Lesson Plan: Challenges and Opportunities for U.S. Immigrants

This lesson was developed by Maine Historical Society in partnership with a Teaching with Primary Sources grant from the Library of Congress.

Objectives:
- Students will be able to use primary sources to describe the challenges and opportunities for immigrants in the United States.
- Students will practice the skills involved in analyzing primary sources.
- Students will learn how to and practice using evidence from primary sources to support a point view.

Essential Questions: What challenges and opportunities have immigrants historically faced in the United States?

Materials:

primary source documents and questions – 1 set per student (see below)
primary source analysis tools (see links below)
computers with internet access for student use – will need to access Library of Congress (https://www.loc.gov/) and Maine Memory Network (www.mainememory.net).
writing paper
pen/pencil
timer (for debate)

Timeframe:

Will vary depending on length of class period, class size, etc.; 5-7 days/class periods recommended.
Procedure:

Part 1 – Initial Analysis

1. Ask students to consider the following questions and to brainstorm some answers; this can be done by students working as individuals, working with partners/small groups, or as a class.
   a. What have been/might be some of the “push-pull” factors for immigrants/emigrants coming to the United States?
   b. What challenges can an immigrant to U.S. expect to find upon arrival? Opportunities?

2. Ask students to share their answers; record and discuss their ideas as a class.

3. Explain that today students are going to take a closer look at some primary sources to try and answer the question, What challenges and opportunities have immigrants historically faced in the United States?

4. Distribute Documents 1-10 and primary analysis tools to students. You can use the primary source analysis tools or graphic organizers from the Maine Memory Network lesson plan Using Primary Source Documents in the Classroom or the Library of Congress’ Primary Source Analysis Tools.

5. Students can work to analyze the documents in a number of ways;
   a. Analyze all documents individually.
   b. Analyze all documents working with a partner or small group.
   c. Randomly assign students to each analyze one of the documents and then instruct students to form jigsaw groups and share information on their assigned documents.
      *Regardless of how you assign the documents, make sure that each student has a copy of all the documents.*

6. If students do not complete their analysis before the completion of the class period, assign completion of the assignment for homework.
Part 2 – Digging Deeper

1. Begin by reviewing with students the questions and their answers from the start of the previous lesson.

2. Ask students to share their findings/ideas from their analysis of Documents 1-10. This can be done in jigsaw groups and/or as a class.

3. Once students have reviewed their primary findings and analysis, students should work to answer the questions for each individual document.

4. Review students’ answers to the document questions. This can be done in small groups and/or as a class.

5. Ask students to consider how these primary sources help answer the essential question(s).

Part 3 – Debate Preparation

1. Instruct students that their next step in this unit will be to prepare and engage in a formal debate using primary sources. Students will work in teams; one team arguing the “pro” side of an issue/statement, the other team arguing the “con” side. Each student on each team will be responsible for a different part of the debate. See debate instructions below.

2. Students will be expected to cite/use at least two of Documents 1-10 as evidence in their debate. They will also need to locate at least one third primary source on the Library of Congress or Maine Memory Network to use as evidence.

3. Assign students to debate teams and distribute debate instructions/assignment. Within each team, pairs or small groups of students should be assigned to the different aspects of the debate: opening statement, evidence, rebuttal, closing statement (see debate instructions below). Whether you assign these pairs/groups or students do it themselves, make sure you have a record of who is responsible for each aspect of the debate for assessment purposes.

4. Allow students as much class time and time outside of class to research, prepare, and practice their debate as appropriate (at least two class periods and three days outside of class is recommended as a minimum). Factoring in this time, set a date for the debate and ensure that students understand they must be prepared to participate in the debate and turn in their written portion of the assignment on that date.
Debate tips:

- You may want to assign certain topics, ideas, or documents for students to stick to in order to better ensure they debate the same points.
- Encourage the teams to talk to each other, especially those working on “evidence” and “rebuttal”. While students won’t necessarily want to give away strategy, remind them that the debate will be smoother for everybody if each team knows the talking points or evidence that the other team is using, not unlike how lawyers must disclose evidence and supply lists of witnesses to each other before going to trial. Everyone should be working with the same information.
- Remind students that their assessment will not be based on who “wins”, but rather on connecting arguments to evidence.
- Rebuttal is typically the aspect of debate that students struggle with the most; preparing rebuttal means trying to predict the arguments the other side with use and how to poke holes in those arguments. Make sure the students assigned to rebuttal have the tools and support they need.
- For students working in pairs/small groups, make sure they determine before the actual debate who will do the speaking for their portion during the debate.
- Encourage (or even require) students to practice the debate; like any presentation, it will go smoother if you practice for an audience (even just one person) first.
- Students will understandably want to know who “won” the debate after it’s over; consider bringing in a guest audience or judges panel of other students or teachers to listen to the debate and determine a winner. Be sure that students understand that determining a “winner” is not the same as an assessment of the assignment.

