

Teacher Resource

Teaching U.S. Immigration Series:
Immigration and World War I





TABLE OF CONTENTS

pg. 1	Introduction
pg. 3	Lesson One: Anti-German Sentiment at Home
pg. 4	Lesson Plan
pg. 5	Supporting Materials
pg.15	Lesson Two: Immigration After the Great War
pg. 17	Lesson Plan
pg. 18	Supporting Materials
pg.35	Supplement: 12 Foreign-Born Heroes of World War I
pg.41	Handout: Print-Friendly Guide to Resources

Introduction

Humans have been migrating throughout every place and time in our history, so in this series we give you the tools to explore immigration through the lens of the history and social studies curriculum already being taught. The period around World War I in the United States is often broadly associated with immigration. Immigration was higher in the early 1900s than it ever had been due to both favorable attitudes and conditions in the U.S. as well as upheaval in Europe that forced many Europeans to seek a better life across the Atlantic. The war itself was a large-scale, intercontinental conflict that caused a great deal of migration and which solidified relationships, whether friendly or not, between the United States and many European countries.

With this resource, we closely examine the immigration landscape of the time and how immigrants and immigration affected, and were affected by, national politics and events in significant ways. Both lesson plans, “Anti-German Sentiment at Home” and “Immigration After the Great War,” are designed to be flexible and adaptable based on the needs of your class. They include options such as multiple-levelled texts and both in-person and online class activities. Each can stand alone in one or two class periods, or each could be used together as fits into the existing scope and sequence of the course.

The outbreak of World War I posed a serious threat to the sense of belonging and safety of one of early 20th century America’s most prosperous and well-respected immigration groups, German Americans, and permanently impacted the prominence of German immigrant culture in the United States. The lesson plan “Anti-German Sentiment at Home” invites students to explore the experiences of German Americans during the war through a set of both primary and secondary sources, while considering how a balance of narrative and expository writing effectively tells the story of history.

In “Immigration After the Great War,” students are asked to examine charts, maps and texts to understand the drop in immigration to the United States after World War I, comparing a primary source *The New York Times* article with a recent secondary source article to understand the shift in national sentiment from the perspectives of both the time period and present day.

A supplementary resource, “Twelve Foreign-Born Heroes in World War I,” profiles 12 historical figures who have been recognized for bravery and sacrifice during the war, and it includes questions for discussion and further learning. This resource can be used alone or with either lesson and could be a starting point for students to learn more about the demographics, motivations and histories of the immigrants during that time period.

For teachers seeking more background lessons and material on immigrants during World War I, an excellent set of lesson plans is available from [Teaching Literacy Through History, Americans All: Foreign-born Soldiers and World War I](#). We recommend any of the three lessons, whose topics include:

- How the outbreak of World War I affected the lives of immigrants and presented opportunities for them to accelerate assimilation.
- How the U.S. government used policies and propaganda to promote immigrants’ loyalties and support for the war effort.
- Immigrants’ contributions to the Allied victory.

Lesson One

Anti-German Sentiment at Home

Educator Notes

This lesson asks students to consider the unique challenges of being German American during a time when America was at war with Germany and to analyze the interplay of individual-level storytelling with broader historical content in a secondary source.

The core secondary source text, [*Being German, Being American*](#), from the National Archives' magazine, *Prologue*, tells the story of anti-German sentiment through the lens of a young soldier and his family from a small town in Illinois. The lesson's activities can be completed using just the text through the section that ends on page 18 (before the section "Otto Radke, 16, Enlists and Heads for France"), though teachers may also choose to use the remainder of the article, which goes into more detail about the war itself and the completion of the short arc of Otto Radke's life. While reading the article, students are asked to create a simple outline with the main ideas and a few key details from each section in order to better see the structure of the text. A graphic organizer is provided as an option for groups or individuals, depending on support needed. (The provided organizer only covers the early sections of the text, up to page 18 of the article.)

The performance task for this lesson has students examining three primary source accounts from German Americans and a newspaper illustration from 1918, and writing an interpretation of the illustration that weaves in historical content and one of the primary source narratives. Two options for differentiating this prompt are included in the lesson activities, for individuals or groups depending on skill level.

Several resources for further exploration of this content are included at the end of the lesson, including a primary source broadside analysis (included as an extension) and an excellent media-supplemented article from *Re-Imagining Migration*, if more class time or independent work time is available.

Lesson Plan:

Anti-German Sentiment at Home

Objectives

- Students will analyze the structure of a secondary source text that incorporates personal details and primary source information.
- Students will summarize the challenges faced by German Americans during World War I and interpret a primary source with this historical context.

Guiding Questions

- What challenges did German Americans face at home during World War I?
- What is the effect of including personal stories and primary sources with historical information?

Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5

Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6

Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.10

Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Materials

- Copies of or access to the article [Have You Bought Your Liberty Cabbage Yet?](#) (*New York Tribune*) and/or Liberty Cabbage worksheet available at the end of this lesson.
- Copies of or access to the article [Being German, Being American](#) (National Archives' magazine, *Prologue*)
- [Being German, Being American worksheet](#) (optional)
- [Anti-German Sentiment and Historical Storytelling worksheet](#)
- Internet access for three primary sources (History Matters):
 - ▶ ["We had to be so careful"](#) (audio/text)
 - ▶ ["Nobody would eat kraut"](#) (audio/text)
 - ▶ ["Get the rope!"](#) (text only)
- Copies of or access to the illustration *Sights of the Town* (*Lincoln Daily News*)
- Copies of or access to the article [From Vantage Points in America Pro-Germanism Shoots in the Back with Poisoned Bullets Our Boys 'Over There'](#) (Library of Congress)

Activities

Opening:

Distribute or give students access to copies of [Liberty Cabbage](#), and if possible, also display the *New York Tribune* article [Have You Bought Your Liberty Cabbage Yet?](#) Give students a few minutes independently to read through the article and begin answering the questions. Debrief as a class. Guide students toward the understanding that anti-German sentiment in this time period was strong enough to prompt official renaming of a common food.

Probe students' thinking with questions like:

- What was the purpose of renaming sauerkraut “liberty cabbage”? Did they think it would literally help win the war, or something else?
- What could be a “charge of pro-Germanism”? Why would it be something people wanted to avoid?
- What might have been the effect of this movement on the many Germans and German Americans living in the United States? How would it have felt for them to read this article?

Let students know that the topic for today's class will be the anti-German sentiment that prevailed in American society during World War I and how it affected German Americans.

Reading and Analysis:

Distribute or give students access to copies of [Being German, Being American](#) from the National Archives' magazine, *Prologue*. Tell students that this article covers in more detail the anti-German sentiment during World War I, using many primary sources and the story of one family and boy in particular. Besides reading for historical information, they will examine how the author integrated the individual story with the broader history, and what effect that has on the reader's perception of the history.

Students will read the article independently, in pairs or as a whole class. As students read, ask them to create a short summary by writing one to two sentences or bulleted phrases and selecting a few key details for each section. Depending on their skill level, students can use blank paper to organize their summaries, or be provided with the [Being German, Being American worksheet](#). Support students and align expectations by reading and summarizing the first section together as a class.

(Continued on next page)

Activities (continued)

Discussion:

- ▶ Share section summaries and main ideas or key takeaways. Was the story about Otto a main idea of the article, or just supporting the history? Which parts of the article were about Otto?
- ▶ Why did the author choose to “frame” the history with the story of Otto? In particular, what was the effect of opening the article with background on Otto and his family?
- ▶ Which of the photos and other primary sources were effective in adding to your understanding of the article’s main ideas?

