading: According to this document, why should immigrants learn the “American language”?

### Document C

4. Close reading: According to Strong, what effect is immigration having on the native population?
5. Close reading: What “diseases” did Strong blame on immigrants?

### Document D

6. Close reading: What, according to Senator Lodge, was the danger of unrestricted immigration?

On separate paper, write one page that answers this question:

*Why did American nativists oppose free, unrestricted immigration in the late 1800s and early 1900s?*

Use information from today’s reading and documents.