Part 4 - Debate

1. On the day of the debate, remind students of debate rules:
   a. The debate will be presented in the following format:
      i. Pro Opening Statement, Con Opening Statement
      ii. Pro Evidence, Con Evidence
         (quick break)
      iii. Pro Rebuttal, Con Rebuttal
      iv. Pro Closing Statement, Con Closing Statement
   b. Each side is given a limited amount of time to speak (see assignment below).
   c. The audience is to be respectful and quiet during the presentation. If you have a guest audience judging the debate, they should be taking notes.
   d. After delivering his/her portion of the debate, each student must turn in a written/typed copy of his/her contribution.
2. After the debate, engage students in a whole class discussion on their personal feelings on the statement/idea that was being debated. What do they think the primary source evidence supports?

Alternatives/Extensions:

1. Instead of having students working in teams on the debate, assign them to work with a partner. In this format, a student is responsible for all aspects of one side in the debate (opening statement, evidence, etc.) as opposed to just one piece of one side. This may be easier to students to take on after having done one or two debates in teams.
2. The debate exercise can be easily modified into a persuasive essay format. Instead of having students debate, have them take a stand on the statement/idea and compose a persuasive essay using the debate format.
3. Use the documents and instruct students to answer the essential questions as Document Based Questions (DBQs).
4. Ask students to imagine themselves as immigrants in the U.S. and write a letter to a family member who is also considering immigrating encouraging or discouraging them.
5. Instruct students to write a curriculum for a modern day “Americanization” class. Without asking the immigrant students in this class to give up their previous culture or ethnic identities, what skills would they need to live in the U.S in 2015/16? What would they need to know or do to become citizens?
Document 1: Don’t Bite the Hand That’s Feeding You (lyrics and the sound recording)

In this 1916 recording, Walter Van Brunt performed “Don’t Bite the Hand That’s Feeding You”. The song was composed in 1915 by lyricist Thomas Hoier and composer Jimmie Morgan.

(Library of Congress, Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division, original link: http://www.loc.gov/item/00694050/#about-this-item)

Don't Bite the Hand That's Feeding You

Last night, as I lay a sleeping,
A wonderful dream came to me.
I saw Uncle Sammy weeping
For his children from over the sea;
They had come to him, friendless and starving,
When from tyrant's oppression they fled,
But now they abuse and revile him,
Till at last in just anger he said:

If you don't like your Uncle Sammy,
Then go back to your home o'er the sea,
To the land from where you came,
Whatever be its name,
But don't be ungrateful to me!
If you don't like the stars in Old Glory,
If you don't like the Red, White and Blue,
Then don't act like the cur in the story,
Don't bite the hand that's feeding you!

You recall the day you landed,
How I welcomed you to my shore?
When you came here empty handed,
And allegiance forever you swore?
I gathered you close to my bosom,
Of food and of clothes you got both,
So, when in trouble, I need you,
You will have to remember your oath:

If you don't like your Uncle Sammy,
Then go back to your home o'er the sea,
To the land from where you came,
Whatever be its name,
But don't be ungrateful to me!
If you don't like the stars in Old Glory,
If you don't like the Red, White and Blue,
Then don't act like the cur in the story,
Don't bite the hand that's feeding you!

Vocabulary:
tyrant: an oppressive ruler
cur: mixed-breed dog
Document 1: Don’t Bite the Hand That’s Feeding You Questions

1.) How does the song describe immigrants?

2.) How does the song imply immigrants have been treated?

3.) In your opinion, how accurate is the song’s description of the immigrant experience? Use evidence to support your answer.
Document 2: Free classes in English!

This poster, created between 1936 and 1941, announced free English language classes and included Yiddish text in the Hebrew alphabet over Star of David.

(Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, original link: http://loc.gov/pictures/item/98513719/)

Vocabulary:
WPA: Works Progress Administration
Document 2: Free classes in English!

1.) What is the reader promised to learn by taking the class being offered? Who is offering the class?

