

## Immigrant Experience Lesson Plan

**Grade Level:** 8

### **Background Information:**

Students will already have been immersed in a unit on the topic of immigration. They will have taken part in activities to build their content-area vocabulary and will have a basic understanding of how and why groups immigrated to the United States (push and pull factors). These lessons aim to will serve to both humanize the immigrants whom we are studying and will ask students to engage in a debate about how much should immigrants be expected to assimilate--a debate that still takes place today. Finally, the last part of the lesson aims to help students explore how different immigrant groups were (and are) included or excluded from the United States.

**Time Required:** 3-5 class periods

### **Part 1: Melting Pot/Salad Bowl**

#### **Objectives/Learning Intentions:**

- Students will examine the metaphor of a melting pot and a salad bowl and how that metaphor represents the tension between unity and diversity.
- Students will analyze interviews (oral histories) from immigrants who came through Ellis Island.
- Students will synthesize the melting pot/salad bowl debate and the oral histories in a structured discussion.

#### **Materials:**

- Projector with sound
- Computer
- Melting Pot and Salad Bowl Reading
- Two Column Note Sheet and Structured Academic Controversy Explanation
- Audio of Immigrants and Transcripts
- Immigrant Oral History Questions

#### **Setting the Stage:**

Begin by having students observe the messages sent by Schoolhouse Rock's "The Great American Melting Pot." Have them quick write for a few minutes after watching the video on the following questions:

- What message is the video sending?
- Who is represented in the video?
- Who is left out?

Engage students in a brief discussion about the message the video is sending, who is represented in the video, and who is left out. This will serve as an introduction to the immigration lesson.

**Strategy/Lesson:**

Students will employ an AVID critical reading strategy (they will have used this strategy before). First students will skim the text without marking it (prereading). Next, students will number the paragraphs. As they read the text a second time, they will circle key terms, and underline the author's claims--in this case, the author's arguments supporting the salad bowl or melting pot metaphor. Ensure that all students understand the metaphors by using a think-pair-share strategy.

Once students have marked the text, they will compare with their neighbor what they underlined. Students will then transfer the arguments they found for the salad bowl and melting pot metaphors to a two-column note sheet. For English Language Learners or students with IEPs, the teacher can pre-mark the text for them to help them identify what's important, and/or individual students could receive a two-column note sheet that is partially filled out, depending on the student's needs.

After students have gathered arguments, they will take part in a structured academic controversy (SAC). The teacher should assign students to argue a certain perspective. There should be an equal number arguing each perspective. After assigning groups, have them prepare review their arguments on the two-column note sheet and *add anything information from the oral histories they examined.*

Explain how the SAC will work:

- a. Side A presents their position using supporting evidence from the text.
- b. Side B restates to Side A's satisfaction.
- c. Side B presents their position using supporting evidence from the text.
- d. Side A restates to Side B's satisfaction.

Have students participate in the SAC. Next have them abandon their positions:

- a. Abandon roles.
- b. Build consensus regarding the question (or at least clarify where your differences lie), using supporting evidence.
- c. Consider the question: **What should we expect from immigrants in the U.S.?**

Go through the SAC with students. End the final discussion you've gotten through the final question.

Finally, ask students to reflect in writing about the structured academic controversy. This will be an exit slip. Students will reflect on:

1. What went well about our discussion?
2. What could go even better next time?

## **Part 2: Ellis Island Oral History**

Students will receive background information on Ellis Island and watch a short video to get a sense of what the island looks like. Students will understand that mostly European immigrants came through Ellis Island. Next, students will interact with primary-source oral histories from immigrants who came through Ellis Island. Students will have the text of the narratives in front of them while they listen to the audio. After listening to the audio as a class (two times for each) and following along, students will answer questions about each interview to deepen their thinking (see attached worksheet). Students with IEPs or English Language Learners could receive a sheet where the questions are partially filled out, depending on the student's needs.

### **Primary Sources:**

Audio of Immigrants:

**1. Emma and William Greiner**

<https://www.nps.gov/elis/learn/education/oral-history-ei-28.htm>

**2. Kathleen Magennis Lamberti**

<https://www.nps.gov/elis/learn/education/oral-history-ei-439.htm>

**3. Gertrude (Gudrun) Hildebrandt Moller**

<https://www.nps.gov/elis/learn/education/gertrude-remembers-changing-her-name.htm>

**4. Charles W. Beller**

<https://www.nps.gov/elis/learn/education/charles-remembers-maintaining-his-identity.htm>

## **Part 3: Chinese Exclusion, Angel Island, and Poems**

Similar to the information students received about Ellis Island, students will receive a brief introduction to the Angel Island Immigration Station. Students will understand that predominately Asian immigrants were processed through this immigration station. Next, students will analyze the Chinese Exclusion Act (activity adapted from Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation). Students will read through several times, first, we will read through and look for new or unknown vocabulary. After we define the vocabulary, we will summarize what the Chinese Exclusion Act says. Finally, I will have students write three reactions or responses in the final box.