Primary Source Exploration and Writing Task:

Give students time to explore three primary source accounts from German Americans remembering their experiences during World War I. Students will need internet and audio access.

- ▶ ["We had to be so careful" \(audio/text\)](#)
- ▶ ["Nobody would eat kraut" \(audio/text\)](#)
- ▶ ["Get the rope!" \(text only\)](#)

Display for students the newspaper illustration [Sights of the Town](#). If needed, give time for questions and observations. Consider clarifying that the names “Schultz” and “Schnider” are German names. Share with students the writing prompt, and give them time to work on it independently or assign for homework.

Instruct students to listen to or read the three primary source accounts and examine the illustration from *Lincoln Daily News*. Write one to two paragraphs explaining what is happening in the newspaper illustration, giving historical context learned from the *Prologue* article and incorporating one personal story from one of the primary source accounts.

Differentiated prompt options:

- ▶ Write one paragraph explaining what is happening in the newspaper illustration, giving historical context you learned from the *Prologue* article.
- ▶ Listen to or read the three primary source accounts and write one paragraph about the challenges German Americans faced during WWI, incorporating one personal story from one of the primary source accounts.

Extension

Read the 1918 article [*From Vantage Points in America Pro-Germanism Shoots in the Back with Poisoned Bullets Our Boys 'Over There'*](#)

Questions for response or discussion:

- ▶ What is the main point of this article's author?
- ▶ What techniques does the author use to get his point across?
- ▶ In your opinion, what is the most striking sentence or phrase?
- ▶ Who do you think is the intended audience? What is the intended effect on the reader or on society?

More Resources



[The Anti-German Sentiment of World War I](#)

This article with media and discussion questions from Re-imagining Migration would be an excellent follow-up or independent activity, complementing the historical content with larger questions about immigration and U.S. culture.



[During World War I, U.S. Government Propaganda Erased German Culture](#)

An 8-minute NPR radio segment with accompanying article.



[German-Americans during World War I](#)

A long and informative article from Immigrant Entrepreneurship.

Liberty Cabbage

Have You Bought Your Liberty Cabbage Yet?

Don't lay yourself open to the charge of pro-Germanism hereafter by calling it "sauerkraut." Refer to it as "Liberty cabbage."

The pickle dealers add to this admonition the earnest plea that people buy it, whatever they call it. For enough sauer—beg pardon—Liberty cabbage is in storehouses here to feed the whole German army for several days.

Just because the food has a German name true patriots are avoiding it. Before the war it was selling at from \$45 to \$50 a barrel. It is down to \$14 or less now, with no buyers.

The pickle dealers sent a delegation to the Federal Food Board yesterday to ask its cooperation in getting rid of the supply of sauerkraut. They offered to change its name to anything the board might suggest, and "Liberty cabbage" was at last selected.

Food conservationists are urged to adopt this slogan:

**BUY, BUY LIBERTY CABBAGE!
AND BYE-BYE SAUERKRAUT!**

1. What's the "gist" of this newspaper article from 1918?
2. What does this tell you about what was happening in American society at this time?
3. What do you think is the significance of the opening phrase, "Don't lay yourself open to the charge of pro-Germanism"?

The New York Tribune, April 25, 1918

Being German, Being American

Section Heading	Summary	Key Details
Intro		
War in Europe Breeds Suspicion in America		
German American Men Enlist to Prove Loyalty		
Anti-German Sentiment Fuels Acts of Violence		
Main ideas or key takeaways of article:		

Anti-German Sentiment and Historical Storytelling

Listen to or read the three primary source accounts and examine the illustration from the *Lincoln Daily News*. Write one to two paragraphs explaining what is happening in the newspaper illustration, giving historical context you learned from the *Prologue* article and incorporating one personal story from one of the primary source accounts.

Materials: Primary Source Text



Lincoln Daily News, June 11, 1915

Materials: Primary Source Text



From Vantage Points in America Pro-Germanism Shoots in the Back with Poisoned Bullets Our Boys “Over There”

GERMAN language papers, the teaching of German in public schools, the singing in any school of German songs, should be vigorously suppressed.

The very thought of Germany and of Germany's past and future must be made so odious and hateful to all decent human beings that the word German will for generations to come carry the meaning of all that is vile and inhuman wherever heard.

The world's civilization and the strength of our moral forces demand that all that is German in name or thought or deed must be regarded from the cradle to the grave as we now think of lustful, brutish beasts, of murderers, of treacherous scoundrels, of all the vilest criminals who have sunk to the lowest depth of human rottenness.

Not to think of Germany in this way would be to prove our own moral flabbiness and our own readiness to count as a bosom friend the unrepentant outrager of womanhood and the murderer of helpless infants.

The criminal, who standing by the side of the cradle murders in cold blood the helpless infant whom God had sent to bless the earth, is not more to be despised than Germany.

The lecherous scoundrel who betrays and outrages the innocent is not more deeply sunk in sin than Germany.

The murderer who, in order to enrich himself, kills the sleeping family and burns the dwelling has as his equals in foul depravity and devil-guided work millions and millions of Germans.

Germany the accursed is possessed of the devil and by the devil, and for its own financial aggrandizement murders, outrages, burns, starves, blisters unto death with its hellfire and smothers with hell-devised deadly gases millions of the very flower of our civilization.

Your boy and your neighbor's boy must stand between the women of this land and these brutish beasts—all because Germany for half a century has been training its armies and teaching its people to take whatever they wanted wherever and whenever they had the power, regardless of morality or of right and wrong.

Therefore Germany must be made odious to all the world, and no honest-hearted, pure-minded man or woman should during the life of this generation ever deal with a pro-German, ever buy or sell a German-made product, ever associate with a pro-German.

Ostracism in business and in private life should be the penalty of pro-Germanism, and he who fails to pursue this policy will show that he regards business or social ties more highly than morality and honor, and that he has no hatred of murder or lust or all the other vile crimes which have brought to the world the greatest sorrow and anguish ever known.

Let the nation therefore move with energy and unswerving determination to crush the reptile propaganda which has wormed its way into our nation and which now seeks to sink its poisoned venom into the breast that has warmed it into life.

“Locate, eliminate and exterminate” all that is pro-German in language, in thought or in deed, wherever found and under whatever guise.

We fight the most desperate, hell-devised power which humanity has ever faced, and if we show mercy it will be counted as weakness, and if we should punish not the guilty without any sentimental, neurotic ideas of morality such as those of degenerate women who write scented notes to murderers and bedeck the cells of rapists, we would cease to have any individual or national morality.

War, accursed war, war of murder, is being made against us, and we must fight to live.

We must fight Germany and pro-Germanism in whatever form they appear and utterly destroy their power for evil now in evidence throughout our country. Our beloved boys from “over there” call us to heroic work here to stand behind them and destroy those who are stabbing them in the back from vantage points in America.

May 2, 1918

By **RICHARD H. EDMONDS**, Editor *Manufacturers Record*, Baltimore, Md.

Lesson Two

Immigration After the Great War

Educator Notes

In this lesson, students examine the patterns of immigration after World War I and the reasons behind them, first through graphs showing immigration to the United States over time, then through a contemporary secondary source article and finally through a primary source *The New York Times* article with accompanying maps. Before teaching this lesson, it will be helpful to work through the process on your own first to prepare for helping students interpret and connect the various sources of information.

