

CHAPTER
15

GUIDED READING *The New Immigrants*

Section 1

A. As you read about people who immigrated to the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, write notes to answer the questions below.

Immigrants from . . .	What were some of the countries they came from?	What reasons did they often have for coming to the U.S.?	Where did they often enter the U.S.?
1. Southern and Eastern Europe			<input type="checkbox"/> Ellis Island <input type="checkbox"/> Angel Island <input type="checkbox"/> Southeastern U.S. <input type="checkbox"/> Southwestern U.S.
2. Asia			<input type="checkbox"/> Ellis Island <input type="checkbox"/> Angel Island <input type="checkbox"/> Southeastern U.S. <input type="checkbox"/> Southwestern U.S.
3. Caribbean Islands and Central America			<input type="checkbox"/> Ellis Island <input type="checkbox"/> Angel Island <input type="checkbox"/> Southeastern U.S. <input type="checkbox"/> Southwestern U.S.

B. In each box below, identify an important difference that tended to exist between native-born Americans and some or all of the new immigrants around the turn of the century.

Native-Born	New Immigrants

C. On the back of this paper, explain the purposes of the **Chinese Exclusion Act** and the **Gentlemen's Agreement**.

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Section 1

SKILLBUILDER PRACTICE *Creating Maps*

Using a U.S. atlas as well as the information from the map on page 461, create a map in the space below of the United States around 1900 that depicts the following information: the locations of Ellis Island and Angel Island; those states with immigrant populations of 100,000 or greater, 200,000 or greater, 300,000 or greater, 400,000 or greater, 700,000 or greater, and 1 million or greater. Depict the information in a way that is clear and easy to understand (Shading the states different colors based on their immigrant populations, for example). Be sure to include a key or legend explaining all colors, symbols, or shading. (See Skillbuilder Handbook, p. R32.)



CHAPTER
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RETEACHING ACTIVITY *The New Immigrants*

Section 1

Reading Comprehension

A. Choose the word that most accurately completes the sentences below.

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| German | religious | air plane |
| literacy test | Jews | Chinese |
| steamship | political | Swedish |

- Many _____ fled Russia to America as a result of pogroms, or organized attacks, against them.
- _____ immigrants helped build the nation's railroads.
- President Cleveland vetoed a bill requiring a _____ for immigrants.
- Nativists objected to immigrants' _____ beliefs as well as their ethnic backgrounds.
- By the 1870s, almost all immigrants traveled by _____.

Summarizing

B. Complete the chart shown here by summarizing the Chinese Exclusion Act and the Gentleman's Agreement.

Chinese Exclusion Act	Gentlemen's Agreement

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PRIMARY SOURCE Artifacts from Ellis Island

Ellis Island was the chief immigration station in the United States from 1892 to 1943. What impressions of Ellis Island do you get from these artifacts?

Section 1

Literacy Test Card, 1919

Class No. 3 Serial Number 5698 Polish

Bądźcie posłuszni przewodnikom swoim, i ulegajcie im; albowiem oni czuwają nad duszami waszemi, jako mający zdać sprawę, aby to z radością czynili, a nie wzdychając; bo dla was to niepożyteczne.

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

(Hebrews 13:17)

Ellis Island Literacy card—Polish. By courtesy of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum.

Immigrants 16 years and older had to pass a literacy test in order to enter the United States. They were required to read a 40-word passage from the Bible in their native language.

Immigrant's Telegram, 1912

THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY Form 1
INCORPORATED
25,000 OFFICES IN AMERICA. CABLE SERVICE TO ALL THE WORLD

This Company TRANSMITS and DELIVERS messages only on conditions limiting its liability, which have been accepted by the sender of the following message. Expenses for printing and cost of telegrams are not included in the amount of the message, and the Company will not hold itself liable for errors or omissions in transmission or delivery of transmitted messages, beyond the amount of cable paid thereon, nor in any case beyond the sum of Fifty Dollars, at which limit the Company's liability is limited. This message has been sent by the sender, and in any case where the above is printed in writing, which is a departure from the message in force with the Company for transmission. This is an UNREPEATED MESSAGE, and is delivered by request of the sender, under the conditions named above.

