

The New Immigrants

AS YOU READ

Use this diagram to take notes on the anti-immigration measures that the United States took.

MEASURE	DESCRIPTION
<i>Chinese Exclusion Act</i>	
<i>Gentlemen's Agreement</i>	

Through the "Golden Door"

Where did the immigrants come from?

Between 1870 and 1920, about 20 million Europeans *immigrated* to the United States. Many of them came from eastern and southern Europe.

Some immigrants came to escape religious *persecution*. Many others were poor and looking to improve their economic situation. Still others came to experience greater freedom in the United States. Most European immigrants arrived on the East Coast.

A smaller number of immigrants came from Asia. They arrived on the West Coast. About 200,000 Chinese immigrants came between 1851 to 1883. Many Chinese immigrants helped build the nation's first transcontinental railroad. When the United States *annexed* Hawaii in 1898, several thousand Japanese immigrants came to the United States.

From 1880 to 1920, about 260,000 immigrants arrived from various islands in the Caribbean Sea. They came from Jamaica, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other islands. Many left their homelands because jobs were *scarce*.

Many Mexicans came to the United States as well. Some became U.S. citizens when the nation

acquired Mexican territory in 1848 as a result of the Mexican War. About a million Mexicans arrived between 1910 to 1930 to escape *turmoil* in their country.

1. Identify of the world where immigrants to the U.S. came from.

Please answer in a paragraph on a separate piece of paper.

How did immigrants cope in America?

Many immigrants traveled to the United States by steamship. On board the ship they shared a cramped, unsanitary space. Under these harsh conditions, disease spread quickly. As a result, some immigrants died before they reached America.

Most European immigrants to the United States arrived in New York. There, they had to pass through an immigration station located on **Ellis Island** in New York Harbor. Officials at the station decided whether the immigrants could enter the country or had to return. Any immigrant with serious health problems or a *contagious* disease was sent home. Inspectors also made sure that immigrants met the legal requirements for entering the United States.

Asian immigrants arriving on the West Coast went through **Angel Island** in San Francisco. The inspection process on Angel Island was more difficult than on Ellis Island.

Getting along in a new country with a different language and culture was a great challenge for new immigrants. Many immigrants settled in communities with other immigrants from the same country. This made them feel more at home. They also formed organizations to help each other.

2. Describe ways immigrants deal with adjusting to life in the United States.

Please answer in a paragraph on a separate piece of paper.

Immigration Restrictions

How did some Americans react to immigration?

By the turn of the century, some observers called America a **melting pot**. This term referred to the fact that many different cultures and races had blended in the United States.

However, this was not always the case. Many new immigrants refused to give up their culture to become part of American society.

Some Americans also preferred not to live in a melting pot. They did not like the idea of so many immigrants living in their country. The arrival of so many immigrants led to the growth of **nativism**. Nativism is an obvious preference for native-born Americans. Nativism gave rise to anti-immigrant groups. It also led to a demand for immigration restrictions.

On the West Coast, *prejudice* against Asians was first directed at the Chinese. During the depression of the 1870s, many Chinese immigrants agreed to work for low wages. Many American workers feared they would lose their jobs to the Chinese. As a result, labor groups pressured politicians to restrict Asian immigration. In 1882, Congress passed the **Chinese Exclusion Act**. This law banned all but a few Chinese immigrants. The ban was not lifted until 1943.

Americans showed prejudice against Japanese immigrants as well. In San Francisco, the local school board put all Chinese, Japanese, and Korean children in special Asian schools. This led to anti-American riots in Japan. President Theodore Roosevelt persuaded San Francisco officials to stop their separation policy. In exchange, Japan agreed to limit *emigration* to the United States under the **Gentlemen's Agreement** of 1907–1908.

3. Describe anti-immigration measures in the U.S.

Please answer in a paragraph on a separate piece of paper.