Three immigrants from Guadeloupe arrive at Ellis Island, c. 1900.

Front cover, clockwise starting from upper left:

Teresa Vazquez, 19, and her day-old daughter, Lilian, at Lutheran Medical Center.

Fiorello H. La Guardia, c. 1910

Juan Rodriguez, 2007

Dora and David Levine, c. 1913


Immigrant family looking at the Statue of Liberty from Ellis Island, c. 1930.

Robert Doug, left, from Jamaica, Chingtao Lekchet-Johnson, center, from Nigeria and Paulette Gouldbourne, from Jamaica, take the oath of citizenship, along with 300 others from 59 countries on Ellis Island, 1996.

Steinway Kindergarten, 1911
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Chinese New Year, AP /Richard Drew; Oath of Citizenship, AP/Bebeto Matthews. All other photos are credited below.

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**FINAL ESSAY**

In this curriculum, *A City of Immigrants: Dreams and Realities of Life in New York, 1840 – 2007*, you have learned many things about immigrants. Using what you have learned, write an essay about why immigrants come to New York City and what are some of the problems they have had to overcome.
INTRODUCTION

Immigration has defined the history of New York City. Our city’s culture, economy and neighborhoods have been renewed and transformed by immigrants.

The history of our city encompasses an assortment of histories of individuals, families and groups. This document based curriculum booklet tells some of these stories of immigration through letters, official documents, photographs, poems and interviews. Through them, you will learn about families and individuals who have made the journey to New York City, discovering why they came and how they adjusted to their lives in a new land.

The immigrants you will learn about – German, Irish, Jewish, Italian, Chinese, Jamaican, Dominican, and Mexican – came to New York City at different times with different cultures, but they have certain things in common. They chose to leave their homes to make a new life here, searching for opportunities that they believed they could not achieve in their homelands. They kept some of the ways of their parents, adapted some of their traditions and created new lives for themselves, their families and communities. This story of immigration continues in New York City today as thousands of people arrive to seek their fortune in the Big Apple.
When they arrived, they got jobs working in various piano factories in the City. They sailed on the ship Helene Sloman from Hamburg, Germany, to New York City. The journey took almost five weeks. That chances of finding work were good. The Steinways decided to follow Charles to New York. In June, 1850, they arrived in New York – the rest traveled to other cities or Western farmlands.

The Steinway family was part of a “Great Migration” of immigrants who left their homelands and moved to the United States during the mid-19th century. From about 1820 onwards, the growth of shipping companies and cheaper fares made it possible for more and more immigrants to cross the Atlantic Ocean. New York City was the primary entry port for these newly arriving peoples. Their spirit and hard work shaped the growth of New York City and the United States.

During the years 1840 to 1860, more than 3,000,000 immigrants arrived in this City. Over 70% of these men, women and children came from Ireland and Germany. Why would so many people want to leave their homes and travel across the ocean to a new country? In 1845, a disease destroyed the potato crop in Ireland, a main source of food for the Irish. The potato disease also attacked crops in Germany. Agricultural depression, combined with political unrest and economic problems, compelled many Germans to leave their homeland, hoping to find more opportunity and a better life in America.

The Steinways were one such family. They lived in Seesen, a German village. Heinrich E. Steinway, the father of the family, had a small business making pianos and other musical instruments. Facing a weak economy and many regulations on trade, the Steinways found it harder and harder to do business.

In 1849, Charles, one of the Steinway sons, decided to leave for America. Charles had supported the failed Revolution of 1848 and thought it best to leave Germany. He went to New York, already a leading cultural and manufacturing center of the nation, and one of the major centers of piano production. He reported back to his family that chances of finding work were good. The Steinways decided to follow Charles to New York. In June, 1850, they sailed on the ship Helene Sloman from Hamburg, Germany, to New York City. The journey took almost five weeks. When they arrived, they got jobs working in various piano factories in the City.

3,000,000 immigrants landed in New York during the years 1840 to 1860. Only about 1 in 6 immigrants remained in New York – the rest traveled to other cities or Western farmlands.

Let’s find out how many immigrants stayed in New York. What is 1/6th of 3,000,000?

Do your math here:

SOME IMMIGRATION MATH

3,000,000 immigrants landed in New York during the years 1840 to 1860. Only about 1 in 6 immigrants remained in New York – the rest traveled to other cities or Western farmlands.

Let’s find out how many immigrants stayed in New York. What is 1/6th of 3,000,000? 500,000

Do your math here:

GLOSSARY

to migrate: to move from one place to another
to emigrate: to leave one’s country for another place
occupation: a job, a way of earning one’s living
ship’s manifest: a list of passengers that the captain gave to immigration officials when his ship arrived in port

The Steinway family name was originally Steinweg. “Weg” is a German word meaning “way.” In this case, the family changed their name after arriving here to make it sound more American. More often, though, immigrant inspectors would change an immigrant’s name at the arrival in port to make it easier to spell on forms. First names can also be tricky to figure out. Heinrich is German for Henry. “Minna” was a nickname for Wilhelmina. Do you know anyone whose name changed when he or she arrived in this country?

Today many Americans are interested in tracing the path of their immigrant ancestors. This can be done by looking at documents such as ship’s manifests and census records. These records often contain detailed information about the members of a family, their ages, and occupations. See what you can learn about the Steinway family from the manifest of the Helene Sloman and answer the questions below.

