

**The Immigrant Rush to the New World 1880-1920**  
**Compare and Contrast Activity/Creative Writing Activity**  
**Mike Watson, Mulberry Middle School**

**I. Lesson Plan Summary:**

- a. Given today's political climate and the social questions centering on the issue of immigration into the United States, both legal and illegal, it seems as if this unit would be both insightful and instructive to partisans of both sides of the immigration argument. The activity will take a close look at the motivating factors that led to this "Great Wave" and also consider the various repercussions. While I made the decision to solely utilize the named textbook, it would be quite easy to incorporate current event articles or other class appropriate readings to enhance this lesson based on possible time extensions and/or the level of students that you may teach.
- b. The objectives of this lesson relate to the Post Civil War Growth and Change/Immigration and Urbanization according to the curriculum maps established by Polk County Schools. The Social Studies Standards that are associated with this activity are: SSA 1.4.2. , SSA 5.4.2. , SSB 2.4.6. , and SSC 1.4.4.
- c. The event and/or time period, as noted above, is "The Immigrant Rush to the New World 1880-1920"
- d. Time necessary will vary according to several factors including level of classes, grades, and how much class time the teacher decides to spend on this assignment. For my classes, it required three 45-minute periods. The first day for introduction/geography challenge. The second would be given over to the Comparison/Contrast activity between two of the immigration groups. And finally, the third day would be utilized for the writing assignment, and completion of the Compare/Contrast assignment for those who need the extra time.
- e. The materials needed for this activity are student text of **History Alive: The United States** and a teacher produced comparison chart of the different immigrant groups. Of course, the students could be instructed to create their own comparison charts which could allow for some individual creativity.

**II. Lesson Procedures:**

**Day One:**

\*I would start this unit activity by questioning and discussing two simple questions. First, "Why do people decide to move?" and second "What does the Statue of Liberty" represent?

\*Following this short Q&A, the class would participate in a group reading of pages 357 and 358. I would elaborate and question the students about the sections titled "The Huddled Masses" and "New Immigration Patterns".

\*Possibly, I would next have the students analyze the map on page 359 and answer the questions of *Geography Challenge* in an effort to reinforce the class reading.

\*If time allows, explain to the class the upcoming assignment and goals for the next day when they will compare at least two of the immigrant groups highlighted in Chapter 25 of the History Alive textbook.

**Day Two:**

\*I would instruct the students to create a two-column Comparison/Contrast chart to highlight the similarities and differences that are relevant to the immigrant patterns of Italian Immigrants (pages 360-361) and Mexican Immigrants (pages 366-367). *Author's Note: I chose the Mexican patterns due to current events and the Italian patterns due to the impact on the growth of urban areas along the East Coast.*

\*The students would be expected to identify several factors of these immigration patterns:

- a. Why did they come to America?
- b. What difficulties will these immigrants face as they journey to America?
- c. What types of jobs will many of these first-generation immigrants likely have?
- d. Describe the living conditions of the new immigrants in America.

- e. What problems did the new immigrants actually face once they were in America, such as prejudice and as a result of language barriers?
- f. Attempts to adjust to American society?

\*To insure that the students produce quality work, I will often indicate an expected number of details for each of the factors based on the information available in the textbook that might be at your disposal.

\*This activity could be an individual assignment or a group activity.

### **Day Three:**

\*Creative Writing Assignment: *A letter from an immigrant child from Italy*. Place the instructions on the board or create copies for the students so that they may be clear on the expectations of this writing assignment.

**You are to pretend that you came to America as a child and you have now lived in the United States for five years. You want to write a letter to your sister who still lives in Italy (there was not enough money for her to travel to America). Tell her about your voyage to America and some of the things that you have experienced, both good and bad, since you have arrived in your new country. Your letter must be at least 5 paragraphs in length and should describe, with emotion and first person urgency, the difficulties faced by new immigrants.**

The size of the letter may vary, but I usually utilize the typical 5-paragraph format. This assignment allows for some dramatic license by the students as well as the opportunity to allow the imaginations to flourish. However, I typically tell the students that the letter must discuss and describe the issues that were described in the Comparison Chart:

- a. Why did they come to America?
- b. What difficulties will these immigrants face as they journey to America?
- c. What types of jobs will many of these first-generation immigrants likely have?
- d. Describe the living conditions of the new immigrants in America.
- e. What problems did the new immigrants actually face once they were in America, such as prejudice and as a result of language barriers?
- f. Attempts to adjust to American society?

This assignment helps to foster better understanding of the plight of the new immigrants because it requires a certain amount of perspective and empathy by the students as they strive to create a strong, imaginary, first person, fictional letter based on historic, social conditions of the time.

### **III. Activities:**

- a. Class discussion based on start up questions
- b. Student participation during Day One class reading
- c. Individual student assignment: *Geography Challenge Assessment Questions*
- d. Students will create a Compare and Contrast chart based on the assigned reading topics
- e. Creative writing activity in which the students will write a first person account of the experiences of immigrating to America.

### **IV. Assessment:**

I would use a traditional form of assessment for the first two activities: The Geography Skills activity and the Comparison chart. Remember, if you designate a specific number of factual details for the different segments of the Comparison chart, you could check for accuracy and comprehension.

However, when grading the creative writing activity, the immigrant letter, it may be useful to utilize a basic rubric.

\*The first item I would look for is did the student fulfill the 5-paragraph mandate as stated in the instructions? **25% of the assignment grade**

\*The second consideration is the effort that was put into this letter. Did the student use creativity and imagination to describe the concerns of the immigrants based on their reading comprehension? This is tough because it is somewhat subjective. **25% of the assignment grade**

\*The third, and most important part of the letter (in my opinion) to be graded would be the accuracy, clear and concise description of the challenges facing the immigrants. **50% of the assignment grade.**

## **V. Resources:**

The only source that was utilized for the creation of this lesson was the **History Alive: The United States** textbook. Of course, other materials could be utilized and brought into the classroom and incorporated into the activity for extra elaboration.

Student Name:

**Comparison Chart**  
**Immigrant Rush to the New World**  
**A Brief Look at the Italian and Mexican Immigrant Experience**

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Italian Immigrants</b><br/><b>Pages 360-361</b><br/>Why did they come to America?</p>                      | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mexican Immigrants</b><br/><b>Pages 366-367</b><br/>Why did they come to America?</p>                      |
|--|--|
| <p>What difficulties will these immigrants face as they journey to America?</p>  | <p>What difficulties will these immigrants face as they journey to America?</p>  |
| <p>What types of jobs will many of these first-generation immigrants likely have?</p>  | <p>What types of jobs will many of these first-generation immigrants likely have?</p>  |
| <p>Describe the living conditions of the new immigrants in America.</p>  | <p>Describe the living conditions of the new immigrants in America.</p>  |
| <p>What problems did the new immigrants actually face once they were in America, such as prejudice and as a result of language barriers?</p> | <p>What problems did the new immigrants actually face once they were in America, such as prejudice and as a result of language barriers?</p> |
| <p>Attempts to adjust to American society?</p>   | <p>Attempts to adjust to American society?</p>   |