

Hello New York! Teacher's Notes

Aim

This lesson looks at immigration into the USA through New York at the beginning of the 20th century. Students will read the journal of a girl who came to the USA as an immigrant, and will learn some vocabulary to describe positive and negative things. They will then write an imaginary letter from a newly-arrived immigrant to his family.

Warmer

Show students a picture of the Statue of Liberty – there are lots on the internet to download, or you can do a simple drawing of it (which could be funnier!). Ask students what it is called and where it is.

1 Reading

- Pre-teach any vocabulary that your students might not know. The following are some suggestions: *immigrant, bunk bed, seasick, harbor, crowded, on deck*. Students read the text and then say if they have ever been on a long boat trip (When? Where? Why?).

2 Comprehension

- Students answer the comprehension questions.

Answers

- 1 More than 12 million immigrants came through Ellis Island between 1892 and 1954.
- 2 From a few hours up to a year.
- 3 She was from Poland.
- 4 Her mother, father, and Lawrence (probably her brother).
- 5 She didn't have a good trip. It took eleven days. She was seasick, and the boat was very crowded. They didn't have much food.
- 6 She stayed on Ellis Island for three days.
- 7 She was very happy to be in America and felt free there.

3 Vocabulary

- Students must decide if the adjectives have a positive or negative meaning. They are all in the text and students can use it to help them.

Answers

positive – delighted, excited, happy, pleased
negative – awful, frightened, terrible, worried

- 1 awful and terrible
- 2 frightened
- 3 worried
- 4 delighted and pleased
- 5 excited, pleased, happy

4 Writing

- Encourage students to use their imagination and some of the adjectives that they have worked on in this lesson to describe how the young boy felt when he traveled to America on his own. The questions will help them to write the letter. Students should also use the reading to help them with their letter.

Homework ideas

Students could write a letter from the mother or sisters in reply to the one they wrote in class.

Websites

Here are some websites that you or your students might find useful for more information about Ellis Island and the immigrants that came in to New York.

www.nps.gov/stli – statue of liberty website

www.ellisland.org/genealogy/ellis_island_history.asp – Ellis Island history

www.statueofliberty.org/Ellis_History.html – Ellis Island history

teacher.scholastic.com/activities/immigration/seymour – read first-hand accounts of immigrants' journeys to America