

Early 20th Century Immigration Perspectives and Legislative Response

Unit duration: approximately 2-3 class periods (2-3 days)

Grade level: High School-11th grade

Objectives:

Students will be able to compare and contrast historical viewpoints by reading primary and secondary source quotations.

Students will be able to summarize two perspectives by writing a claim (thesis) sentence.

Students will be able to research primary and secondary sources to find pro/con arguments by reading online and print sources.

Students will be able to present an argument by speaking and listening during a structured academic controversy.

Essential Questions:

How did various perspectives about immigrants and immigration shape policy in the US during the early 1900s?

What were some of the perspectives about immigrants and immigration during this time period?

What were some lasting effects from the passage of the 1924 Immigration Act ?

Colorado State Standards Addressed:

Colorado High School History Standards:

Standard 1: Use the historical method of inquiry to ask questions, evaluate primary and secondary sources, critically analyze and interpret data, and develop interpretations defended by evidence

- a. Evaluate a historical source for point of view and historical context (DOK 2- 3)
- b. Gather and analyze historical information, including contradictory data, from a variety of primary and secondary sources, including sources located on the Internet, to support or reject hypotheses (DOK 1-3)
- c. Construct and defend a written historical argument using relevant primary and secondary sources as evidence (DOK 1-4)

Standard 2: The key concepts of continuity and change, cause and effect, complexity, unity and diversity over time

- a. Analyze continuity and change in eras over the course of United States history (DOK 2-3)
- b. Investigate causes and effects of significant events in United States history. (DOK 1-2)
- c. Analyze the complexity of events in United States history. (DOK 2-3)
- d. Examine and evaluate issues of unity and diversity from Reconstruction to present. (DOK 1-3)

Standard 3: The significance of ideas as powerful forces throughout history.

- a. Analyze the origins of fundamental political debates and how conflict, compromise, and cooperation have shaped national unity and diversity.

High School Geography Standards:

Standard 1: Use different types of maps and geographic tools to analyze features on Earth to investigate and solve geographic questions

- a. Gather data, make inferences and draw conclusions from maps and other visual representations (DOK 1-3)

Lesson Plans

Day/time/ duration	Title/content	Step by step instructions	Materials needed/notes
Day 1	Early Immigration Perspectives	<p>This lesson would work best after students have a bit of context around early immigration in regards to Early Chinese immigration and exclusion and context around industrialization and European immigration between 1890s-1920s.</p> <p>Step 1: Divide students into either partners or small groups (no more than 4 students per group) with a blank poster paper for each group.</p> <p>Step 2: Hand out the quotations taken from various primary and secondary sources (prior cut into strips...one quotation per strip)</p> <p>Step 3: Instruct students to divide these quotations/ideas into two categories. They will first need to decide what the two categories should be, then organize the quotations into these categories, then glue them on the poster paper, including the label for their two categories.</p> <p>Step 4: Instruct students to now create a “claim” or thesis statement that would summarize/encapsulate the main idea(s) presented by the quotations in each of their categories (this could be ONE claim statement that incorporates the contrasting ideas or two separate claim statements for each category). <i>For example: While some people felt immigrants were contributing economically to the US, others felt immigrants did not belong. OR---Some people wanted immigrants to have equal rights, fair working conditions, and be treated humanely. Some people felt immigrants needed to assimilate, not “lower” American cultural standards, and not take jobs from other Americans.</i></p> <p>Step 5: Instruct students to nominate a group member to share out their categories and a different member to read their claim statement(s). As student groups share out, I usually write their various categories on the board at the front of the room to keep track of differences and similarities.</p> <p>Step 6: Lead a class discussion about what they observe about similarities/differences of categories, overlap of themes, etc...</p> <p>Step 7: Bringing it back to history...share the ppt. slides (I usually preface this with...”if I were to categorize these quotations, these are the two categories I would choose and why...”)</p>	<p>Hand out: Historical Perspective Quotations (attached) https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oo10KWYJujhRuWQKpFUyC_-Su_0WaJ07/view?usp=sharing</p> <p>Glue</p> <p>Poster papers, enough for each group of students in your class</p> <p>PPT. slides 2-6 (attached) https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1prpTZ-kCGkjss6-R0jFb9OffWus2y9VFNCx0kejLsEg/edit?usp=sharing</p>