When examining the pair of graphs in the opening to the lesson, students might notice:

- Before World War I, immigration had overall been rising and was higher in the early 1900's than any time prior.
- Around the start of World War I, the number of immigrants admitted dropped sharply, stayed low for the war years and then started to come back up.
- There were two brief peaks of immigration after the war, followed by another drop in 1925, which would get even lower during the following years.

The article from the National Park Service will help students evaluate their hypotheses about why these shifts occurred. When reading this article with students, it may be helpful to clarify the visa system (referenced in both articles in this lesson). Before 1924, immigrants came to the United States and were processed here, often at Ellis Island, before being released into the country. After 1924 and continuing through today, immigrants apply for visas in their home countries, and must have their paperwork approved before being allowed to travel to the United States. This was a major logistical change in how immigration to the U.S. was handled, beginning with the Immigration Act of 1924.

The articles in this lesson can be used either as excerpts (provided here as handouts) or in their complete forms, depending on the class and students. The full articles contain more context and nuance and would be a good option for students who can handle a longer text.

If using the full version of the article, *America of the Melting Pot Comes to End*, online access is preferable for the full article, as being able to zoom in on the small text will help readability. If students are tackling the original version, they could also read portions of the text to get the “gist,” rather than reading the entire article. The excerpted version of this article focuses on the “homogeneity” goal of the 1924 law, while the full article also discusses the additional purposes of streamlining the visa process and controlling the population by reducing immigration.

Lesson Plan:

Immigration after the Great War

Objectives

- Students will interpret visual information from graphs and maps about immigration patterns around World War I and connect them to information in written texts.
- Students will compare and contrast how a primary source and contemporary secondary source discuss the Immigration Law of 1924.
- Students will describe how immigration changed in the years after World War I and identify reasons for those changes.

Guiding Questions

- How did immigration laws and patterns change after World War I?

Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.10

Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Materials

- Copies of or access to the worksheet [Patterns of Immigration to the United States](#) and display graphs if possible.
- Copies of or access to the article *Closing the Door on Immigration* ([full article](#) or [excerpted version](#))
- Copies of or access to the provided maps from *The New York Times* article [America of the Melting Pot Comes to End](#)
- Copies of or access to the worksheet *America of the Melting Pot Comes to End*
- Copies of or access to either the [full article](#) or the [provided excerpt](#) of [America of the Melting Pot Comes to End](#)
- Copies of or access to [Exit Ticket: Immigration After the Great War](#)

Activities

Opening:

Share with students the [graph](#) displaying numbers of immigrants admitted to the United States in the time period 1850-2000 and then the [graph](#) of the narrower period of 1910-1930. For each, have students describe the trends they see and make any guesses about the reasons for patterns, such as high, low, rising, falling, etc., based on what they know about historical context.

Graphs can be displayed on a board or screen and followed by whole group discussion, or the activity can be done in groups or individually using the [Patterns of Immigration to the United States worksheet](#).

Secondary Source: *Closing the Door on Immigration*

Share with students the National Park Service [article](#) or [excerpt](#) *Closing the Door on Immigration*. Ask students to read the article, independently or in pairs, with the purpose of highlighting or underlining information from the article that helps explain any of the immigration trends they saw in the graphs. Have students share what they found in groups or as a class, connecting historical facts from the article to the visualized data in the graphs.

Highlight key takeaways from the article by asking:

- ▶ Why did immigration decrease, after a brief rise, following World War I?
- ▶ What was the purpose of the laws designed to restrict immigration after the war?

(Continued on next page)

Activities (continued)

Primary Source: *America of the Melting Pot Comes to End*

Share with students [the maps](#) from *The New York Times* article *America of the Melting Pot Comes to End* from Sunday, April 27, 1924. If possible, both display and give students access to their own copies, so they can closely examine the images and text. Ask students: What do you observe? What jumps out at you from this map? What are these maps of?

Once students are oriented to the maps, give them time to work in groups on the set of three questions [on the worksheet](#). For the last two questions, students will need access to either the full text of the article (on a computer is ideal, to zoom in on small text, unless large paper is an option), or the excerpt of the article provided.

If time allows, discuss as a whole group. Consider starting with turn-and-talks to help students generate ideas.

- ▶ After reading the National Park Service article, did anything Senator Reed wrote surprise you?
- ▶ How did the two articles, written nearly 100 years apart, differ in how they discussed the changes to immigration and the goals or impact of the legislation passed to restrict immigration?

Closing:

Have students complete the [Exit Ticket](#), assessing their understanding of the main historical content from today's lesson.

Extension: The first Red Scare and Palmer Raids

A piece of the post-WWI immigration story not discussed in this lesson is the rise of anti-immigrant movements during the first Red Scare, a period from 1917 to 1920 fueled by a widespread fear of communism, socialism and anarchism. Some labor and socialist groups in the United States had strongly opposed the war and were sanctioned or even prosecuted as a result. To further suppress anarchist and anti-war protestors, the U.S. government passed the Immigration Act of 1918, formalizing the ability to deport any immigrant or “alien” individual broadly associated with anarchy. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 to 1920, transforming Russia into the communist Soviet Union, further incited a fear of communism and of potentially subversive “radical” immigrants. The first Red Scare culminated in the Palmer Raids, a series of raids conducted in 1919 and 1920 by the United States Department of Justice to capture, arrest and deport suspected socialists, anarchists and communists. The raids resulted in the arrest, often without warrants, of thousands of people and the deportation of 556. The American Civil Liberties Union, or ACLU, was created in 1920 in direct response to the raids.

This chapter of history would be a valuable topic for further learning, using any of the lesson plans below.

The First Red Scare

Lesson plan for grades seven through 12 from the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. This lesson contains background on the Bolshevik Revolution and uses primary sources and academic articles to support a student debate on the topic.

Palmer Raids

Lesson plan from Stanford History Education Group. In this lesson, students examine a collection of documents in order to answer the question, “What caused the Palmer Raids?”

The Red Scare

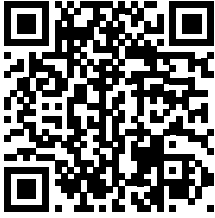
High school lesson plan from Ohio State University’s History Teaching Institute. This lesson uses political cartoons to familiarize students with the issue of nativism during this time period.

anarchy (noun)

a theory that regards the absence of all direct or coercive government as a political ideal and that proposes the cooperative and voluntary association of individuals and groups as the principal mode of organized society

Collins Dictionary

More Resources



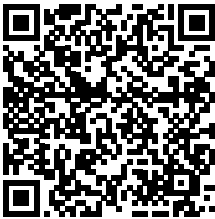
[The Immigration Act of 1924 \(The Johnson-Reed Act\)](#)

Article from the U.S. Department of State Office of the Historian



[The 1924 Law That Slammed the Door on Immigrants and the Politicians Who Pushed it Back Open](#)