SHIP’S MANIFEST FOR THE HELENE SLOMAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passenger</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steinway, Heinrich 53 M</td>
<td>Instrument Maker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie 46 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorette 22 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heinrich Jr. 19 M</td>
<td>Instrument Maker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minna 17 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William 15 M</td>
<td>Instrument Maker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermann 13 M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert 10 M</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna 7 F</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Who are the mother and father in the family?

2. What clues led you to your answer?

3. What was the father’s occupation?

4. Look at the picture above. Which passenger from the list do you think this person is?

5. How many Steinway children traveled to America?

6. How many were girls? How many were boys?

Records may not tell the whole story. How many children were there in the Steinway family? Remember, Charles was already here. Unless you did more detective work, you might not know that the eldest son, Theodore, stayed behind in Germany to run their piano business. He arrived in the United States in 1865. All together, the Steinways had nine children.
THE IMMIGRANTS: Letters from America

Immigrants wrote many letters to relatives and friends back home, sharing family news and their opinions about life in America. Here are parts of two letters Henry and Charles Steinway wrote to their brother Theodore in Germany in 1850 and 1852. Remember, Charles arrived in New York in 1849 and Henry arrived in 1850.

Read the letters to answer the questions below.

October 1850

After telling Theodore that their mother and father are in good health, Charles and Henry describe working and living conditions in the new country:

Henry writes:

Father now has a job with a German musical instrument maker by the name of Leucht. He makes sounding boards and earns $6.00 a week. If he did the same work for an American, he could earn at least $7.00, but since he knows not a word of English and will never learn it, he will never be able to work for an American. I now make $7.00 a week. If I wanted to become a piano tuner, I could get a job at $9.00 to $10.00 a week, but I don’t feel like tuning all the time. People here work only 10 hours a day, but they work hard. [Charles continues.] We all work in different factories, yet close by. Here there are about 200 piano factories and about the same number in Boston. The weather is beautiful now; generally, the autumn is very nice and pleasant in America. Now the mosquitoes and bed bugs are no longer as bad during the hot summer.

1. Why can’t their father work for an American company and make more money? ___________________________

2. Henry says that people in America work only 10 hours a day. What does that say about working hours in Germany? __________________________________________________________________________________________

3. Does Henry think that people work harder in America? __________________________________________________________________________________________

Charles to Theodore, 1852

Here, Charles gives his opinion on life in Germany and America.

Dear Theodore,

How are you? I hope you are better than I am, since, due to my chest pains, I am unable to work without ruining my health. It has now already been almost three years since I left Germany. I do not advise you to come here, if you are able to make an honest living with diligence and thrift [in Germany]. And I advise the same to everyone, whoever it may be. Of course America offers a home for those who want to work and had no work in Germany and who generally had to struggle against want and sorrow. But nothing is perfect and so it is with the fortunes of people in America. In Germany we had our problems and here we have different ones. Very few Germans can stand the climate, almost all of them suffer from chest pains. Tell people who do not know a trade to avoid coming here. There is almost no way that a man over 21 and without a trade or money can make his fortune here, since nobody takes the time to teach.

On a separate sheet of paper, pretend you are writing to a relative who is thinking about coming to America. Describe where you live. Name two things that you like about living here. Name two things you don’t like.

GLOSSARY

trade: a kind of work requiring skill and training, such as a printer or carpenter
climate: the weather over a long period of time
diligence: constant attention to work
thrift: being careful with money, not spending too much
pianoforte: the pianoforte was invented in Italy in 1700 by Bartolomeo Cristofori. The word pianoforte was eventually shortened to piano.
translation: to change the words of one language into the words of another

4. In 1852, Charles is not well. What health problem does he have in common with other German immigrants?

5. What does he think causes the problem?

6. Is it possible for a young man to earn a good living in America if he does not have a trade or job skills?

7. Does Charles think a young German should come to America if he or she can earn a living at home by working hard and being thrifty? ________ Why or why not? ________

By the following year, 1853, the Steinway family had saved enough money to start their own piano factory. Here is a picture of the Steinway family in front of their homes and factory in the year 1862, thirteen years after Charles first arrived in America. Look at the photograph. Do you think they have done well in America or not? ________ What clues do you see in the photo that prove your point? Write them down.

1865 turned out to be a sad year for the Steinway family. Henry Jr. died of tuberculosis and Charles died of typhoid fever. Their father asked Theodore to come to New York to help run the business. Theodore sold his piano company in Germany and arrived in New York in October, 1865.

Sometimes historians need special language skills to study the history of immigration. Here is part of the actual letter written to Theodore in 1852. It is written in German. You have just read translations of the letters into English.
THE STEINWAYS: Steinway Village

After the Civil War, the Steinway business grew steadily. The family needed more space to expand their factory buildings. In 1870, William Steinway bought 400 acres of farmland in northern Astoria, in Queens, for their new factory site.

Why did they look for space in Queens? They needed to be near water to transport heavy raw materials, like lumber and iron ore, that were used to make piano cases and other parts. The finished pieces were shipped to the 53rd Street factory where they were assembled into pianos. Ferry boats were used to ship the parts to Manhattan, and to bring workers living in Manhattan back and forth to the factory. The Astoria factory communicated with the 53rd Street factory by telegraph, until telephones were installed in 1884.

There was another reason to move. Steinway workers held strikes in 1869 and 1872. This was a period of political unrest and economic troubles in the United States. By moving the factory to Queens and building a “company town” where workers could live, away from bad housing conditions and labor unrest, William Steinway could control forces affecting the stability of his business.

Worker housing in the “Steinway Settlement” began with forty-five small brick houses built on Albert Street (now 41st Street) between Winthrop (now 20th) Avenue and Old Bowery (now 20th) Road. Find Albert Street on the map on page 7.

