

**“We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams.”**

President Jimmy Carter

During the 19th century, a great wave of European and Asian people immigrated to America. In 1816, the Irish population in America was 6,000. By the end of 1854, the Irish population jumped to nearly 2,000,000. The German population grew from 10,000 in 1832 to over 200,000 in 1854. During the same time period, over 25,000 Chinese moved to California. The flood of immigrants during the 19th century changed the face of our nation and contributed to the diversity of our country. The story of the people who came to America tells the story of American history.

Imagine that one day, while you are exploring your family's attic, you find an old diary. It appears to be over 100 years old! In reading it, you realize this diary belonged to someone who immigrated to America in the 19th century. It is filled with information about this person's life, family, native land, journey to America, and experience upon arriving.

What would this diary reveal about the immigrant who wrote it?

<http://www.bcps.org/offices/lis/models/attictreasure/index.htm>

## Turning Pages

The pages of a diary can hold secrets. They can record a trip to a new place or an adventure with an old friend. They can be filled up with ordinary things, like what you ate for breakfast or how much the movie costs. They can tell you about yourself - or someone else. They might be made by thousands of people or only one. A diary can be big or little, fancy or plain, long or short, old or new.

Diaries are private books, but sometimes people are willing to share them. They offer a glimpse of what something or someone was really like, without being fixed up or made to sound pretty. If you don't know the writer, reading a diary can be like reading a mystery. Because diaries aren't written for other people to read, characters aren't introduced but just appear with no explanation. You get to figure out who's who and what's what.

Looking through a diary is a little like meeting the person who wrote it, at least for a few minutes. In a history book, the author writes about what other people did. But in a diary, you get to hear the story first-hand. Of course, diaries aren't always as well organized or as easy to find as history books, but they're worth looking for.

Most diaries record the events in the life of a person. They're a reliable way to learn the histories of ordinary people, individuals who go without notice in most history books.

[http://www.uen.org/annefrank/turning\\_pages.shtml](http://www.uen.org/annefrank/turning_pages.shtml)

### TASK:

You are now going back in time... You will create an immigrant persona who lived in the mid to late 1800's or early 1900's and write a diary of your experiences. In your diary you will record not only your experiences, but also your feelings and the events in the life of your immigrant persona. Remember, your diary is a type of historical fiction that combines facts with fiction in an artistic way. Your diary will be a reliable way to learn about the histories of ordinary people, individuals who go without notice in most history books.

In your diary, you will chronicle the following experiences:

- Your life in your home country
  - Information about your country of origin
  - Information about your family
  - Your family's occupation
  - Information about living in your home country
- Push/Pull factors
- Packing
- The Journey to America
- Arriving in America (Castle Garden or Ellis Island)
- Assimilation (your new life in America)

## Immigrant Persona

Immigrant name: \_\_\_\_\_

Country of origin: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Family members and ages:

\_\_\_\_\_ Age

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Age

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Age

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Age

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Age

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Age

\_\_\_\_\_

You will research information about your country of origin.  
Remember, all you facts MUST BE historically ACCURATE!!!

Information about your country of origin:

Setting:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Weather:

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Type of home:

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Government:

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Type of occupation your family had:

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Other important information:

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## **Immigrant Diary - Entry #1**

### **PUSH/PULL**

Now that you have adopted a new persona, try your best to think as that individual. Use language from the time period and base your entry on accurate facts.

You will write about your home country and your decision to leave. Use the information from the picture books, images and documents to help you.

Your entry must include:

- Information about your life in your country of origin (facts)
- Push factors (facts)
- Pull factors (facts)
- Your feelings about leaving your country, family and friends
- Your feelings about living in America
- Problems you think you will face (based on facts)
- Hopes and dreams for the future

Remember, these are only a few of the things you will write about. Add your thoughts and concerns. Make sure you combine facts and fiction to create a believable diary entry.