Article from Smithsonian Magazine



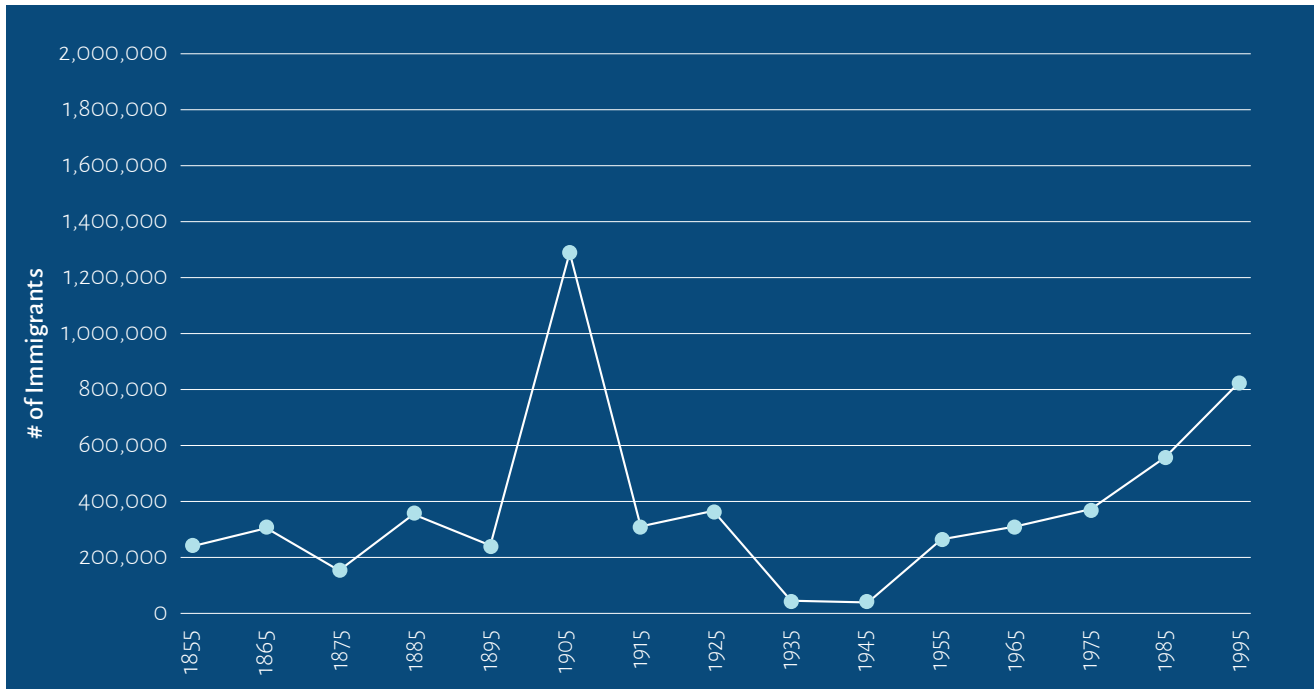
[The Impact of the Immigration Act of 1924](#)

A data-focused lesson plan for grades 7-12 created by the National Archives for DocsTeach

Patterns of Immigration to the United States

Part 1: Find the years of World War I (1914-1918) on the graph below.

Immigrants Admitted to the United States



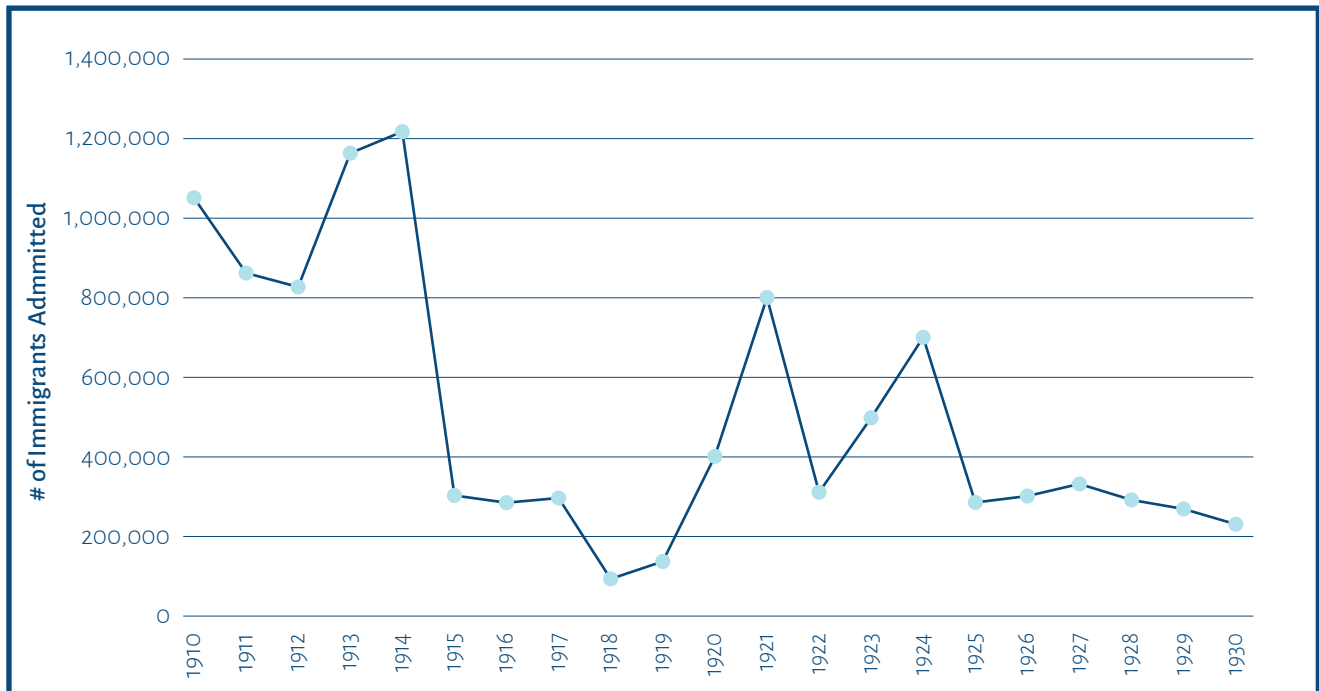
Source: Graph created from Migration Policy Institute tabulations of U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* (various years). Available at www.dhs.gov/files/statistics/publications/yearbook.shtm.

1. Describe the trends happening in immigration around the time of World War I.

2. Based on what you know about history, what guesses do you have that would explain any of the trends or patterns?

Part 2: Find the years of World War I (1914-1918) on the graph below. It presents the same data in Part 1, zoomed in on two decades.

Immigrants Admitted to the United States, 1910-1930

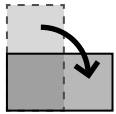


Source: Graph created from Migration Policy Institute tabulations of U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* (various years). Available at www.dhs.gov/files/statistics/publications/yearbook.shtm.