William Steinway also added buildings he thought a community should have. If you were designing a village, what would you put in it? After you’ve made your list and named some streets, look at the upside-down list to see what the Steinways put in theirs. Would all of these things be necessary today?

YOUR VILLAGE

__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________

STEWNAY VILLAGE

Steinway Kindergarten

Look at the map. See what the Steinway neighborhood looked like around 1875, and do the exercises below.

1. Which two streets do you think were named for Steinway sons? __________________________

2. What is Albert Street called today? _____________________________________________

3. Can you find where the Steinway family lived? ___________________________ (clue: mansion = house) Circle it on the map.

4. What was the name of the island near the factory and foundry, opposite the bulkhead? ________________________

5. Steinway and Sons used an artificial body of water called a _________________ to ship supplies to and from the factory.
THE IRISH ESCAPE THE FAMINE

Hundreds of thousands of Irish immigrants came to America in the 1840s and 1850s to escape a famine in their homeland that claimed millions of lives. The famine was caused by a disease that destroyed the potato crop, Ireland’s main source of food at the time. The situation was made worse by the failure of the British government, which ruled Ireland, to send food. Without their crops to support them, many Irish were evicted from their homes by their English landlords. Homeless and weakened from hunger, many fell ill with “famine fever.” Even on the journey to America many died. For this reason the ships that carried the Irish immigrants were sometimes called “coffin ships” because so many died on the voyage.

1. Why did Irish immigrants leave Ireland in the 1840s? __________________________________________________
2. What caused the damages “about midnight” and what was destroyed? ____________________________________
3. What was the cause of many deaths? __________________________________________________________________
4. What do you think the author meant when he said, “My whole lifetime did not seem to me so long as the last two months appeared to me”? _____________________________________________________________________________
5. What was the author’s purpose in writing this narrative? ________________________________________________

From William Smith An Emigrant’s Narrative, or a Voice from the Steerage (New York: W. Smith, 1850)

The day advertised for sailing was the 12th of [November 1847], but in consequence of not having got in the cargo, which consisted of pig iron and earthen-ware, we were detained ten days . . . and one day to stop a leak . . . The immigrants . . . having left Ireland a week, some a fortnight, before the day fixed for sailing, this detention of eleven days was severely felt by those poor creatures, many of them having consumed half of their provisions, without the means of ob-
taining more . . . On Friday, November 26, 1847, we set sail . . .

About midnight, a number of boxes and barrels broke loose . . . breaking the water cans and destroying everything capable of being destroyed by them . . . In a few minutes the boxes and barrels broke to atoms, scattering the contents in all directions – tea, coffee, sugar, potatoes, pork, shorts, trousers, vests, coats, handkerchiefs &c., &c., were mingled in one confused mass. The cries of the woman and children was heart-rending . . . some praying, others weeping bitterly, as they saw their provisions and clothes (the only property they possessed) destroyed. The passengers being sea sick, were vomiting in all parts of the vessel.

We had been at sea four weeks . . . I felt sure . . . that however good the motives were which induced the captain to take a southerly passage, that the dreadful scourge, the ship fever, (which was already on board our ship) would be increased by it; an opinion . . . verified by the number of cases and deaths increasing . . .

This disastrous voyage . . . [came] to an end, after an absence of exactly ten weeks from the shores of my native land, (the day we arrived at Staten Island being Friday, the 21st of January, 1848). My whole lifetime did not seem so long as the last two months appeared to me . . .

6. Describe the emotions you think people in this drawing felt as they prepared to board the ship

7. Why do you think they are feeling the way they do?

8. Have you ever gone on a long journey before? _____ If so, where did you go? ____________________

1. When did Samuel Farrell leave for New York? _________________________________________________________
2. How much space was each passenger given for luggage? ________________________________________________
3. What supplies was the Master of the Ship required to provide for each passenger? ___________________________

4. Why was this so important? ____________________________

5. Does this seem like enough food for a four week journey? _______________________________________________

The Irish continued to immigrate to the United States after the Famine. Below is a drawing of Irish emigrants leaving Queenstown, Ireland, in 1874.
New York Governor Alfred E. Smith’s maternal grandparents emigrated from Westmeath, Ireland, in 1841 and his Irish heritage was very important to him. To the right is a description of Alfred E. Smith from a New York Times article in 1928, when he became the first Catholic to run for president of the United States. During his political career, Smith was a leading supporter of the immigrant population of New York City. After reading the article, answer the questions below.

1. Why do you think the writer of this article said Alfred E. Smith was a product of New York City? __________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

2. What political office did Al Smith hold? ______________
   ________________________________________________________________

3. How old was Al Smith when he took the oath of office? ______
   ________________________________________________________________

The photo below is of South Street in Manhattan in 1892. This is the street where Al Smith was born. Study it closely and answer the questions below.