2.) In what ways would a class like this benefit new immigrants to the United States?
After passage of the Immigration Act of 1917, immigrants to the United States over the age of sixteen had to pass a literacy test. The legislation was championed by John Lawson Burnett, a Congressman from Alabama who chaired the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization.
Document 3: The Americanese wall Questions

1. Describe the imagery and symbolism used in the cartoon.

2. Based on what you see in the cartoon, what is the cartoonist’s opinion on the Immigration Act of 1917?
Document 4: Portland Americanization Class, 1924

Clara Soule, teacher and Director of Americanization, in her 1924 annual report, wrote that enrollment in adult day classes like the one pictured had increased 31 percent since the previous year. "Confined to the home in the settlement district, with a large family to care for, little opportunity is offered her to learn either language or customs," Soule wrote of immigrant women. Adult day classes, aimed primarily at mothers and occasionally held in their homes, were intended to remedy what Soule saw as a serious problem.

(Maine Memory Network link: https://www.mainememory.net/artifact/48820)
Clara L. Soule, director of the Americanization program stands at the back of an Americanization class in this photograph at the Woolson School, also known as the Chestnut Street School. The students are, from left, George Wong, Dan Wong, Henry Wong, Philip Dong, Han Tong and Chee Wong. All were Chinese American waiters at the Oriental and Empire restaurants in Portland.

An article about this class was published in the Portland Sunday Telegram on January 25, 1925. According to the article, this class was formed when Soule called the managers of the city's two Chinese restaurants in March of 1924 to see if the staff would be interested in English classes. Eleven students were in the first class, and by the following fall several had found work in other cities, including Bangor, Augusta, Boston, Syracuse, N.Y. and Rutland, V.T.

(Maine Memory Network link: https://www.mainememory.net/artifact/43316)
Document 6: Americanization class, Portland, 1924

Students in an Americanization class at the Woolston School, also called the Chestnut Street School, performing in a dramatization of immigration to America.

Gladys Moss and Nathan Golodetz are dressed as the Goddess of Liberty and Uncle Sam to greet the recently arrived.

A newspaper article noted, "The Junior Americanization Class of the day school will entertain the audience with a varied program of songs, recitations and a dramatization of Uncle Sam’s Problems, depicting some perplexing questions, and concluding with a discussion of many truths of vital interest to the thinking citizens of today."

(Maine Memory Network link: https://www.mainememory.net/artifact/43318)
Documents 4, 5, and 6: Portland Americanization Class photographs Questions

1.) Describe some of the groups of people who took advantage of the Americanization classes in Portland, ME.

2.) What were some of the skills taught in these classes? How might these skills have been beneficial for immigrants new to the United States?

3.) In what ways do these photographs illustrate both the challenges and opportunities new immigrants found in the U.S.?
The Ku Klux Klan impacted Maine politics during 1923 when over 7,000 of their number rallied to change city government structure from having an elected mayor to hiring a city manager. The Klan had a huge headquarters complex on Forest Avenue. The Klan's Maine director, F. Eugene "Doc" Farnsworth, spoke against Catholics, Jews and immigrants.

(Maine Memory Network link: https://www.mainememory.net/artifact/1265)
Document 7: Ku Klux Klan procession, Portland, ca. 1923

1. What kind of attitude toward immigrants is being displayed in this photograph? How can you tell?

2. Does this photograph provide any evidence about the challenges immigrants faced in the United States? Explain.
Document 8: "You're going to a different country, different style of life. . . it's a challenge." (audio recording)

Rocco Ditaranto was born in Italy and immigrated to the United States. He owned Ditaranto's Market on 21st Avenue in Patterson, New Jersey. In 1994, Ditaranto was interviewed about his experiences as an Italian immigrant.

Listen to this segment of his interview on what he faced to coming to the United States.

You can access the audio recording at the following web address:
https://www.loc.gov/item/afcwip003906/

Rocco Ditaranto was born in Italy and immigrated to the United States. He owned Ditaranto's Market on 21st Avenue in Patterson, New Jersey. In 1994, Ditaranto was interviewed about his experiences as an Italian immigrant.

Listen to this segment of his interview on what he did soon after arriving in the United States.

You can access the audio recording at the following web address:
https://www.loc.gov/item/afcwpip003905/

Document 10: "When I came to this country, I thought I only was going to learn to speak English."

Rocco Ditaranto was born in Italy and immigrated to the United States. He owned Ditaranto's Market on 21st Avenue in Patterson, New Jersey. In 1994, Ditaranto was interviewed about his experiences as an Italian immigrant.

Listen to this segment of his interview the language barriers her faced in the United States.