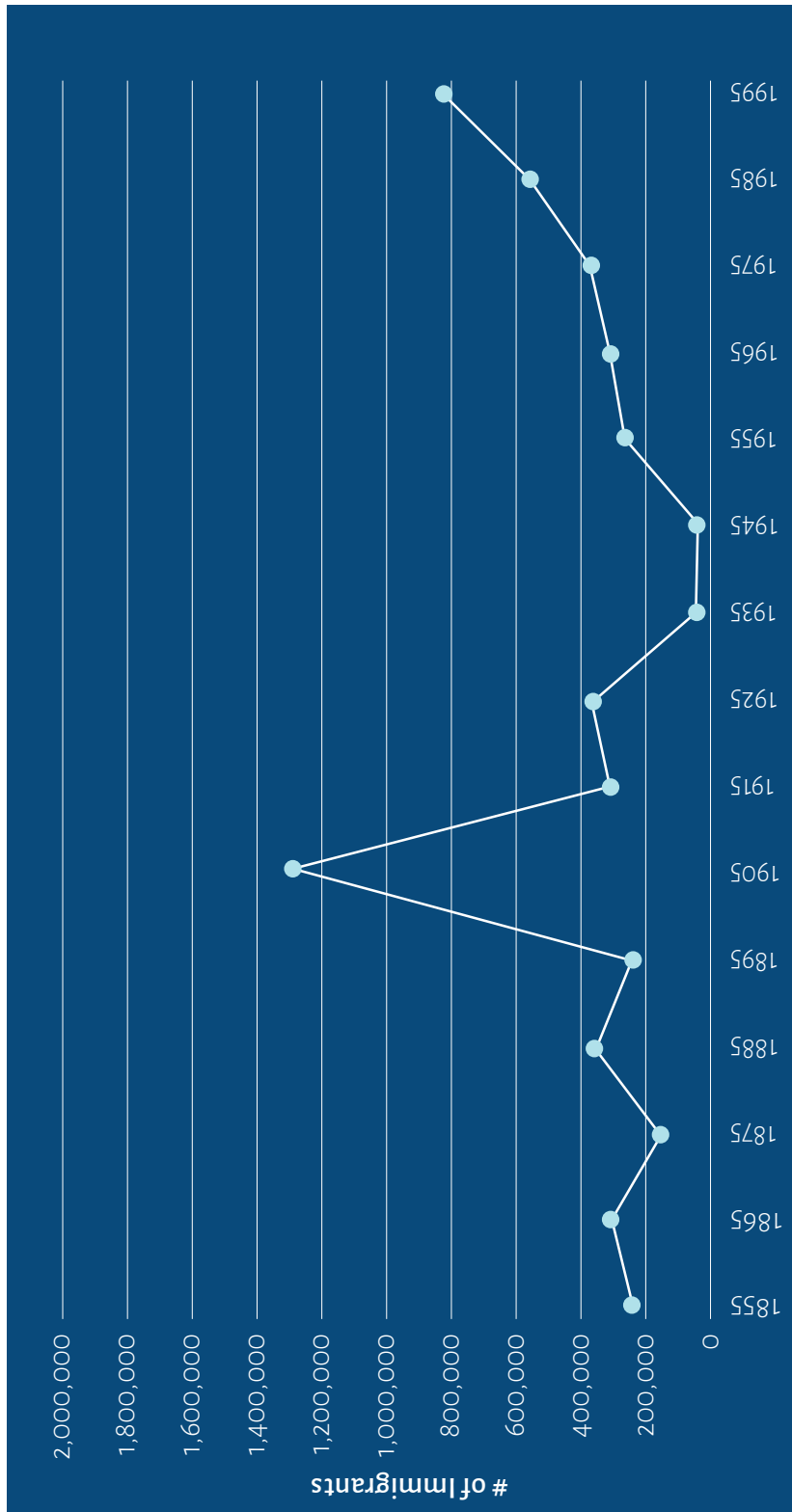
1. Describe the trends happening in immigration around the time of World War I.
2. Based on what you know about the events of this time period, what guesses do you have that would explain any of the trends or patterns?

Materials

Immigrants Admitted to the United States

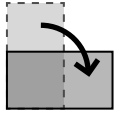


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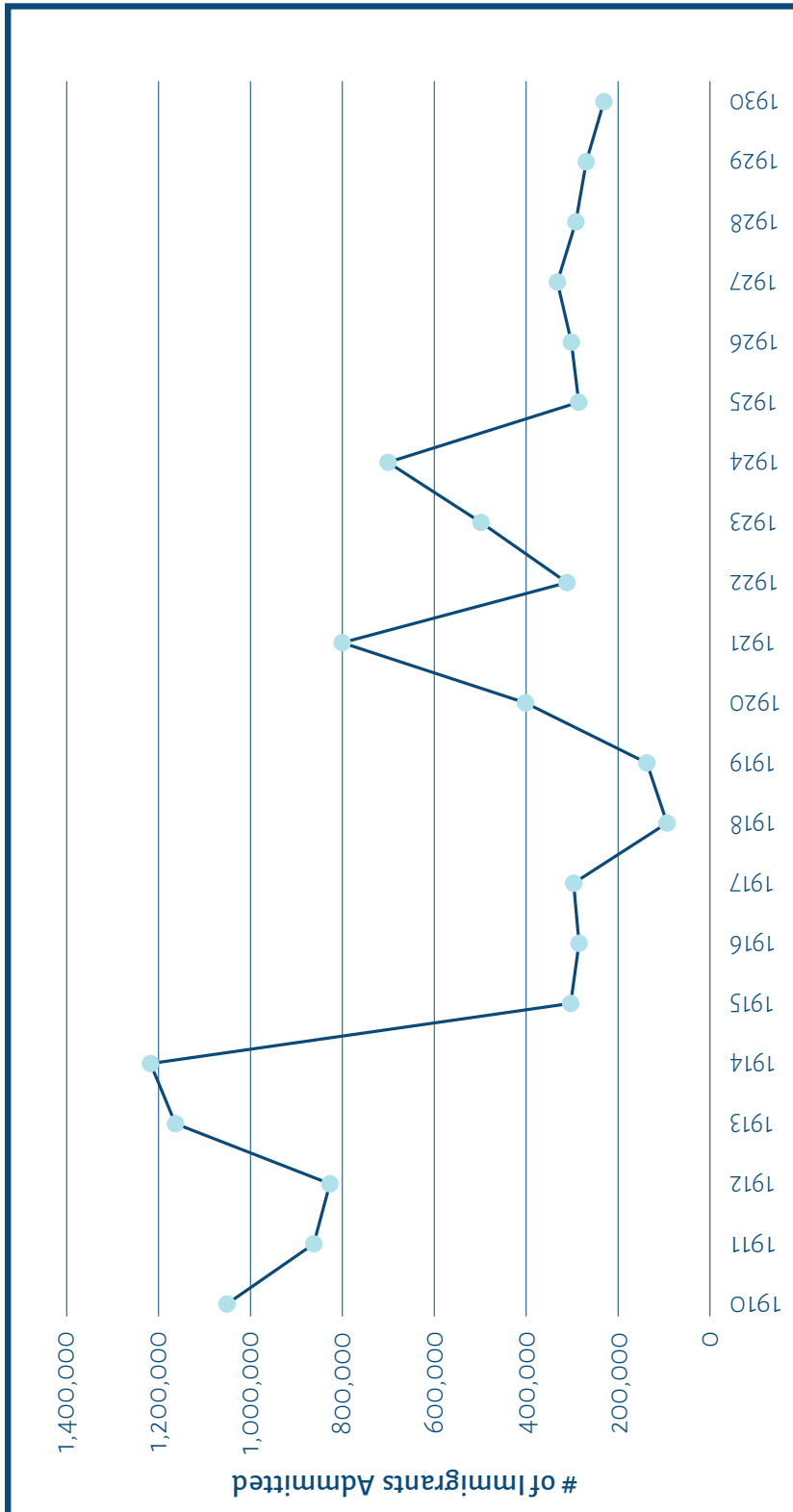


Materials

Immigrants Admitted to the United States, 1910-1930



Rotate paper 90 degrees clockwise to view image properly.