1. How do you know that scene is near the water? ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

2. Name some jobs that people might have had on South Street. ______________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

3. Why is the caption in English and in Spanish? What is your guess? ______
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

GLOSSARY

address noun a formal communication; especially a prepared speech delivered to a special audience or on a special occasion
atom noun a tiny particle
detained verb to hold or to keep in, as in custody
earthen-ware noun ceramic ware made of slightly absorbent solid clay fired at low heat
famine noun an extreme shortage of food; starvation
fortnight noun a period of 14 days, or two weeks
induced verb to move by persuasion or impulse
mingled verb to mix
motives noun a need or desire that causes a person to act
oath noun a commitment to tell the truth (especially in a court of law)
pig iron noun a raw iron that is used to refine steel, wrought iron, or ingot iron
prejudice preconceived judgment or opinion
provisions noun a stock of needed provisions and supplies
scourge noun an instrument of pain or punishment
tenement noun a run-down and often overcrowded apartment house
trousers noun old English for trouser, meaning pants
verified verb to establish truth or accuracy
JEWISH PERSECUTED IN EUROPE SEEK A BETTER LIFE

From the 1880s through the early 1920s, millions of Jews from Eastern Europe arrived in the United States, many of them settling in New York City. They came here seeking a better life. Jews were an oppressed group and were often persecuted in their homelands because of their religion. It was not uncommon for their governments to forbid them from holding certain jobs, own property other than their homes, or even to live in many places because they were different from the majority. In the Russian Empire, Jewish villages were attacked by mobs that were encouraged by government officials. These were known as pogroms.

Bringing their skills from Europe with them, many Jews worked in the garment industry, making or selling clothing. Two people who came to New York City in the early 1900s were Dora and Morris Levine. They both lived on Essex Street on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, and were married in 1910. Morris Levine was a traveling salesman who sold fabrics. Above is a letter he wrote to Dora during one of his business trips. The letter is in Yiddish, the language of East European Jews. Below is a translation.

Park Rapids, Minn
Mar 14, 1910

Highly Esteemed and Much Loved Dora Levine

I am thank God in good health & hope to hear the same from dear Dora. Received three letters from you dated Feb 19, Feb 22 & March 1. I thank you for writing, the letters brought me back to life. Forgive me for not writing so long. I did not have an opportunity to write because we were traveling from town to town. We do not stop in any large cities where I would have time to write so I ask you a thousand times to excuse me for not writing. I hope with God’s help soon to be able to give up this knocking around with you living in one town world and me in another. This is no life for you & me with worrying about each other every day but we should be together.

About my business. Paid off all my debts. I have $650 in the bank. We still have $550 in merchandise. My partner & I decided to open a store in Minneapolis. It costs $7 to go there from Chicago. What do you advise, dear Dora?

No more news. All my best wishes from your loving Morris Levine who awaits your reply. It is 11 pm & I am going to sleep. Regards to your mother, brother, sister-in-law & sister.

Morris Levine

P.S. Please do not tell my brother Lewis about what I wrote about a store because he will tell all Hester Street about it. I do not want him to know about it until I have the store. And I hope to bring you here and you should not have to work in the store. We decided that it is best for us to open a store in Minneapolis because in New York they are too smart for us and here we have an opportunity to do well because my partner has a rich uncle here and he has a daughter with whom my partner is going and my partner is well known in the whole city and he has a lot of friends & that is good for me and when I will bring you here you will spend your time better than in New York and you will not have to work in the shop. My partner’s girl works in a large dept. store & you will not be lost here and we will be together.

My partner sends best regards

Morris Levine

Translated by Abraham Mark.
Fill in the words to complete the sentences. In the space provided below, write down the letters that are in the circles. Then unscramble the circled letters to discover the words that complete the sentence. (Read the whole lesson before attempting quiz.)

**Dora’s mother’s name is _______ _______ _______ _______ (aaShr)\**

**Morris wanted to open a store in _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ 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_______ _______ _______ ...
Every ten years the United States government conducts a census, counting all the people living in the United States. Above is a part of a census showing where Dora Levine and her family lived in 1910. Look at it carefully and answer the questions below.

1. Why do you think that immigrants from the same country live in the same neighborhood?

2. What is the range of ages of the Levine children? ________ What is the mean age of the children? ___________

3. What ethnic group predominates in 80 Essex Street?

4. Look at column 5: Which year is the mode of immigration to the U.S.?

5. What in the column “Relation” tells you that the Nadel family is wealthier than their neighbors?

6. What did Mr. Nadel do for a living?

7. Which occupation is the most interesting to you? Why? 1. __________ 2. __________ 3. __________ 4. __________ 5. __________
Chinese began to arrive in the United States in large numbers after gold was discovered in California in 1848, fleeing poor economic conditions and even famine. Many Chinese also worked on the transcontinental railroad. Completed in 1869, the railroad allowed people to travel across the country from San Francisco to New York City. Many white Americans did not like Chinese immigrants because they competed with them for jobs and the Chinese were often willing to work for lower wages. White workers blamed the Chinese immigrants and the employers who hired them.

In response to these economic and also racist fears, Congress passed a law in 1882 called the Chinese Exclusion Act, which prevented Chinese workers from immigrating to the United States. Chinese who were already in the United States could remain, but could not become citizens. The U.S. government issued Certificate of Identity cards to these Chinese immigrants.

Some Chinese immigrants left California and moved to New York City, where they lived in a neighborhood soon called Chinatown. One Chinese person who moved to New York was Leung Suie Lung. Below is his Certificate of Identity.

From the document, what are three things you can tell about Leung?

1. ____________________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________________

1. How old is Leung? ______
2. Why isn’t he in school? __________________________________________________________________________
3. His occupation is listed as “Merchant.” What is a merchant? (Hint: His father owned a grocery store.) __________________________________________________________________
4. This is the back page of Leung’s Certificate of Identity. Who issued the Certificate?_______________________________________
5. What do you think the Chinese letters on the left side say? _____________________________
6. Leung was number 576. Why do you think this number was important to the immigration service? __________________________________________________________________

The top photo is of 38 Mott Street in Chinatown taken in the early 1900s. This is the store where Leung Suie Lung worked. The photo at bottom is of the same store in 2007, about a hundred years later.