You can access the audio recording at the following web address: https://www.loc.gov/item/afcwip003912/

Documents 8, 9, and 10: Ditaranto audio recordings Questions

1. What are some of the challenges Ditaranto says he and others faced upon coming to the United States?

2. Why did he and others decide to come despite those challenges?
Immigration Debate

Objective: Describe the challenges and opportunities faced by immigrants in the United States.

Essential Questions: What challenges and opportunities have immigrants historically faced in the United States?

Assignment:
Work with a partner/group to prepare a debate that addresses the statement “Immigrants to the United States have historically experienced more opportunities than challenges in their new homeland.” You and your partner or the opposing team will each take on a role in this debate; one will argue the pro position (Yes, immigrants to the United States have historically experienced more opportunities than challenges in their new homeland.), the other will argue the con position (No, historically, immigrants to the United States have not experienced more opportunities than challenges in their new homeland; they have in fact encountered more challenges.). Your debate must follow the outlined format. Your debate script must be typed and turned in after your debate is presented to the class.

Timeline: You will have ____ class periods to work both with your partner and independently to prepare your debate. You must also use your own time outside of class to prepare.

Due date: ________________

Debate format

Question:
To answer the question, you must address two of the following main ideas:

Round 1

1. Opening Statement
   a. Explain background, why is topic important, think “big picture”, appeal to passion
      (1 paragraph)

2. Evidence
   a. Present data, case studies, evidence for each argument, think “specific”, appeal to intellect
      (2 paragraphs)

Round 2

1. Rebuttal
   a. Attack opposing side’s arguments, reiterate your side’s arguments, appeal to passion and intellect
   b. May ask questions of opponent
      (1 paragraph)

2. Closing statement
   a. Summarize your position and evidence, take the moral high ground
      (1 paragraph)
Suggested Assessment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding of Topic</strong></td>
<td>The student clearly understood the topic in-depth and presented their information forcefully and convincingly.</td>
<td>The student clearly understood the topic in-depth and presented their information with ease.</td>
<td>The student seemed to understand the main points of the topic and presented those with ease.</td>
<td>The team did not show an adequate understanding of the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information</strong></td>
<td>All information presented in the debate was clear, accurate and thorough.</td>
<td>Most information presented in the debate was clear, accurate and thorough.</td>
<td>Most information presented in the debate was clear and accurate, but was not usually thorough.</td>
<td>Information had several inaccuracies OR was usually not clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Facts/Statistics and Primary Sources</strong></td>
<td>Every major point was well supported with several relevant facts, statistics and/or examples. Student used ample amount of primary source evidence.</td>
<td>Every major point was adequately supported with relevant facts, statistics and/or examples. Student used adequate amount of primary source evidence.</td>
<td>Every major point was supported with facts, statistics and/or examples, but the relevance of some was questionable. Student did not use adequate amount of primary source evidence.</td>
<td>Every point was not supported. There was little to no use of primary source evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Debate Format</strong></td>
<td>Debate format was followed consistently throughout the debate.</td>
<td>Debate format was mostly followed.</td>
<td>The debate format was only partly followed.</td>
<td>The debate format was rarely or not followed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Script Format</strong></td>
<td>Script format was followed; typed, double spaced, size 12 Times New Roman font.</td>
<td>Script format was mostly followed.</td>
<td>Script format was partially followed.</td>
<td>Script format was not followed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics and Grammar</strong></td>
<td>Few to no errors in mechanics and grammar.</td>
<td>Few errors in mechanics and grammar.</td>
<td>Several errors in mechanics and grammar.</td>
<td>Many errors in mechanics and grammar.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maine Learning Results:
Grade Level: PreK-2; Content Area: Social Studies: HISTORY (A1a, A1b, A1c, A1d, A1e, A3, E1b, E1e, E2a, E2b)
Grade Level: 3-5; Content Area: Social Studies: HISTORY (A1a, A1c, A1d, A1e, A3, E1a, E1b, E1c, E2a, E2b)
Grade Level: 6-8; Content Area: Social Studies: HISTORY (A1a, A1b, A1c, A1d, A1e, A1f, A1g, A1h, A1k, A1l, A3, E1a, E1b, E1d, E2a, E2b, E2c)
Grade Level: 9-Diploma; Content Area: Social Studies: HISTORY (A1a, A1b, A1c, A1d, A1e, A1i, A1j, A3, E1a, E1b, E1d, E2a, E2b)

Common Core State Standards:
Anchor Standards: COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7); COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR WRITING (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.5, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.6, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.7, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.8); COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.4, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.5);
COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR LANGUAGE (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.2)
Grade 2: WRITING (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.6, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.7); LANGUAGE (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.3)
