NEW

Head Way

Advanced Student's Book

Liz and John Soars

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language teaching se

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Our land is your land!

Avoiding repetition . Describing nationalities . British and American English





The American dream

1 Look at the photograph. What things can you identify? What is their significance?



- **2** Read the introduction to Ellis Island. Choose the numbers you think are correct. Then answer the questions.
 - 1 Check the numbers with your teacher. Do any surprise you?
 - 2 Which countries do you think the immigrants came from?
 - 3 Why is Ellis Island a symbol of 'the American dream'?

Ellis Island is a symbol of America's immigrant heritage. For more than six decades – 1892 to 1954 – this island, about one mile south west of New York City, saw an estimated (1) 5 / 7 / 12 million immigrants pass through it. Today their descendants account for almost (2) 10% / 20% / 40% of the population of the United States. During peak periods as many as (3) 500 / 2,000 / 5,000 people each day would be checked, and questioned. Ellis Island, like its neighbour the Statue of Liberty, is a symbol of the American dream of freedom and opportunity.

3 Read an extract from the British writer and journalist H.G. Wells. Use a dictionary if necessary.

Answer the questions.

- 1 Why does Wells call Ellis Island 'this filter of immigrant humanity'?
- 2 What words and images does Wells use to illustrate the huge numbers of people?
- 3 What do you learn about the way the people were processed?
- 4 How would you answer Wells' final question? What has it all amounted to?

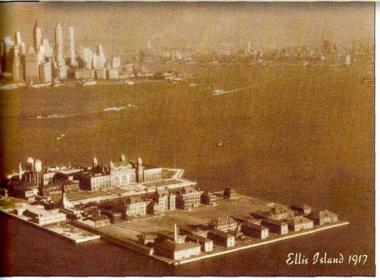


TALES FROM ELLIS ISLAND

I VISITED ELLIS ISLAND YESTERDAY. It chanced to be a good day for my purpose. For the first time in its history this filter of immigrant humanity has this week proved inadequate to the demand upon it. It was choked with twenty thousand or so from Ireland, and Poland, and Italy, and Syria, and Finland, and Albania. Men, women, children, dirt, and bags together. All day long, the long procession files, step by step, bearing bundles and trunks and boxes, past this examiner and that, past the quick, alert medical officers, and the clerks. It is a daily procession that would stretch over three miles, that in any week in the year could put a cordon of close-marching people round London or New York, that could populate a new Boston. What in a century will it all amount to?

H.G. Wells 1907





4 Read about some individual immigrants. Work in three groups.

Group A Read about the Russian girl on p10.

Group B Read about the German boy on p10.

Group C Read about the Polish baby on p11.

Answer the questions.

- 1 Who is telling the story?
- 2 What is the problem?
- 3 What is the role of the commissioners? How do they treat the immigrants?
- 4 What do you learn about the families and background of the immigrants?
- 5 Is there a happy ending?
- **5** Find partners from the other two groups. Compare the three stories, using your answers to exercise 4.

RUSSIAN GIRL

AGE 20



A HANDSOME, CLEAR-EYED RUSSIAN GIRL of about twenty-years, the daughter of a farmer comes in and sits down before us. She is clean and intelligent looking. She nervously clasps and unclasps her hands and the tears are welling in her eyes.

'That girl,' says one commissioner, 'is an interesting and puzzling case. Her father is a farmer in moderate circumstances. A young man with whom she grew up, the son of a neighbor, came here two years ago, and last year wrote to her father that the girl could come over and he would marry her. So she came, alone. But the prospective bridegroom didn't show up. I wrote to him he lives somewhere in New Jersey - and last week he appeared and looked her over. Finally he said he'd changed his mind. He wasn't sure whether he wanted to marry her or not. Naturally her pride was somewhat wounded. She says she doesn't want to go back to be laughed at by her family, and I can't let her land. So everything is at a standstill. She could work, look at her strong arms! A nice girl, too. Well, I don't know what to do. You don't know any lady who wants a servant, do you? No? Well, I just don't know what to do with her.'

He turns again to the girl.

'Are you willing to marry Peter if he comes again?'

The girl nods and says, 'I am', the tears brimming over. 'Well, I'll write to the fellow again and tell him he's a fool. He'll never have such a chance again.'

William Williams Papers, Ellis Island Commissioner, March 1910

CERMAN BOY

AGE 13

THEY ALSO QUESTIONED PEOPLE ON literacy. My uncle called me aside.