1. Have you ever been to the part of Manhattan known as Chinatown? ____________________________________________________________________
2. Can you describe what you saw? __________________________________________________________________
3. Why would the signs be in Chinese? __________________________________________________________________
4. What kind of store is 38 Mott Street? 1910 ___________________ 2007 ___________________
5. What are some things that might be sold there? 1910 ___________________ 2007 ___________________
6. Compare the two photos of 38 Mott Street. How are they the same? __________________________________________________________________
7. How are they different? __________________________________________________________________
Below is a map of Chinatown from the early 1900s. Look carefully at the map and answer the questions below.

1. Can you find 38 Mott Street on the map? ________ What large park is near it?_____________________________

2. Can you name three streets that go into Mott Street? __________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. Name two streets that border the park. _______________________________________________________________

4. What streets are west of Baxter Street? _______________________________________________________________

5. What streets are south of Franklin Street? _____________________________________________________________

The menu below is from the Jung Sy Mandarin Restaurant, which operated in Manhattan at West 96th Street and Broadway from the 1910s through the 1930s. The owner of the restaurant was Lee Tung Foo, one of the first Chinese-American singers and performers on the vaudeville stage. (Vaudeville was a popular form of live entertainment, where performers traveled to theaters in different towns and cities.) Mr. Lee ended his career in vaudeville in 1919, but from the 1930s – 1960s he appeared in over sixty films. Unfortunately, these roles were small and he often received no credit for them. Not until 1958 would an Asian actor, Sessue Hayakawa, receive a nomination for an Academy Award for The Bridge on the River Kwai.

What is your favorite Chinese food? _______________________________________

You and a friend go to the Jung Sy Mandarin restaurant and have $10.00 to spend. Make a list of your order and total the prices. How much change would you get back from $10.00?*
Fiorello H. La Guardia was born in 1882 and became famous as Mayor of New York City from 1934–1945.

La Guardia’s parents were both from Europe. His father was from southern Italy and his mother was from a city in Austria-Hungary, which today is part of northern Italy. They came to New York City in 1880. Throughout his life, La Guardia fought for the rights of people who had little power, like immigrants.

In 1900, La Guardia became a consular officer in Fiume, which was then a port city of Hungary, but is now part of Croatia. Below is a cartoon describing how La Guardia fought for the rights of emigrants going to America from Fiume.

True Comics “The Little Flower: Fiorello La Guardia,” c. 1941 (Fiorello means “Little Flower” in Italian.)

1. Why did La Guardia want each emigrant examined before leaving for America? ____________________________________________________________

2. a. What would happen to immigrants if they were sick when they arrived at Ellis Island? ____________________________________________________________

   b. Do you think this was fair? ____________________________________________________________

When he returned to the United States, La Guardia worked at Ellis Island as a translator, helping immigrants through the examination process as they arrived in the United States.

1. Why was it useful for La Guardia to speak six languages? ____________________________________________________________

2. Are you able to speak another language? __________________ If so, why do you find it useful? ____________________________________________________________
When La Guardia was an interpreter, he acted as a translator for an Italian teenager, whom doctors believed was mentally ill. The case was so troubling that he wrote about it in his autobiography. Read his description of the girl.

The physical requirements of immigrants were very high. A large percentage of exclusions were for medical reasons. In addition to trachoma, invariably unknown to the person, cases of favus and scalp disease were not uncommon. On the whole, the health standards were very high. I always suffered greatly when assigned to the hospital to interpret in mental cases. I felt all along and do to this day, that over 50% of the deportations for alleged mental disease were unjustified. Many cases were causes just by ignorance and inability on the part of the doctors to understand the norm or the standard of the particular immigrant.

A case that haunted me for years and one which I shall never forget was of a young girl in her teens, from the mountains in northern Italy. No one understood her particular dialect very well. Because of her hesitancy in replying, she was sent to the hospital for observation. Imagine this girl who had always been protected according to the custom of her province (medieval) and who was perhaps never in the company of a man alone, suddenly to have a doctor rap at her knees, getting reflexes of her eyes, turning her on her back, tickling her spine to ascertain normal reflexes. Of course this child rebelled and how! It was the most cruel case I ever witnessed. In two weeks this child was a raving maniac, although she had been perfectly sound and normal in her own standard when she arrived at Ellis Island.

1. Why did the U.S. government require immigrants to have a health test?
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Why was the teenage girl sent to the hospital for observation?
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. Were the doctors trying to hurt her or did they not understand her?
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

4. Have you ever felt misunderstood by a friend, a parent or a teacher? ______ Why? __________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

GLOSSARY

consular adj. a government official of one country who looks after the interests and the welfare of its citizens in another country
dialect noun a way of speaking found only in a certain area or among a certain group of people
disabled noun a person who leaves his or her native country or region
emigrant noun a person who leaves his or her native country or region
ignorance noun unaware or uninformed
maniac noun an insane person
medieval adj. from the Middle Ages
translator noun a person who allows people who speak different languages to understand each other
trachoma noun an eye infection. If immigrants had trachoma, they were not allowed to enter the United States.
JAMAICANS: Coming to New York for an Education

Jamaicans began to arrive in large numbers in the United States in the early 1900s. Young people left Jamaica because they could not earn a decent living in their own country and believed the United States provided greater opportunities. The number of Jamaicans coming to the U.S. increased after the Hart-Celler Act, an immigration law passed in 1965 that made it easier for more immigrants to come to the U.S. from all over the world. Many Jamaicans have come to New York City, making them one of the largest immigrant groups in the city today (2007).