**Use interesting adjectives, similes and descriptive, luscious language.**

## **Immigrant Diary - Entry #2**

### **PACKING**

Now that you have adopted a new persona, try your best to think as that individual. Use language from the time period and base your entry on accurate facts.

You will write about your leaving your home country and your decisions about what to take with you to a new land. Use the information from the chapter, "The Sacrifice" to help you.

Your entry must include:

- Information about the items you decided to pack
- Why you brought these items (wants vs. needs)
- The difficulty you faced deciding what to bring and what to leave
- Feelings as you packed
- Problems you think you will face (based on facts)
- Hopes and dreams for the future

Remember, these are only a few of the things you will write about. Add your thoughts and concerns. Make sure you combine facts and fiction to create a believable diary entry.

**Use interesting adjectives, similes and descriptive, luscious language.**

## Immigrant Diary- Entry # 3

### THE JOURNEY

Now that you have adopted a new persona, try your best to think as that individual. Use language from the time period and base your entry on accurate facts.

You will write about your experiences on the journey to America. Use the information from The Famine Ship and the journey centers to help you.

#### **Your entry must include:**

- What it was like saying goodbye to family members
- Is your home country near a port or did you have far to travel just to get to a port?
  - What methods of travel did you use to get to the port?
- Describe the sailing ship
  - Use your senses to describe the ship.
  - What did you see, hear, smell, feel, and taste (describe the foods)?
- Describe life in steerage
  - Use your senses.
  - What did you see, hear, smell, feel and taste (describe the foods, drinks)?
- Describe the health of the passengers on the ship
  - Did anyone in your family get sick?
  - Did other passengers get sick or die? Describe the scene. Show details.
- What were the accommodations and food like on the ship?
- Hardships/obstacles you faced on the voyage
- What are your hopes and dreams?

Remember, these are only a few of the things you will write about. Add your thoughts and concerns. Make sure you combine facts and fiction to create a believable diary entry.

**Use interesting adjectives, similes and descriptive, luscious language.**



## **Immigrant Diary - Entry #4**

### **ARRIVAL IN AMERICA**

Now that you have adopted a new persona, try your best to think as that individual. Use language from the time period and base your entry on accurate facts.

You will write about arriving in America. Castle Garden, Ellis Island and Angel Island were immigrant processing stations that determined if you were allowed to enter the United States or if you were returned to your home country. Use the information from the picture books, images, videos, trip and documents to help you.

Your entry must include:

- Information about the processing station
- How you felt arriving in New York harbor, or California
- A description about the processing station (buildings, services, accommodations, food, hospitals)
- The size, number of people, the confusion, the heat, the cold
- The examinations/inspections
- Were you separated from family members?
- Language barriers
- Other problems faced
- Whether any family members came to meet you
- How long you were at the processing station
- Your feelings about arriving in America
- Problems you think you will face in America (based on facts)
- Hopes and dreams for the future

Remember, these are only a few of the things you will write about. Add your thoughts and concerns. Make sure you combine facts and fiction to create a believable diary entry.

**Use interesting adjectives, similes and descriptive, luscious language.**

## **Immigrant Diary - Entry #5**

### **ASSIMILATION**

Now that you have adopted a new persona, try your best to think as that individual. Use language from the time period and base your entry on accurate facts.

You will write about living in America. Use the information from the Tenement Museum, picture books, Immigrant Kids, images and documents to help you.

Your entry must include:

- Information about your new life in America (facts)
- Your home (Detailed facts)
- Your learning a new language
- Your schooling
- Your job
- Your parent's job
- Your play time
- Problems faced (prejudice, learning a new language, missing home, new foods)
- How much of your old culture do you keep or give up and why
- Your feelings about your new country, family and friends
- Hopes and dreams for the future

Remember, these are only a few of the things you will write about. Add your thoughts and concerns. Make sure you combine facts and fiction to create a believable diary entry.

**Use interesting adjectives, similes and descriptive, luscious language.**