THEO. W. WALK, PRESIDENT BELVIDERE BROOKS, GENERAL MANAGER

NUMBER 15 SENT BY OB CHECK 9-43 a

RECEIVED AT _____ 191
DATED Jan Stoboken N.J. 11
TO M Goldfusz
164 Judson St

Arrived Steamer Boardman
meet me at Ellis Island
immediately Freide Goldfusz

Ellis Island telegram. By courtesy of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum.

Freide Goldfusz traveled alone to America to join her husband Morris. She was not allowed to leave Ellis Island until immigration officials knew she was in safe hands. This is the telegram she sent to her relatives in New Jersey.

Detention Card, 1899

FORM 1508 *Kraiu* *20*
United States Immigration Service, *20*
ELLIS ISLAND, NEW YORK HARBOR.

1 _____ 16
2 _____ 17
3 _____ 18
4 _____ 19
5 Name, *Francis [unclear] [unclear]* 20
6 _____ 21
7 Vessel, *Sea Dragon* 22
8 Date, *Oct 27*, 1899, M. 23
9 _____ 24
10 CAUSE OF DETENTION: 25
11 *No ticket to Kansas* 26
12 _____ 27
13 _____ 28
14 _____ 29
15 _____ 30
16 _____ 31

JAN. FEB. MARCH. APRIL. MAY. JUNE. JULY. AUG. SEPT. OCT. NOV. DEC.

Ellis Island Detention card. National Archives.

Immigrants who failed inspection received detention cards like this one and remained temporarily at Ellis Island. Inspectors recorded the reason why some immigrants were detained, including a lack of money or health problems.

Activity Options

1. Working with a group of classmates, draw up a list of questions you would like to ask an immigrant like Freide Goldfusz who passed through Ellis Island.
2. With your class, brainstorm a list of people in your community who emigrated to the United States. Choose one person from the list and invite him or her to speak to your class about immigration. Afterwards, compare the speaker's experiences with those of immigrants you have read about.
3. Write a poem about immigration from the point of view of Freide Goldfusz or another immigrant who arrived at Ellis Island. Share your poem with classmates.

CHAPTER
15

LITERATURE SELECTION *from Call It Sleep*
by Henry Roth

Section 1

This novel tells the story of David Schearl, an immigrant boy who comes to the United States in the early 1900s and grows up in the dark, crowded tenements of New York. What happens when David and his mother first arrive at Ellis Island?

The small white steamer, *Peter Stuyvesant*, that delivered the immigrants from the stench and throb of the steerage to the stench and throb of New York tenements, rolled slightly on the water beside the stone quay in the lee of the weathered barracks and new brick buildings of Ellis Island. Her skipper was waiting for the last of the officials, laborers and guards to embark upon her before he cast off and started for Manhattan. Since this was Saturday afternoon and this the last trip she would make for the week-end, those left behind might have to stay over till Monday. Her whistle bellowed its hoarse warning. A few figures in overalls sauntered from the high doors of the immigration quarters and down the grey pavement that led to the dock.

It was May of the year 1907, the year that was destined to bring the greatest number of immigrants to the shores of the United States. All that day, as on all the days since spring began, her decks had been thronged by hundreds upon hundreds of foreigners, natives from almost every land in the world, the jeweled close-cropped Teuton, the full-bearded Russian, the scraggly-whiskered Jew, and among them Slovak peasants with docile faces, smooth-cheeked and swarthy Armenians, pimply Greeks, Danes with wrinkled eyelids. All day her decks had been colorful, a matrix of the vivid costumes of other lands, the speckled green-and-yellow aprons, the flowered kerchief, embroidered homespun, the silver-braided sheepskin vest, the gaudy scarfs, yellow boots, fur caps, caftans, dull gabardines. All day the guttural, the high-pitched voices, the astonished cries, the gasps of wonder, reiterations of gladness had risen from her decks in a motley billow of sound. But now her decks were empty, quiet, spreading out under the sunlight almost as if the warm boards were relaxing from the strain and the

pressure of the myriads of feet. All those steerage passengers of the ships that had docked that day who were permitted to enter had already entered—except two, a woman and a young child she carried in her arms. They had just come aboard escorted by a man.