Fern June Khan is a Jamaican-American woman who came to the United States in the 1950s to go to college. She began her studies in Chicago, but transferred to New York University to complete her degree. Fern’s father, Egbert Spence, was a stationmaster for the Jamaica Government Railway. Below is part of an interview of Fern Khan with Richard K. Lieberman, the director of the La Guardia and Wagner Archives, LaGuardia Community College/CUNY.

Fern Khan: My father was very handsome, tall, slim. My father was about six foot three inches. As a little girl I would come to visit him when he was stationed in Kendal. Now, I could travel on the train free because my father worked at the railway. So he would always send me a pass, and I would sit in the first class coach.

Now that was interesting because only English people rode in first class. Again this was in the 50s. In second class, you had the coaches, and they were much more fun because that’s the way the local Jamaicans traveled. And people were noisy and talking and, you know, carrying on. And then at each station when the train stopped, Jamaican sales people came to sell their fruits and food. That’s how they made their living. So you would hear “buy your oranges, buy your starapples, cashewnuts, mangoes!” and everybody’s competing to sell because the twice daily trains were very important in their lives… And I would observe all of these things happening.

1. Why did Fern get to sit in first class on the train?

2. What did Fern enjoy about riding in second class?

3. Why was the train so important to the Jamaican sales people?

After Fern graduated from high school, she decided to come to the United States. In her interview, she describes what influenced her decision to come and study here.

Richard: How did you first hear about America, the opportunities? How did you know about that?

Fern: Well, America, you know, has always been a very attractive and compelling place for Jamaicans to come. So it was in the air. I mean, everybody talked about wanting to come to America because America provided the opportunity to earn money, and then you could come back to Jamaica and build a house or do whatever you wanted to do. But America offered opportunities, and we had different kinds of people coming to America. You had the people who wanted to study, you had people who wanted to work to earn a living and go back, and then you had the farm workers who would come during certain seasons. They would pick apples or tobacco and then they would go back to Jamaica. Now when they came back, they would tell these stories. And, you know, as a child I know I heard a lot of things. Information was all around me. Because you’re just, you know, in the open. You don’t live in apartment buildings like here. You’re outside, and you hear things and people talk and they visit each other with their children. So I used to hear all these stories about these people who would come here and they would pick apples or tobacco and they would marry somebody here so that they would be able to come back to America and become a resident.

1. What attracted Jamaicans to the United States?

2. Fern says, “You hear things.” Is everything you hear true? How do you know? Do you think everything Fern hears is true?

3. Interview someone you know who came from another country to find out why they came to New York.

To enter the United States, Fern needed to have a passport, a document issued by a country that allows its citizens to travel. Below is Fern’s Jamaican passport.
After Fern completed her studies at NYU, she married another student named Ismail, and became a social worker, later an educator, in New York City. In 1973, Fern’s father, Egbert Spence, wrote a letter to her and Ismail asking about their lives. (In the letter, Fern’s father calls her June, a name she used only in her family.)

1. Based on the first paragraph, what does Fern’s father want her and her family to do? _______________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Why do you think Fern’s father doesn’t know what a “brownstone” is? ____________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. Have you ever heard names of things that you didn’t know the words for? _____ What are they? _____________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________

GLOSSARY

brownstone noun a style of building covered with reddish-brown sandstone

coaches noun a class of passenger transportation at a lower fare than first class

compelling verb to have a powerful effect; to urge forcefully

graduate student noun a student at a university or college who has received a bachelor’s degree who continues on for a masters or doctoral degree

undergraduate noun a student at a college or university who is pursuing (or studying for) a bachelor’s degree

Fern: So I was an undergraduate then. I was at NYU from ’58 to ’62 as an undergraduate, and then from ’62 to ’64 as a graduate student in the School of Social Work. Now NYU had a critical mass of West Indian students. They came from all over the Caribbean. So in the cafeteria which no longer exists, a huge cafeteria, there was always a table for the West Indian students. That’s where every one of us headed. As soon as we entered the cafeteria, we would walk right over to the West Indian table, and every West Indian person would come over to that round table. (The British West Indies are a group of Caribbean islands, including Jamaica and Trinidad, which were once British colonies.)

Richard: It wasn’t just Jamaicans. We had Trinidadians, who were the next largest group, but the majority were Jamaicans. And they were a fun group. I mean we had such good times, you know. And even in the library we would sit together and study.

1. Why do the West Indian students walk to the West Indian table during lunch? _____________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Have you ever found yourself in a similar situation? _____________ Describe it. ____________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Fern: How is Yussuf? We were expecting you both – Imagine 2 years and 3 months and I haven’t seen my grandson: I suppose you are waiting until I have off. (smile) His nephews, nieces, etc. want to know him...

Richard: Glad we are to hear you are trying to buy your own home – but what do you call a “Brownstone”? Does not mean you won’t come to Jamaica?...

Daddy

Kisses for Ismail, Yussuf & [your]self, until then – Cheerio

Daddy

1. Based on the first paragraph, what does Fern’s father want her and her family to do? _______________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Why do you think Fern’s father doesn’t know what a “brownstone” is? ____________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. Have you ever heard names of things that you didn’t know the words for? _____ What are they? _____________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Fern (third from left) with friends from New York University, c. 1959

Fen, Yussuf, and Ismail, 1971
A DOMINICAN-AMERICAN BOY AND HIS DREAMS

Dominicans began to arrive in large numbers in New York City in the 1970s. More people were able to leave because the United States government passed the Hart-Celler Act in 1965, a law that allowed more people from all over the world to immigrate to the United States. At the same time, many people in the Dominican Republic were very poor and had few opportunities in their homeland. Many of them came to New York City hoping to improve their families’ fortunes. One such family was the parents of Elvis García.