		<p>Step 8: If time, at the end of the class period, have students reflect with a quick-write on the question: How would you summarize two perspectives people held about immigration or immigrants in the early 20th Century?</p>	
Day Two	Political reactions to Early Immigration Perspectives	<p>This lesson follows the previous one, so if you didn't quite finish from previous day, do so first.</p> <p>Step 1: Provide context around the 1921 and 1924 immigration legislation that was passed by Congress (ppt. slides).</p> <p>Step 2: Divide students into groups of 4.</p> <p>Step 2: Set the stage for conducting a Structured Academic Controversy around the debate proposition: The United States needed to enact the 1924 immigration quota system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pass out instructions for conducting a Structured Academic Controversy and go over with students. -Assign 2 students per group as the affirmative (arguing that, yes, the US needed to enact the immigration quota system) and 2 students per group the negative (arguing that, no, the US did not need to enact the immigration quota system) sides. <p>Step 3: Give students time to research their sides' position using the evidence-gathering document provided (these are suggested resources, but by no means exhaustive...the textbook referenced is an OLD textbook I have access to, so you might check your textbook or other resources that address the different sides/arguments surrounding this legislation)</p> <p>Step 4: Conduct the Structured Academic Controversy following the protocol steps and time frames</p> <p>Step 5: Exit ticket: final ppt. slide</p>	<p>PPT. slides 7-11 https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1prpTZ-kCGkjss6-R0jFb9OffWus2y9VFN Cx0kejLsEg/edit?usp=sharing</p> <p>Instructions for SAC https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dbZ5uqsDJ6IAzd1MBYu3WsrAhKsdOO8J/view?usp=sharing</p> <p>Graphic organizer for SAC note-taking https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_mbeiywAhOR0l2Md5-mzyxSiptEm0y1/view?usp=sharing</p> <p>Computers/devices to access internet</p> <p>Handout or shared google doc: Evidence for building a case- Immigration Legislation https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wMPzmAmYMmwiwsWb1eCDR581ZRPF57CEKgSofWuKlXw/edit?usp=sharing</p>

Handout: Perspectives Quotations

“The strike of yesterday was ordered by a committee representing every department at the Pullman works. This committee was in session all night Thursday night, and finally came to the conclusion to order a strike 4:30 o’clock yesterday morning. The position of the men is that they are receiving less than a living wage, to which they are entitled.”

-Chicago Times

“I cannot stop now . . . I propose to work harder than ever and teach a lesson to those bigoted idiots. The managers refuse to work for peace.”

-Eugene Debs

“If fair wages [were] the return for efficient service, [then] harmonious relations may be established and maintained. . . and the necessity for strike and lockout, boycott and blacklist, alike disastrous to employer and employee, and a perpetual menace to the welfare of the public, will forever disappear.”

-Eugene Debs

“During the First World War, I was in the army, and I held to my idea about coming to America. Then, in 1919, my sister Josephine came [to America]. I was very close to her. . . She came by herself and she got married. She was doing very well over here. And I wanted to build a new life, better myself. Eventually, all my brothers and sisters come to the United States.”

-Peter Mossini

“What shall the workers do? Sit idly by and see the vast resources of nature and the human mind be utilized and monopolized for the benefit of the comparative few? No. The laborers must learn to think and act, and soon, too, that only by the power of organization, and common concert of action, can. . . their rights to life. . . be recognized, and liberty and rights secured.”