Materials

Closing the Door on Immigration

By the National Parks U.S. Department of the Interior, last updated: July 18, 2017



A 1921 political cartoon portrays America's new immigration quotas, influenced by popular anti-immigrant and nativist sentiment stemming from World War I conflict.

Library of Congress

U.S. participation in World War I fanned the flames of anti-immigrant sentiment, despite the fact that many immigrants served with distinction in the U.S. military. This time, the hostility was directed toward the southern and eastern Europeans that made up the wave of immigration occurring at the same time as the conflict. The geopolitical tensions that drew the United States into the war, combined with hostile depictions of our foreign foes through political cartoons and other media depictions, increased the popularity of isolationist and nativist viewpoints.

Anti-immigrant movements existed in the United States long before this. Nativist groups such as the Know-Nothing Party were active at the time of the first great wave of immigration in the mid-1800s. The first inspections of immigrants started in 1855 in response to the arrival of large numbers of Irish fleeing their homeland's potato famine. America's first big restriction on immigration, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, came in reaction to the arrival of Chinese immigrants in the mid-1800s. The 1907 "Gentlemen's Agreement" with Japan and the Immigration Act of 1917 further curtailed Asian immigration.

Immigration to the United States began to rebound following the conclusion of World War I. Among those leading the resurgence were refugees from the Russian Revolution, the Armenian genocide, and the collapse of the Italian economy. In the United States, however, demobilization led to increased competition for jobs and growing unemployment. Economic concerns combined with ethnic prejudice to end America's "open door" immigration policy in the 1920s.

(Continued on next page)

Materials (continued)

Closing the Door on Immigration

The Emergency Quota Act of 1921 established the nation's first numerical limits on the number of immigrants who could enter the United States. The Immigration Act of 1924, also known as the National Origins Act, made the quotas stricter and permanent. These country-by-country limits were specifically designed to keep out “undesirable” ethnic groups and maintain America's character as nation of northern and western European stock. The final quota figures were based on the ratio of different ethnic groups existing in America in 1890, before the second big wave of immigration by southern and eastern Europeans.

To implement the quotas, the whole immigration process was changed in 1924 to the visa system we still use today. Ellis Island was reduced to being a detention center for a trickle of immigrants with problems upon arrival and for persons being deported. Parts of the island fell into disuse after 1924 or were used by other government agencies for other purposes. Eventually, the government decided it wasn't worth keeping up the huge Ellis Island complex for that trickle of detainees, and the facility was abandoned in 1954.

When Adolf Hitler and the Nazis came to power in the 1930s, they showed the world the horrors that result if eugenics theories are carried to an extreme. It would take a Second World War in the 1940s to stop them, even as the U.S. quota system prevented many refugees from escaping the Nazis. It was not until the Immigration Act of 1965 that America's ethnicity-based quotas would disappear, and the United States would adopt a more ethnically neutral way of controlling immigration.

Materials

Closing the Door on Immigration (Excerpt)

Based on the article by the National Parks Service U.S. Department of the Interior



A 1921 political cartoon portrays America's new immigration quotas, influenced by popular anti-immigrant and nativist sentiment stemming from World War I conflict.

Library of Congress

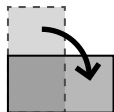
“Immigration to the United States began to rebound following the conclusion of World War I. Among those leading the resurgence were refugees from the Russian Revolution, the Armenian genocide, and the collapse of the Italian economy. In the United States, however, demobilization led to increased competition for jobs and growing unemployment. Economic concerns combined with ethnic prejudice to end America’s “open door” immigration policy in the 1920s.

“The Emergency Quota Act of 1921 established the nation’s first numerical limits on the number of immigrants who could enter the United States. The Immigration Act of 1924, also known as the National Origins Act, made the quotas stricter and permanent. These country-by-country limits were specifically designed to keep out “undesirable” ethnic groups and maintain America’s character as nation of northern and western European stock. The final quota figures were based on the ratio of different ethnic groups existing in America in 1890, before the second big wave of immigration by southern and eastern Europeans.

“...When Adolf Hitler and the Nazis came to power in the 1930s, they showed the world the horrors that result if eugenics theories are carried to an extreme. It would take a Second World War in the 1940s to stop them, even as the US quota system prevented many refugees from escaping the Nazis. It was not until the Immigration Act of 1965 that America’s ethnicity-based quotas would disappear and the United States would adopt a more ethnically neutral way of controlling immigration.”

Materials

America of the Melting Pot Comes to End (Excerpt)



Rotate paper 90 degrees clockwise to view image properly.

THE NEW YORK TIMES. SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 1924. 3

AMERICA OF THE MELTING POT COMES TO END

Effects of New Immigration Legislation Described by Senate Sponsor of Bill—Chief Aim, He States, Is to Preserve Racial Type as It Exists Here Today

HOW NEW LEGISLATION WILL CHANGE THE FLOW OF IMMIGRATION FROM EUROPE TO THE UNITED STATES

Legend for Immigration Flow:

- Above 30,000
- 30,000 to 50,000
- 10,000 to 30,000
- 5,000 to 10,000
- 1,000 to 5,000
- Below 1,000

Map 1: FLOW UNDER THE PRESENT LAW
(Under Which 357,801 Immigrants Are Admitted)

Map 2: FLOW UNDER THE PROPOSED LAW
(Under the House Bill 161,990 Would Be Admitted)

Materials (continued)

America of the Melting Pot Comes to End (Excerpt)

“Until the years 1853-85 the sources from which the greater number of our immigrants came were the same sources from which our country was originally colonized, and as a result of this fact the immigrants were easily assimilated in our population upon their arrival here. Beginning about 1885, new types of people began to come. For the first time in our history men began to come in large numbers from Italy, Greece, Poland, Turkey in Europe, the Balkan States and from Russia. As these new sources of immigration began to pour out their masses of humanity upon our shores the old sources in Northwestern Europe seemed to dry up, and whereas in 1890 the natives of Southern and Eastern Europe constituted about 8 per cent of our foreign population, in 1910 they constituted 39 percent.

“The change brought new difficulties in the problem of assimilation. These new peoples spoke strange languages. It was not to be expected that they would readily fuse into the population that they found here. It was natural that they should not understand our institutions, since they came from lands in which popular government is a myth...

“The “melting pot” is no longer necessary, for each year's immigration that reaches our shores will be but a counterpart of the population that it finds on arrival. The composition of our population will not change in future decades in the same way in which it changed between 1885 and the outbreak of the World War. It is true that 75 percent of our immigration will hereafter come from North-western Europe; but it is fair that it should do so, because 75 per cent of us who are now here owe our origin to immigrants from these same countries...

“In my opinion, no law passed by Congress within the last half century compares with this one in its importance upon the future development of our nation. Its adoption means that America of our grandchildren will be a vastly better place to live in. It will mean a more homogeneous nation, more self-reliant, more independent and more closely knit by common purpose and common ideas.”

America of the Melting Pot Comes to End

1. Based on what you've read today, in what year do you think this article was published in *The New York Times*?
2. What are the changes to be implemented by the new law, as shown by the maps? List or describe.
3. The author of this article was Senator David Reed, co-sponsor of the Immigration Act of 1924 (also known as the Reed-Johnson Act). Read some of the article accompanying the map, or a provided excerpt. What were his arguments in favor of the bill?