Elvis García, the son of Dominican immigrants, was ten years old and living in Queens with his four brothers and sisters in the early 1990s, when he wrote about his life and his dreams.

My mom and dad met in this country, so I was born here. I am a completely American citizen. Can you believe they named me Elvis? Actually, I kind of like it. They thought it was the ultimate American name. My dad relied on the old customs when I was born, though. He put a small baseball mitt and ball in my crib. This is to guarantee that I would be a baseball player. I think he has already figured out that my two brothers weren’t going to be famous ball players. I was the last hope. I haven’t told him yet that I don’t want to be a ball player; either. He’s going to be really sad, so I’m just going to wait. I like it a lot for fun, but that’s it. In the Dominican Republic it is a real big deal, you know. Even more so than in this country, if you can believe it. I have a cousin, Manny, who plays pro baseball in California. He is kind of everybody’s idol because he makes a lot of money, and we watch him on TV. People are really poor here, too. So baseball is the big dream.

My big dream is to design computer games. I am really good in math and stuff. I can already design programs on the computer at school. I got advanced placement. That’s the first time that has happened to anybody in my family! I am proud and so is my mom. I think. My oldest sister, too. She says I am going to be one of those computer geniuses you read about. You never know.

I really like living in Queens. My dad works with my Uncle Julio running a cab company. It took them a long time to do this, but now they are on their own. My mom likes it here, too. She cried sometimes because she missed her home country. Last year Dad gave her a ticket to the Dominican Republic as a Christmas present. She went for a visit and saw her sister and mother. She liked her visit a lot, and doesn’t miss her home as much now that she’s back. She says she was imagining things were a lot better than they were. I guess missing things makes your imagination work like that.

We live near other people from the Dominican Republic. I speak Spanish. I like knowing two languages. I think this will give to this ten years old boy?

You never know. Juan: To go after his dream, you know. To go after your dream, always keeping in mind what reality is, but don’t give up on your dream just because other people might not like it. It is your dream, it’s your life, be persistent and at the end it will pay up.

Richard: Say it in Spanish.

Juan: Sigue tus sueños y tu vas a estar delante si sigues tus sueños y ser más persistente en tus metas.

Richard: When you look back now and your father told you “No baseball, I want you to become a professional,” right?, when he told you that when you were twelve years old, no wait, thirteen years old, what did you think of that advice then? And what do you think of that advice now?

Juan: Well, back then I thought that it was just arrogance. I thought that it made no sense, you know, why wouldn’t somebody want me to make money, that’s the way I see it. But now I see it as it’s important.

1. What country is Elvis’s family from?
2. Why don’t they use regular baseballs, gloves and bats?
3. What can you tell about Elvis Garcia by reading his story?
4. Where is your family from? Have you been to the country where your family came from? Ask a family member about the country and then describe it.
5. Write a paragraph about your hopes and dreams. What do you want to do when you grow up? Ask your parents what their dream for you is. Is it the same as your dream for yourself? Describe how it is alike or different.
6. Compare Juan’s interview to Elvis’ letter. What is similar or different about them?

Juan Rodríguez is about the same age as Elvis, but he was born in the Dominican Republic and came here when he was 13. Juan is studying computer science at the City College of New York/CUNY and is a college assistant at the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives. He talked about his life with Steven Levine and Richard R. Lieberman, also of the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives, LaGuardia Community College/CUNY.
Below is a map of New York City showing how many Dominican immigrants lived in different neighborhoods in 1990. Using the map answer the questions below.

1. What parts of your borough did people from the Dominican Republic settle in? _____________________________
   ( Hint: Go back to page 30 and read about Elvis’ story.)
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Where do you think Elvis would have lived and why? ____________________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________

3. Why do you think Dominican immigrants lived in large numbers in certain neighborhoods? ___________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________

---

GOODBYE SANCOCHO AND PIZZA

Benjamin Polanco, an immigrant from the Dominican Republic, was a high school student in Lawrence, Massachusetts, when his English teacher asked him to write a poem saying goodbye to all the places he had lived. Read the poem and then answer the questions below.

---

List at least five things the author misses about the Dominican Republic. Include one thing in each of the categories below.

SIGHTS  SOUNDS  TASTES  SMELLS  THINGS TO FEEL

__________  ___________  ___________  ___________  ___________

__________  ___________  ___________  ___________  ___________

__________  ___________  ___________  ___________  ___________

__________  ___________  ___________  ___________  ___________

Use your five senses and write a poem about a place you miss:

---

GLOSSARY

irrelevancies  noun  not related
plátanos  noun  a vegetable fruit similar to a banana
relied  verb  to have confidence based on experience
sancocho  noun  a Dominican cuisine similar to a soup or stew
Look at the bar graph for 1950. Places outside the United States are written on the left side. The numbers written across the bottom tell how many thousands of people were born abroad and then came to Queens. For example, Sweden is the birthplace for about 4,000 people living in Queens in 1950. The bar graph lets us estimate, without having to find exact numbers.

3. Look at the countries listed in the bar graph. If you know anyone from the country, name the country and person.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

4. Estimate how many 1950 Queens residents had been born in Greece. Estimate how many immigrated from Ireland.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

5. Did more people come from Poland than Yugoslavia? 

 ___________________________________________________________________________________________

6. Estimate how many people came from Germany. __________________ How many came from Hungary? _____________ About how many more people came from Germany than Hungary? __________________

7. Which two places shown on the graph are not countries?

 ____________________________________________

8. Name the three countries that the largest number of immigrants to Queens by 1950 came from.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

9. Using both the pie graph and the bar graph describe who lived in Queens in 1950.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

WHO LIVED IN QUEENS, 1950 AND 2000?