About the appearance of these late comers there was very little that was unusual. The man had evidently spent some time in America and was now

He paid only the scantest attention to the Statue of Liberty or to the city rising from the water or to the bridges spanning the East River.

bringing his wife and child over from the other side. It might have been thought that he had spent most of his time in lower New York, for he paid only the scantest attention to the Statue of Liberty or to the city rising from the water or to the bridges spanning the East River—or perhaps he was merely too agitated to waste much time on these wonders. His clothes were the ordinary clothes the ordinary New Yorker wore in that period—sober and dull. A black derby

accentuated the sharpness and sedentary pallor of his face; a jacket, loose on his tall spare frame, buttoned up in a V close to the throat; and above the V a tightly-knotted black tie was mounted in the groove of a high starched collar. As for his wife, one guessed that she was a European more by the timid wondering look in her eyes as she gazed from her husband to the harbor, than by her clothes. For her clothes were American—a black skirt, a white shirt-waist and a black jacket. Obviously her husband had either taken the precaution of sending them to her while she was still in Europe or had brought them with him to Ellis Island where she had slipped them on before she left.

Only the small child in her arms wore a distinctly foreign costume, an impression one got chiefly from the odd, outlandish, blue straw hat on his head with its polka dot ribbons of the same color dangling over each shoulder.

Except for this hat, had the three newcomers been in a crowd, no one probably could have singled out the woman and child as newly arrived immigrants. They carried no sheets tied up in huge bundles, no bulky wicker baskets, no prized feather beds, no boxes of delicacies, sausages, virgin-olive oils, rare cheeses; the large black satchel beside them was their only luggage. But despite this, despite their even less than commonplace appearance, the two overalled men, sprawled out and smoking cigarettes in the stern, eyed them curiously. And the old peddler woman, sitting with basket of oranges on knee, continually squinted her weak eyes in their direction.

The truth was there was something quite untypical about their behavior. The old peddler woman on the bench and the overalled men in the stern had seen enough husbands meeting their wives and children after a long absence to know how such people ought to behave. The most volatile races, such as the Italians, often danced for joy, whirled each other around, pirouetted in an ecstasy; Swedes sometimes just looked at each other, breathing through open mouths like a panting dog; Jews wept, jabbered, almost put each other's eyes out with the recklessness of their darting gestures; Poles roared and gripped each other at arm's length as though they meant to tear a handful of flesh; and after one pecking kiss, the English might be seen gravitating toward, but never achieving an embrace. But these two stood silent, apart; the man staring with aloof, offended eyes grimly down at the water—or if he turned his face toward his wife at all, it was only to glare in harsh contempt at the blue straw hat worn by the child in her arms, and then his hostile eyes would sweep about the deck to see if anyone else were observing them. And his wife beside him regarding him uneasily, appealingly. And the child against her breast looking from one to the other with watchful, frightened eyes. Altogether it was a very curious meeting.

They had been standing in this strange and silent manner for several minutes, when the woman, as if driven by the strain into action, tried to smile, and touching her husband's arm said timidly, "And this is the Golden Land." She spoke in Yiddish.

The man grunted, but made no answer.

She took a breath as if taking courage, and tremu-

lously, "I'm sorry, Albert, I was so stupid." She paused waiting for some flicker of unbending, some word, which never came. "But you look so lean, Albert, so haggard. And your mustache—you've shaved."

His brusque glance stabbed and withdrew. "Even so."

"You must have suffered in this land." She continued gentle despite his rebuke. "You never wrote me. You're thin. Ach! Then here in the new land is the same old poverty. You've gone without food. I can see it. You've changed."

"Well that don't matter," he snapped, ignoring her sympathy. "It's no excuse for your not recognizing me. Who else would call for you? Do you know anyone else in this land?"

"No," placatingly. "But I was so frightened, Albert. Listen to me. I was so bewildered, and that long waiting there in that vast room since morning. Oh, that horrible waiting! I saw them all go, one after the other. The shoemaker

and his wife. The coppersmith and his children from Strij. All those on the Kaiserin Viktoria. But I—I remained. To-morrow will be Sunday. They told me no one could come to fetch me. What if they sent me back? I was frantic!"

"Are you blaming me?" His voice was dangerous.

"No! No! Of course not Albert! I was just explaining."

"Well then let me explain," he said curtly. "I did what I could. I took the day off from the shop. I called that cursed Hamburg-American Line four times. And each time they told me you weren't on board."

"They didn't have any more third-class passage, so I had to take the steerage—"

"Yes, now I know. That's all very well. That couldn't be helped. I came here anyway. The last boat. And what do you do? You refused to recognize me. You don't know me." He dropped his elbows down on the rail, averted his angry face. "That's the greeting I get."