-Samuel Gompers

“The working people find that improvements in the methods of production and distribution are constantly being made, and unless they occasionally strike, or have the power to enter upon a strike, the improvements will all go to the employer and all the injuries to the employees The American Republic was not established without some suffering, without some sacrifice, and no tangible right has yet been achieved in the interest of the people unless it has been secured by sacrifices and persistency.”

-Samuel Gompers

“You have endured the pangs of want and hunger; your children you have sacrificed to the factory-lords. In short, you have been miserable and obedient slaves all these years. Why? To satisfy the insatiable greed, to fill the coffers of your lazy thieving master!”

-August Spies

“...The people engaged in this outrageous work of destruction are not strikers. The persons who set the fires yesterday are young hoodlums.”

-Chicago Times

One Southerner explained the use of Irish labor on the grounds that:“n-----s are worth too much to be risked here; if the Paddies (Irish) are knocked overboard . . . nobody loses anything.”

-David R. Roediger

“...immigration not only furnishes the greater portion of our criminals, it is also seriously affecting the morals of the native population. It is disease and not health which is contagious. Most foreigners bring with them continental ideas of the Sabbath, and the result is sadly manifest in all our cities, where it is being transformed from a holy day into a holiday. But by far the most effective instrumentality for debauching (corrupting) popular morals is the liquor traffic, and this is chiefly carried on by foreigners...”

-Rev. Josiah Strong

“These new immigrants were no longer exclusively members of the Nordic race as were the earlier ones who came...the new immigrants [contain] a large...number of the weak, the broken and the mentally crippled of all races drawn from the lowest [levels] of the Mediterranean basin and the Balkans, together with hordes of the wretched, submerged populations of the Polish Ghettos. Our jails, insane asylums and almshouses are filled with this human flotsam [wreckage] and the whole tone of American life, social, moral, and political has been lowered and vulgarized by them.”

-Madison Grant

“...if the master race of this continent is subordinated to or overrun with the communistic and revolutionary races, it will be in grave danger of social disaster.”

-The Age of Steel

“...America is a great country. In America everybody has a chance. Everybody who comes to America from the old country ought to learn the American language and become an American citizen. If the people that come to America do not become Americans, this country will soon be like the old country.”

-Granite City Schools

“In every American city with a large, foreign vote have appeared the boss, the machine, and the Tammany way [Tammany Hall was the corrupt city government of New York City]. Once the machine gets a grip on the situation, it broadens and entrenches its power by intimidation at the polls, ballot frauds, vote purchases, saloon influences, and the support of the vicious and criminal. But its tap-root is the simple-minded foreigner...”

-E.A. Ross

Early 20th Century Immigration Perspectives and Legislation

Perspectives Posters

- Be able to...
 - Explain your reasoning behind your categories; why did you title them the way you titled them? Why did you organize the quotations the way you did?
 - Read your claim statements and explain why you feel this is the claim of each category.

Expansion of Industry: Perspectives

- 1890: Great divide between rich (business owners) and poor (laborers)
 - Leads to political activism from workers: usually in the form of labor unions
 - Leads to work of muckrakers (journalists)
 - Richest 9% held 75% of the national wealth
 - Average worker makes about \$200/year
 - Children make about 17 cents per 14 hour day
 - Women make half of what men make (\$100 for women, \$200 for men)
 - 6-day work weeks common
-
- “The strike of yesterday was ordered by a committee representing every department at the Pullman works. This committee was in session all night Thursday night, and finally came to the conclusion to order a strike 4:30 o’clock yesterday morning. The position of the men is that **they are receiving less than a living wage, to which they are entitled.**” -*Chicago Times*
 - “I cannot stop now . . . I propose to work harder than ever **and teach a lesson to those bigoted idiots.** The managers refuse to work for peace.” -*Eugene Debs*
 - “**If fair wages [were] the return for efficient service, [then] harmonious relations may be established** and maintained...and the necessity for strike and lockout, boycott and blacklist, alike disastrous to employer and employee, and a perpetual menace to the welfare of the public, will forever disappear.” -*Eugene Debs*
 - “What shall the workers do? Sit idly by and see the vast resources of nature and the human mind be utilized and monopolized for the benefit of the comparative few? No. **The laborers must learn to think and act,** and soon, too, that only by the power of organization, and common concert of action, **can...their rights to life...be recognized, and liberty and rights secured.**” -*Samuel Gompers*
 - “You have endured the pangs of want and hunger; **your children you have sacrificed** to the factory-lords. In short, **you have been miserable and obedient slaves** all these years. Why?”