Like your family, people from all over the world have come to Queens to live. The map above shows the borough of Queens. If you live in Queens, or have a friend or family member who does, put a star where your or their neighborhood is. The map of this international borough has remained about the same since 1898. However, Queens’ population changes constantly. In 1950, many people had arrived from European countries such as Ireland, Germany and Italy. Your classmates and neighbors today may be from other countries.

The two graphs on these pages tell about Queens in 1950. The pie graph shows the races of people in the borough at that time. The bar graph shows the birthplace of Queens residents in 1950 who had come from other countries.

1. Look at the pie graph. What percentage of Queens was Asian or Native American in 1950? ______________ What percentage African-American? ____________ What percentage was white? ______________

2. The total population of Queens in 1950 was 1,550,049. Figure out how many of these people were white by subtracting the number of people who were African-American and the number who were Asian or Native American from the total. ________________

WHO LIVED IN QUEENS, 1950 AND 2000?

FOREIGN BORN POPULATION OF QUEENS, 1950

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Thousands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR/Russia</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
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<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Scotland</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>South and Central America</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Yugoslavia</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Denmark</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LESSON 8

RACIAL COMPOSITION OF QUEENS, 1950

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>96.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Native American</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHO LIVED IN QUEENS, 1950 AND 2000?

Thousands of people have made this international borough their home since 1950. People came from all over the world in growing numbers. By 2000 there were more Hispanic people, more African-American people, more Korean people and more Colombian people living in Queens than in 1950.

1. Look at the pie graph for the racial composition of Queens in 2000. What percentage of people were African-American? ___________ What was the percentage increase in the African-American population between 1950 and 2000? (Use the pie graph on page 34 and compare it to the pie graph above.) _________________________________

2. What was the percentage change for Asians and Native Americans between 1950 and 2000? ___________________ _______________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. The second pie graph shows the ethnicity (or background) of People of Hispanic Origin in Queens, 2000. What percentage came from Puerto Rico? _______________ The largest group on the pie graph is Other Hispanic Origin. What other ethnicities do you think they could be? *Hint: Think of people you know and where they or their parents were born.*) ______________________________________________________________________________________

4. The bar graph shows the ethnicity of people living in Queens in 2000. How many Queens residents called themselves Russian then? _________________________________________________________________________________

5. Among Queens residents in 2000, which three ethnicities were the most populous?________________________ ____________________________________________________________________________________________________________ Did these ethnicities follow the same order in 2000 as their countries ranked as birthplaces in 1950? (See page 35.) __________ What is different? ________________________________

6. Compare the number of Greeks in 1950 and 2000. What observations can you make about the Greek population in Queens? ____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

7. The bar labeled “other” includes all ethnicities which are not listed here by name. Is your ethnicity listed here? ______ If not, what is it? ______ Almost half of Queens claimed a different ethnicity than those on the graph. Name three ethnicities from your class which are not on the graph. _________________________________ ____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

8. How would you describe the changes in Queens’ population between 1950 and 2000? ____________________________ ____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

EXTRA CREDIT: Name three ethnicities which were large enough to appear on the graph for 2000 but did not have
Your ethnicity reflects your family's country of origin or the customs and values you share with people in a different continent. Even if your family has been in the United States for hundreds of years, you can probably determine your ethnicity with your teacher's help. If you have more than one ethnicity, pick one for this exercise. What is it?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

List all the ethnicities in your class on the chalkboard. Find out how many people in the class have one. It is sometimes not clear where you are from. Work with your teacher to determine this. Which is the most common kind of ethnicity for your class? ______________________________________ This will be the top line of your bar graph.

Looking at the other places listed, how many people in your class have ethnic ties to Asia? __________________

How many to the Caribbean? _______________ To Africa? ________________ To South America? ______________

To Central America? ______________________ To Europe? _______________ To the Middle East? _______________

Each of the areas where someone in your class is from should appear on your graph. Write each place name on the lines on the left side of the graph. As a class decide the scale of your graph: how many people each dashed vertical line should stand for. Write the numbers at the bottom of the graph, under the lines.

Now you can make the bars of your graph. For each place draw a straight line as far as the number of people in your class who have that origin. You can use a different color for each bar.

WHO LIVED IN QUEENS, 1950 AND 2000?

The pie graph on this page shows where people moving to the United States since 2000 have been coming from. It includes four continents (South America, Europe, Asia and Africa), two countries, and two regions (Caribbean and Central America) which are neither continents nor countries.

1. From which place are more immigrants coming to the United States than any other? _______________________

2. Where did more people come from, the Caribbean or South America? ________________ South America is much larger than the Caribbean region, how is it possible for more people to immigrate from a small place than from a larger place?

3. Which continent has sent the highest percentage of immigrants to the United States? ____________________

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3. Which continent has sent the highest percentage of immigrants to the United States? ____________________
1. Who are the top three immigrants groups in New York City?
   1. __________________________________________
   2. __________________________________________
   3. __________________________________________

2. Where in Mexico does Teresa Vázquez come from?
   ____________________________________________

3. According to the article, why do many Mexicans have large families?
   ____________________________________________

4. What kind of work does Ms. Vázquez do?
   ____________________________________________

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**Glossary**

- **agricultural** adj. related to farming