"I'm sorry, Albert," she stroked his arm humbly. "I'm sorry."

"And as if those blue-coated mongrels in there weren't mocking me enough, you give them that brat's right age. Didn't I write you to say seventeen months because it would save half fare! Didn't you hear me inside when I told them?"

"How could I, Albert?" she protested. "How could I? You were on the other side of that—that cage."

"They didn't have any more third-class passage, so I had to take the steerage—"

“Well why didn’t you say seventeen months any way? Look!” he pointed to several blue-coated officials who came hurrying out of a doorway out of the immigration quarters. “There they are.” An ominous pride dragged at his voice. “If he’s among them, that one who questioned so much, I could speak to him if he came up here.”

“Don’t bother with him, Albert,” she exclaimed uneasily. “Please, Albert! What have you against him? He couldn’t help it. It’s his work.”

“Is it?” His eyes followed with unswerving deliberation the blue-coats as they neared the boat. “Well he didn’t have to do it so well.”

“And after all, I did lie to him, Albert,” she said hurriedly trying to distract him.

“The truth is you didn’t,” he snapped, turning his anger against her. “You made your first lie plain by telling the truth afterward. And made a laughing-stock of me!”

“I didn’t know what to do.” She picked despairingly at the wire grill beneath the rail. “In Hamburg the doctor laughed at me when I said seventeen months. He’s so big. He was big when he was born.” She smiled, the worried look on her face vanishing momentarily as she stroked her son’s cheek. “Won’t you speak to your father, David, beloved?”

The child merely ducked his head behind his mother.

His father stared at him, shifted his gaze and glared down at the officials, and then, as though perplexity had crossed his mind, he frowned absently. “How old did he say he was?”

“The doctor? Over two years—and as I say he laughed.”

“Well what did he enter?”

“Seventeen months—I told you.”

“Then why didn’t you tell them seventeen—” He broke off, shrugged violently. “Baah! You need more strength in this land.” He paused, eyed her intently and then frowned suddenly. “Did you bring his birth certificate?”

“Why—” She seemed confused. “It may be in the trunk—there on the ship. I don’t know. Perhaps I left it behind.” Her hand wandered uncertainly to her lips. “I don’t know. Is it important? I never thought of it. But surely father could send it. We need only write.”

“Hmm! Well, put him down.” His head jerked brusquely toward the child. “You don’t need to carry him all the way. He’s big enough to stand on his own feet.”

She hesitated, and then reluctantly set the child down on the deck. Scared, unsteady, the little one edged over to the side opposite his father, and hidden by his mother, clung to her skirt.

“Well, it’s all over now.” She attempted to be cheerful. “It’s all behind us now, isn’t it, Albert? Whatever mistakes I made don’t really matter any more. Do they?”

“A fine taste of what lies before me!” He turned his back on her and leaned morosely against the rail. “A fine taste!”

They were silent. On the dock below, the brown hawsers had been slipped over the mooring posts, and the men on the lower deck now dragged them dripping from the water. Bells clanged. The ship throbbed. Startled by the hoarse bellow of her whistle, the gulls wheeling before her prow rose with slight creaking cry from the green water, and as she churned away from the stone quay skimmed across her path on indolent, scimitar wing. Behind the ship the white wake that stretched to Ellis Island grew longer, raveling wanly into melon-green. On one side curved the low drab Jersey coast-line, the spars and masts on the waterfront fringing the sky; on the other side was Brooklyn, flat, water-towered; the horns of the harbor. And before them, rising on her high pedestal from the scaling swarmy brilliance of sunlit water to the west, Liberty. The spinning disk of the late afternoon sun slanted behind her, and to those on board who gazed, her features were charred with shadow, her depths exhausted, her masses ironed to one single plane. Against the luminous sky the rays of her halo were spikes of darkness roweling the air; shadow flattened the torch she bore to a black cross against flawless light—the blackened hill of a broken sword. Liberty. The child and his mother stared again at the massive figure in wonder.

Activity Options

1. Draw a sketch to accompany this excerpt from *Call It Sleep*. Then display your sketch on a classroom bulletin board.
2. With a partner, role-play the Schearls’ reunion on the docks of the *Peter Stuyvesant* for the class. Then discuss why you think Mr. and Mrs. Schearl react as they do.
3. Imagine that you are Mrs. Schearl. Write a postcard to a friend or family member back home in Poland in which you describe your trip to America.