Students will read through a slide that compares Ellis Island to Angel Island (adapted from Erica Lee). Students will understand that immigrants were detained much longer at Angel Island. Next students will look at four Angel Island Poems to make inferences about how life was in detention. Students will receive both the English and Cantonese versions of each poem. They will answer questions on the Angel Island Poem Analysis worksheet attached. I will model analyzing Poem 1 together.

Poem 1:

Everyone says travelling to North America is a pleasure.  
I suffered misery on the ship and sadness in the wooden building.  
After several interrogations, still I am not done.  
I sigh because my compatriots are being forcibly detained.

Poem 2:

Abandoning wife and child, I crossed an entire ocean. I do not know  
how much wind and frost I've weathered; it was because my  
family was poor that I searched for white jade.  
Bidding farewell to relatives and friends, I drifted ten thousand *li*. It is  
difficult to keep track of all the rain and snow I've endured; it is all  
due to an empty purse and my reference for copper coins.

Poem 3:

America has power, but not justice.  
In prison, we were victimized as if we were guilty.  
Given no opportunity to explain, it was really brutal.  
I bow my head in reflection, but there is nothing I can do.  
By Chan

Poem 4:

Leaving behind my writing brush and removing my sword, I came to America.  
Who was to know two streams of tears would flow upon arriving here?  
If there comes a day when I will have attained my ambition and become successful,  
I will certainly behead the barbarians and spare not a single blade of grass.

Finally, students will engage in a seminar-type discussion comparing the treatment of Chinese immigrants to the treatment of many of the European immigrants who came through Ellis Island. We will relate the poems and oral histories back to our initial melting pot/salad bowl discussion.

As an optional extension or assessment opportunity, students could compare and contrast the experiences of these immigrant groups, while tying in the ideas of melting pots and salad bowls. The class discussion will be a good primer for this writing.

# Structured Academic Controversy

Position A The U.S. should be a <b>melting pot</b> .	Position B The U.S. should be a <b>salad bowl</b> .
Evidence 1:	Evidence 1:
Evidence 2:	Evidence 2:
Evidence 3:	Evidence 3:
Evidence 4:	Evidence 4:

Questions I have about sources and ideas:

*SAC p1.*

## Should the United States be a melting pot or a salad bowl?

### Side A:

The U.S. should be a melting pot.

### Side B:

The U.S. should be a salad bowl.

### I. Groups Prepare

- a. Find evidence to support your side of the argument. Craft position.

### II. Position Presentation

- a. Side A presents their position using supporting evidence from the text.
- b. Side B restates to Side A's satisfaction.
- c. Side B presents their position using supporting evidence from the text.
- d. Side A restates to Side B's satisfaction.

### III. Consensus-Building

- a. Abandon roles.
- b. Build consensus regarding the question (or at least clarify where your differences lie), using supporting evidence.
- c. Consider the question: **What should we expect from immigrants in the U.S.?**

# Ellis Island Oral Interview

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Education Department  
Ellis Island Immigration Museum  
Statue of Liberty National Monument



## Interviewee: Emma and William Greiner

Date of Birth: December 30, 1913 and July 18, 1912

Date of Interview: March 3, 1991

Interviewer: Paul E. Sigrist, Jr.

Immigrated from Italy (on German and French Quotas) at Age 11 and 12 in 1925

Ellis Island Collection: EI-28

### Greiner (What He Packed):

**EMMA:** Yes, yes. It was very disrupting, you know, to pack and break up your home.

Oh, we took, of course, our clothing and some pieces of like china that were very, very special. And maybe a blanket or two also that were real good wool, that we felt maybe we may not be able to get here in the United States.

**WILLIAM:** Of course, there was pressure to leave things there but they accommodated us kids. And I brought a lot of things that (he laughs) I now wonder why I was so attached, for instance, to greeting cards. They were very, very romantic in those days and they were through the years birthdays and so on. And a few toys. My tin soldiers. I don't remember whether I brought anything about my small railroad, um.

**WILLIAM:** Oh, yes, yes. And then I had, uh, what we called a "Magic Lantern." It was a... Projector.

Very, very primitive, (he laughs) compared to today's.

**EMMA:** And I was hoping he wouldn't bring those soldiers because when we played together at home, you see I was German and he was French, you know, and he would always decimate all my soldiers, kill them all off, so we had quite a different set in our lives...(she laughs)

# Oral History

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Education Department  
Ellis Island Immigration Museum  
Statue of Liberty National Monument



Interviewee: KATHLEEN MAGENNIS LAMBERTI  
Date of Birth: NOVEMBER 6, 1898  
Date of Interview: FEBRUARY 25, 1994  
Immigrated from Ireland in 1921 at Age 22  
INTERVIEWER: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR.  
Ellis Island Collection: EI-439

SIGRIST: Tell me what that first night in America was like?

SIGRIST: So she fed you?