Supplement

Twelve Foreign-Born Heroes of World War I

Educator Notes

This student-friendly resource summarizes the contributions of 12 foreign-born figures during World War I. It is designed to be easily distributed directly to students but could also inspire a short research project in the form of a written response, or digital or oral presentation. Regardless of how these heroes' stories are explored, we encourage use of the discussion questions for a more dynamic and deeper engagement with the history.

It is important to note, or allow students to observe, that many of these famous figures were white men, as are the majority of the heroes who are remembered for their actions during World War I. In the unequal society of the time, only white men were typically able to pursue careers that would earn them these accolades, but every one of them was supported by people from marginalized groups, without whom the war could not have been waged at all. The demographic breakdown of the time period's heroes is influenced by factors such as immigration and citizenship laws, lack of support for non-white or non-male volunteers enlisting and taking command, and whose stories are revered and remembered.

Asking students to critically examine society, both of the time period and today, and the way history is told will deepen their understanding of the content and its connection to the present day.

Discussion Questions

1. Many of these World War I heroes brought specific strengths, such as multilingualism, that were assets to the U.S. military.
 - a. What other strengths are often found in people who have migrated?
 - b. What are some other examples where diversity of background is a strength in a group of people?
2. Though all of the people listed were born outside the United States, most were men of white, European descent.
 - a. What factors in the society of the time, and the recording or telling of history, led to this imbalance?
 - b. Are there other definitions of "hero" that would include those who worked less visibly than on the battlefield?

More Resources



[The Immigrant Army: Immigrant Service Members in WWI](#)
from United States Citizenship and Immigration Services



[Immigrants](#)
from the United States World War One Centennial Commission



[World War I: Immigrants Make a Difference on the Front Lines and at Home](#)
from the Library of Congress



[Jewish American Immigrants in the Military during World War I](#)
from the National Museum of American Jewish Military History

Handout

Twelve Foreign-Born Heroes of World War I

Johannes S. Anderson (Finland)

Johannes Anderson was born in Finland in 1887, immigrated to Chicago in the early 1900s and entered the U.S. Army in 1916. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions in Consenvoye, France, shortly before the war ended in 1918. His citation reads, “While his company was being held up by intense artillery and machine-gun fire, 1st Sgt. Anderson, without aid, voluntarily left the company and worked his way to the rear of the nest that was offering the most stubborn resistance. His advance was made through an open area and under constant hostile fire, but the mission was successfully accomplished, and he not only silenced the gun and captured it, but also brought back with him 23 prisoners.” After the war he married, raised two children and worked as a carpenter in Illinois.



Louis Cukela (Croatia)

Louis Cukela was born in 1888 in Split, Croatia (formerly the Austro-Hungarian Empire). He immigrated with his brother to Minneapolis in 1913 and shortly thereafter enlisted in the U.S. Army. He was honorably discharged from the Army as a corporal in 1916. The next year, with war already consuming Europe, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. After the U.S. entered WWI, Cukela was sent to France, where he was promoted to Sergeant. He was awarded the Medal of Honor by both the Army and Navy for his actions during the Battle of Soissons. Advancing through a forest, his company had been stopped by a German force. Cukela moved alone toward the enemy lines through a barrage of heavy fire, single-handedly capturing a machine gun position and several of the enemy soldiers. Cukela would go on to an illustrious military career spanning both world wars, finally retiring with the rank of Major in 1946. He died in 1956 and was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.



George Dilboy (Greece)

George Dilboy was born in 1896 in a Greek community of what is now Turkey. Due to persistent ethnic conflicts and persecution, his family moved to the United States when he was 10, starting in New Hampshire and eventually settling in Somerville, Massachusetts. At the age of 16, Dilboy returned to the area of his homeland, Asia Minor, to fight in the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913. Upon returning to Massachusetts, he enlisted in the National Guard to fight in a conflict on the Mexican border. Already an experienced soldier at the age of 21, he enlisted in the Army when the U.S. entered World War I and was sent to France to fight on the third continent of his short military career. He was killed in the line of duty in 1918, after fighting so courageously that he was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. In his hometown of Somerville, Massachusetts, a monument of George Dilboy stands outside City Hall, and a stadium is named in his honor.



Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee (Canada)

Lenah Sutcliffe immigrated to the United States from Canada in 1899 to complete her formal nurse training in New York, the same year she married her husband, John Higbee, a retired U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel. When her husband passed away in 1908, Lenah Higbee entered the newly created U.S. Navy Nurse Corps as one of its 20 original members. Higbee became the chief nurse at Norfolk Naval Hospital and then the second superintendent of the Nurse Corps in 1911, a role she held for 11 years. Under her leadership, the Navy Nurse Corps grew from 160 to more than 1,300 nurses and successfully served during the health care crises of WWI and the Spanish Flu epidemic. Though Higbee was never given a military rank and was paid far less than her male colleagues, she was awarded the Navy Cross in 1920 and became the first woman to have a U.S. Navy warship, the Higbee, named after her.



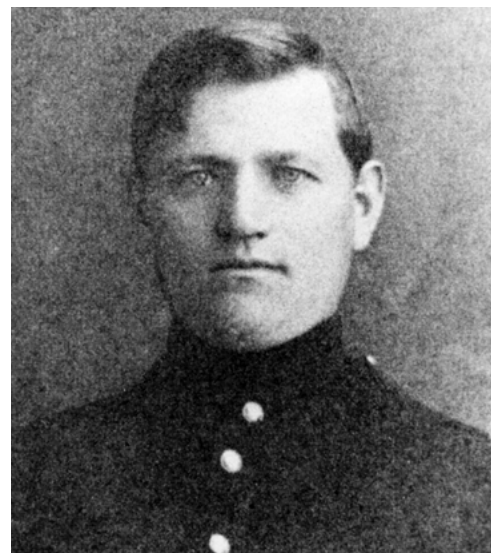
Jane Jeffrey (England)

Jane Jeffrey was born and raised in Newmarket, England, and immigrated to New England, training as a nurse in hospitals in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New York. When the United States entered World War I in 1917, Jeffrey was 37 years old, and she became involved in the war effort as a medical professional through the Red Cross. She was sent to France to serve at a military hospital, where she worked in hospital wards housed in tents without running water and overflowing with wounded soldiers. In July 1918, the hospital Jeffrey worked at was bombed by German planes. Two people were killed and 14 injured, including Jeffrey, who sustained a wound near her spine by a piece of metal shrapnel. Despite being severely wounded, Jeffrey refused to leave her post and continued to administer aid both during and after the attack. Her extraordinary courage earned her the Legion of Honor from France and the Distinguished Service Cross from the United States.



Matej Kocak (Austria)

Matej Kocak was born in 1882 in Slovakia, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He immigrated to the United States in 1906 and enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps from New York the following year. While in France in 1918, his company was set upon by gunfire from a hidden enemy machine gun. Kocak went out alone and attacked the enemy position, succeeding in driving off the enemy soldiers. Later that day, he organized a group of soldiers and led an attack on a second machine gun location, putting it out of action. He was killed in action in France just a few months later, and was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor by both the U.S. Navy and Army.