Expansion of Industry: Perspectives

- Anti-immigrant movement (often referred to as “nativism” by historians)
 - People who speak out against open immigration policies, arguing for laws to limit immigration
 - People who openly express hatred and fear of immigrant groups and discriminate
-
- “...The people engaged in this outrageous work of destruction are not strikers. The persons who set the fires yesterday are **young hoodlums.**” -Chicago Times
 - One Southerner explained the use of Irish labor on the grounds that:“n-----s are worth too much to be risked here; **if the Paddies (Irish) are knocked overboard . . . nobody loses anything.**” -David R. Roediger
 - “...immigration not only **furnishes the greater portion of our criminals**, it is also **seriously affecting the morals** of the native population. It is disease and not health which is contagious. Most foreigners bring with them continental ideas of the Sabbath, and the result is sadly manifest in all our cities, where it is being transformed from a holy day into a holiday. But by far **the most effective** instrumentality for debauching (**corrupting**) **popular morals** is the liquor traffic, and this is **chiefly carried on by foreigners...**” -Rev. Josiah Strong
 - “These new immigrants were no longer exclusively members of the Nordic race as were the earlier ones who came...the **new immigrants [contain] a large...number of the weak, the broken and the mentally crippled of all races drawn from the lowest [levels] of the Mediterranean basin and the Balkans, together with hordes of the wretched, submerged populations of the Polish Ghettos.** Our jails, insane asylums and almshouses are filled with this **human flotsam [wreckage]** and **the whole tone of American life, social, moral, and political has been lowered and vulgarized by them.**” -Madison Grant

SAC Steps

1. Read the background information and do some research of your own to identify facts and arguments that support your assigned position. Prepare to advocate the position.
2. Team A makes the best case supporting the proposition (affirmative) that you can make in the assigned time frame. Team B should listen and take notes. This is not the time to argue.

Next, Team B makes the best case opposing the proposition (negative). Team A listens and takes notes.

When both sides have presented, each can take 1 minute for clarifying questions. Clarifying questions begin with phrases like “What did you mean by...?” or “Could you explain what you meant by...”

3. Next, reverse positions. Pair B should first use their notes and what they learned from the other side to make a short presentation demonstrating their understanding of the best arguments supporting the proposition. Pair A should then do the same for the arguments opposing the proposition.
4. Leave your assigned positions and discuss the issue in your foursome, trying to find points of agreement and disagreement among group members. Try to reach consensus on something; if you cannot reach consensus on any substantive aspect of the issue, try to reach consensus on a process you could use to resolve disagreements.
5. Be prepared to participate in a class debrief of the activity.

Graphic Organizer: SAC 1924 Quota System

Name: _____

Proposition: The United States needed to enact the 1924 National Origins Quota system.

Affirmative (Change was Needed)	Negative (Change was not needed; keep the status quo)

Evidence for Building a Case--Immigration Legislation

Evidence for building your case:

Proposition: The United States needed to enact the 1924 National Origins Quota system.