LAMBERTI: She fed, oh, yes, she fed us. (she laughs)  
And my Uncle Joe brought in, he brought in a pizza pie. And I, we looked at that and they said, "Now, this is pizza pie." And Mother said, "Oh, what is that?" This dreadful looking stuff. It was awful. Mother said, "Mmm." Didn't eat that. Well, we were very disappointed. When we got his back turned we put it out. We threw it out. But we didn't, we didn't know what it was. To eat tomatoes in a pie. That was dreadful. (she laughs) Then, but we did grow to love it.

# Ellis Island Oral Interview

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Education Department  
Ellis Island Immigration Museum  
Statue of Liberty National Monument



## **Interviewee: Gertrude (Gudrun) Hildebrandt Moller**

Date of Birth: June 15, 1920

Date of Interview: October 5, 1992

Interviewer: Janet Levine, Ph.D

Immigrated from Germany in 1929 at Age 9

Ellis Island Collection: EI-222

### **Moller (Name Change in School):**

I was born Gudrun Hildebrandt and married Moller, Mr. Moller, who was from Denmark. He immigrated here many years later and we met in New York. However when I started school in Chicago, where I grew up, needless to say, first of all, I couldn't speak a word of English, and I was the only child in the school that couldn't speak English. And (she laughs) it wasn't too happy the first couple of years but my mama said "Take heart because some day you're going to be able to speak two languages and all the ones that were teasing you will speak only one". And it was true. She was always right. So, my teacher suggested, since none of the children could pronounce Gudrun, which is an old Germanic-Scandinavian name, and a very beautiful name (I hear), she gave me a list of girls' names to choose from. So that all the kids could converse, you know, know what to call me. So I picked the name starting with a g, as with my name, and it was Gertrude. I'm not very happy with it, but it has stuck with me all of these years.

# Ellis Island Oral Interview

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Education Department  
Ellis Island Immigration Museum  
Statue of Liberty National Monument



**Interviewee: Charles W. Beller (Kalman Bilchick)**

Date of Birth: November 4, 1903

Date of Interview: August 29, 1991

Interviewer: Janet Levine, Ph.D.

Immigrated from Russia at age 6 in 1910

Ellis Island Collection: EI-82

**Levine:**

Did your mother and father have the attitude that they wanted their children to become Americanized and they wanted them to hold on to the traditions of Jews in Russia?

**Beller (Maintaining Cultural Identity):**

My father would want us to go to synagogue on the high holy days; and I always went with him. The other boys, they strayed away from the religious part of it. But I always went with him on every high holiday and the like. I went to Hebrew school. I had the rabbi come to the house for awhile. Then I went to the Rabbi's place in order to learn until I was thirteen years old. And after that I didn't care about that. I wanted to be Americanized. I want to be an American, and I want to accept my opportunities and take the, make the most of them. Take advantage of everything that I could learn. And I did just that.

Name:

## Immigration Oral Histories

### 1. Emma and William Greiner

Level 1: What did Emma and William take to America?

Level 2: Make an inference as to why William was so attached to greeting cards and other things from home.

Level 3: Imagine you had to pack to move to another country. What would you take with you? Why?

### 2. Kathleen Magennis Lamberti

Level 1: What was Kathleen's first reaction to pizza?

Level 2: What does Kathleen's reaction suggest about her experience with foreign foods, like pizza?

Level 3: What do you think it would be like to be immersed in a completely new culture and country like Kathleen was?

### 3. Gertrude (Gudrun) Hildebrandt Moller

Level 1: How does Gertrude feel about her new first name?

Level 2: In what ways was Gertrude pressured to assimilate?

Level 2: How does the melting pot/salad bowl tension (or the unity vs. diversity tension) apply to Gertrude's experience as an immigrant?

#### **4. Charles W. Beller**

Level 1: What actions did Charles take to preserve his cultural identity?

Level 2: Interpret what the interviewer means when she uses the term "Americanize."

Level 2: How does the melting pot/salad bowl tension (or the unity vs. diversity tension) apply to Charles's experience as an immigrant?

STUDENT HANDOUT

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Chinese Exclusion Act Matrix

<p>From the New York Times, April 28, 1882:  <b>"The New Chinese Bill"</b>                  Section 1. "AN ACT to execute certain treaty stipulations relating to Chinese.                  Whereas, In the opinion of the Government of the United States, the coming of Chinese laborers to this country endangers the good order of certain localities within the territory thereof; therefore                  It is enacted, &amp; c., That from and after the expiration of 90 days next after the passage of this act, and until the expiration of 10 years next after the passage of this act, the coming of Chinese laborers to the United States be and the same is hereby suspended; and during such suspension it shall not be lawful for any Chinese laborer to come, or having so come after the expiration of said 90 days, to remain within the United States."</p>	<p><b>New or Unknown Vocabulary</b>                  Directions: List any new or unknown vocabulary words in this box. Use a dictionary, your classmates, or your teacher to find definitions.</p>
<p><b>Response</b>                  Directions: Write down any thoughts, you have after reading Section 1 of the "Exclusion Act."</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p><b>Summarize</b>                  Directions: Rewrite and summarize the passage in your own words.</p>