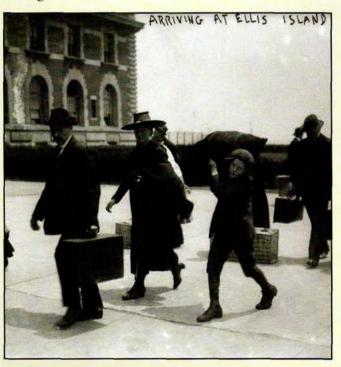
He said, 'Your mother doesn't know how to read.' I said, 'That's all right.'

For the reading you faced what they called the commissioners — like judges on a bench. I was surrounded by my aunt and uncle and this other uncle who's a pharmacist — my mother was in the center. They said she would have to take a test of reading.

So one uncle said, 'She can't speak English.'

A commissioner said, 'We know that. We will give her a siddur.'

You know what a siddur is? It's a Jewish book. The night they said this, I knew that she couldn't do that and we would be in trouble. Well, they opened up a siddur. There was a certain passage there they had you read. I looked at it and I saw right away what it was. I quickly studied it - I knew the whole paragraph. Then I got underneath the two of them there - I was very small - and I told her the words in Yiddish very softly. I had memorized the lines and I said them quietly and she said them louder so the commissioner could hear it. And that served the purpose. She looked at it and it sounded as if she was reading it, but I was doing the talking underneath.



Arnold Weiss, 1921



POLISH BABY

AGE 0

THE POLISH WIFE OF A Pennsylvania coal miner, both admitted a year before, had gone back suddenly to Poland to visit her old father, who had taken sick and might soon die. The visit over, she returned to America. She would be admitted at once, for little visits do not count against quotas. Her husband was at Ellis Island, waiting for her. We told him everything would be all right, but he still looked extremely nervous. Then the ship came in, the *Lapland* of the Red Star line, from Antwerp, and we found out why he was so nervous. On the day before the ship made port, out on the high seas, a baby had been born to the returning mother. Mother and child were both doing well in the Ellis Island hospital, everyone was delighted, until the inspector admitted the mother, but excluded the baby.

'Why?' asked the father, trembling.

'Polish quota exhausted,' pronounced the helpless inspector.

They brought the case to me. Deport the baby? I couldn't. But somebody had to act quickly, for the mother was not doing well under the idea that her baby would soon be taken from her.

'The baby was not born in Poland,' I ruled, 'but on a British ship. She is chargeable to the British quota. The deck of a British ship is British soil.'

'British quota was exhausted yesterday,' replied the inspector. That was a blow. But I had another shot.

'Come to think of it,' I remarked, 'the Lapland hails from Antwerp. That's in Belgium.

The baby is Belgian. Use the Belgian quota.'

'Belgian quota ran out a week ago,' said the inspector. I was stumped.

'Oh, look here,' I began again. 'I've got it! It is clear to me that the mother was hurrying back, so the baby would be born here and be a native-born American citizen. No immigrant business at all. This baby had the intention to be born in America, only the ship was a day late and that upset everything. And – under the law – the baby, by intention, was born in America. It is an American baby – no baby Pole at all, no British, no Belgian – just a good American baby. That's the way I rule!'

Henry Curran, Ellis Island Commissioner, 1922-26

Vocabulary work

6 Find the words or phrases in your text which have similar meanings to these phrases. Explain them to your partners from the other groups.

Text A

- 1 plays nervously with her hands
- 2 her eyes are filling with tears
- 3 her pride was hurt
- 4 no progress can be made
- 5 she finally starts to cry

Text B

- 1 took me away from the group
- 2 stood opposite
- 3 particular
- 4 learnt ... by heart
- 5 worked well

Text C

- 1 shaking slightly
- 2 that was a big disappointment
- 3 I made another attempt
- 4 comes from
- 5 I was not able to think of any answer at all

What do you think?

- · Read and comment on these quotes.
- 1 'No country has received a more diverse variety of immigrants than the United States.'

 Do you think this is true? What other countries have received great numbers of immigrants? From where?
- 2 'Each successive group of arrivals, however, is viewed as less desirable than their predecessors.' How do people generally react to immigrants? Why do you think they react like this?
- What's the difference between ...?

a refugee an illegal immigrant
an asylum seeker an immigrant

Are any of these groups in the news at the moment?

- Do you have many immigrants in your country? Which countries do they come from? Do you know of any that have become famous and/or successful?
- What causes people to emigrate? Is there any country you would like to emigrate to? Why?