Text of the 1924 National Origins Quota system Act:

<https://immigration.procon.org/sourcefiles/1924Johnson-ReedImmigrationAct.pdf>

Background information on the National Origins Quota system:

<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act>

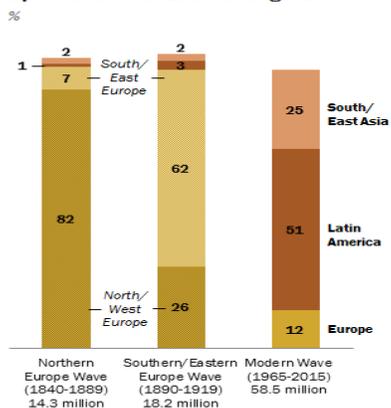
<https://dp.la/search?q=immigration+act+1924>

New Restrictions in the 1920s, Pew Research Center

The visa arrangement in place when the 1965 law was passed was a legacy from half a century earlier. At that earlier time, a giant wave of immigration that began in the late 1800s had raised the nation's population of foreign-born residents to a then-record high of 13.9 million in 1920, making up a near-record 13% of the U.S. population ([Gibson and Jung, 2006](#); [Passel and Cohn, 2008](#)).⁵ The first arrivals in this wave were mainly Northern Europeans, but by the early 1900s most new arrivals came from Italy, Poland and elsewhere in Southern and Eastern Europe ([Martin, 2011](#)).

FIGURE 1.1

Latin American, Asian Immigrants Make Up Most of Post-1965 Immigration



Note: Data for 1965–2015 include legal and unauthorized immigrants; for 1840–1919, only legal admissions.

Source: For 1965–2015, Pew Research Center estimates based on adjusted census data; for 1840–1919, Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, 2008*, Table 2

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Reacting to the change in immigrant origins, laws enacted in the 1920s sought to return U.S. immigration patterns to those that prevailed decades earlier, when Northern Europeans were the largest group of immigrants. A 1921 law imposed the first overall numerical quota on immigration to the U.S.—about 350,000, reduced to 165,000 in 1924 ([Martin, 2011](#)). The 1924 law set annual quotas for each European country based on the foreign-born population from that nation living in the U.S. in 1890.⁶ The 1921 and 1924 laws exempted from the new quota highly skilled immigrants, domestic servants, specialized workers such as actors and wives or unmarried minor children of U.S. citizens, and the 1924 law also created preferences for quota visas for certain family members and agricultural workers ([Martin, 2011](#)).

Nationality quotas were imposed only on Europe, not on countries in the Western Hemisphere. There were no quotas for Asia, because immigration from most countries there already was prohibited through other restrictions imposed in 1875 and expanded in later decades.

These laws were passed against a backdrop of growing federal regulation of immigration, which was mainly controlled by states until a series of Supreme Court rulings in the late 1800s declared that it was a federal responsibility. Aside from country limits, federal laws already in place barred immigration by criminals, those deemed “lunatics” or “idiots,” and people unable to support themselves, among others ([U.S. Department of Homeland Security](#)). These laws also required that immigrants older than 16 prove they could read English or some other language. The federal immigration bureaucracy, created in 1891, grew in the 1920s with creation of the Border Patrol and an appeals board for people excluded from the country ([U.S. Department of Homeland Security](#)).

Census data from 1890 and 1910:

<https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab04.html>

Various articles/resources to help form arguments:

“Eugenists Dread Tainted Aliens”

<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1921/09/25/98744564.pdf>

During World War I, U.S. Government Propaganda Erased German Culture

<https://www.npr.org/2017/04/07/523044253/during-world-war-i-u-s-government-propaganda-erased-german-culture>

“The Anti-Catholic Press, 1854 THE KNOW-NOTHING: AND AMERICAN CRUSADER 29 July 1854”

http://hsp.org/sites/default/files/legacy_files/migrated/anticatholicpress.pdf

National Archives Catalog: “Pro-and-Con Public Opinion Re: Quotas and other Proposed Restrictive Immigration Laws”

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/1226235>

American Panorama-digital mapping

<https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/foreignborn/#decade=2010>

America textbook, pages 534-545