James I. Mestrovich (Montenegro)

James (born Joko) Mestrovich was born in Yugoslavia (present-day Montenegro) in 1894. He immigrated to California in 1911 and then to Pennsylvania. In 1914 he volunteered with the Red Cross as an interpreter for medical personnel traveling to Serbia. As well as interpreting, he assisted the wounded on the battlefield, witnessed the devastation of a typhus outbreak, and saw the dedication of the doctors and nurses, many of whom gave their lives. Upon returning to the United States, he told a reporter, “Before I went back home with American Doctors and saw the loyalty with which they served humanity did I [sic] understand the meaning of Americanism.” Inspired, he soon enlisted in the Pennsylvania National Guard, spending time along the U.S.-Mexico border and in several other states before deploying to France in 1917. In one battle through a ruined French town, the company commander fell wounded while the rest of the men took shelter. Mestrovich crawled through heavy enemy fire to bring the officer back, where he administered first aid and saved the man’s life. He was wounded but survived, only to be killed in action less than two months later.



Rosika Schwimmer (Hungary)

Rosika Schwimmer was a leading figure in feminist and pacifist movements, starting as a young woman in Hungary, where she organized and campaigned for women’s rights, and later in London, when she became press secretary of the International Women’s Suffrage Alliance. When the Great War broke out, Schwimmer traveled to the United States to advocate for peaceful mediation among the nations involved. Ultimately international leaders refused to take action, and Schwimmer organized an unofficial neutral mediation conference, sponsored by American automobile manufacturer Henry Ford. The conference convened in Stockholm in 1916, with the American delegation sailing across the Atlantic on the Oscar II, known as the Peace Ship Expedition. Schwimmer’s authoritative leadership with the singular goal of ending the war drew criticism and negative press, and she eventually resigned in her position as adviser to the expedition, which failed to influence European leaders. Back in the United States following the war, her career was damaged by negative publicity and the anti-feminist and nativist wave that struck the U.S. after the war. Schwimmer was never granted American citizenship due to her refusal to bear arms in defense of the country, a clause in the citizenship application that was required at the time. She lived in the United States until her death in 1948.



Marcelino Serna (Mexico)

Marcelino Serna settled in Texas in 1916 after immigrating from Mexico at the age of 20. He enlisted in the U.S. Army and would become the first Latino soldier to be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the second-highest battlefield honor. During the Battle of Saint-Mihiel, France, after 12 of his fellow unit members were killed, Serna volunteered for a solo mission and successfully killed six enemy soldiers while bringing eight others back as prisoners. Two weeks later, he took on another solo mission by following a German sniper back to his trench during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. He threw three grenades, killing 26 enemy soldiers and capturing another 26. He was hit by sniper fire in both legs four days before the war ended but survived his wounds and lived until 1992. Serna is the most decorated World War I soldier from Texas, and there has been a recent movement to posthumously award him the Medal of Honor.



Michael Valente (Italy)

Michael Valente was born in Italy in 1895 and immigrated to the United States alone at the age of 18, finding work as a mason in upstate New York. He joined the New York Guard in 1916, and when the United States entered World War I, he was deployed to France. Near the end of the war, his unit was involved in an operation against the Hindenburg line, an enormous German defense through France that was severely inhibiting the progress of the Allied forces. Valente and one other soldier volunteered to rush forward through machine-gun fire. They charged on and succeeded in disabling two machine guns, killing several enemy soldiers and capturing many more. His courageous action contributed greatly to the Allied victory. Upon returning to the United States, Valente settled in New York and became an involved community member in the city of Long Beach. The city now has a bridge named after him, a plaque proclaiming Long Beach as his home and a local holiday, Michael Valente Day, celebrated on September 29.



Ludovicus Matheus van Iersel (Netherlands)

Ludovicus Matheus van Iersel began his career of heroic deeds while traveling to the United States as a sailor on a merchant ship in 1917. He rescued 27 British sailors whose ship had been hit by a German torpedo. Upon arriving in the United States, he immediately submitted papers both to become a U.S. citizen and to enlist in the U.S. army. He learned English in just a few months, and his multilingualism (Dutch, English, French and German) became a valuable asset when he shipped out to France to combat the German enemy. He received the Medal of Honor for his bravery in a battle in Mouzon, France, where his actions were estimated to have saved the lives of around one thousand men. After returning to the United States, he used the expedited military naturalization process to become an American citizen. When the U.S. entered WWII, he volunteered again and joined the Marine Corps, serving along with two of his sons who had joined the Navy.



Reidar Waaler (Norway)

Reidar Waaler was born in 1894 in Oslo, Norway, and came to the United States in 1913, arriving first in Virginia and then settling in New York. He enlisted in the New York National Guard and was sent to Europe to participate in World War I. In France on the Hindenburg Line, he saw a British tank on fire and rushed in to rescue any soldiers trapped inside. He successfully extracted two men and returned to the tank, which also contained ammunition that could explode at any time, to ensure that no other soldiers needed help. Waaler received a Medal of Honor for his bravery. After the war, he and his wife moved back and forth between New York and Norway, opening several businesses, until the U.S. entered World War II. Waaler tried to enlist, but at 47 he was too old for the Army. Instead he was accepted into the intelligence service, based in Sweden. He became a United States citizen through the Nationality Act of 1940.



Handout

Print-Friendly Guide to Resources

Introduction (page 2)



[Teaching Literacy Through History, Americans All: Foreign-born Soldiers and World War I](#)

Lesson One: Educator Notes (page 3)



[Being German, Being American](#)

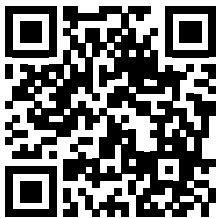
Lesson One: Lesson Plan – Materials (page 5)



[Have You Bought Your Liberty Cabbage Yet?](#)



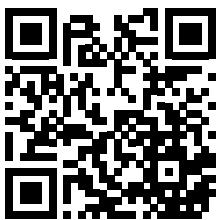
["We had to be so careful" \(audio/text\)](#)



["Nobody would eat kraut" \(audio/text\)](#)



["Get the rope!" \(text only\)](#)



[From Vantage Points in America Pro-Germanism Shoots in the Back with Poisoned Bullets Our Boys 'Over There'](#)

For links on pages 6-8:

Find QR codes on page 41 under the sections "Lesson One: Educator Notes" and "Lesson One: Lesson Plan – Materials".

Lesson Two: Lesson Plan – Materials (page 18)



[*America of the Melting Pot Comes to End*](#)

Lesson Two: Lesson Plan – Extension (page 20)



[The First Red Scare](#)



[Palmer Raids](#)



[The Red Scare](#)

Lesson Two: Lesson Plan – Materials (page 22-23)



[Patterns of Immigration to the United States](#)



[Patterns of Immigration to the United States](#)

Lesson Two: Lesson Plan – Materials (page 26)



[*Closing the Door on Immigration*](#)

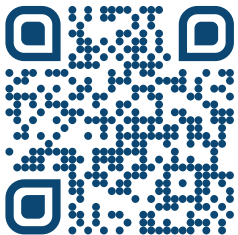


The Immigrant Learning Center

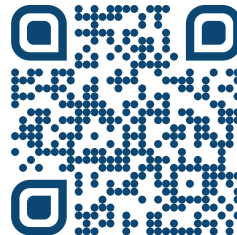
About The Immigrant Learning Center

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. of Malden, MA, is a not-for-profit organization that gives immigrants a voice in three ways. The English Language Program provides free, year-round ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes to help immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston become successful workers, parents and community members. The Public Education Institute informs Americans about immigrants and immigration in the United States, and the Institute for Immigration Research, a joint venture with George Mason University, conducts research on the economic contributions of immigrants. For more information, visit the website <http://www.ilctr.org>.

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