

**Teaching American History Grant: Learning Experience 2008-2009**  
**Mrs. Amy Kowal- Minisink Valley Middle School, Orange County**

**Topic Title:** Unit: Coming to America: Myths versus Reality

Lesson: Is Angel Island Appropriately Nicknamed the Ellis Island of the West?  
(2-day lesson)

**Grade Level:** 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Background Information/Curriculum:**

- The New York State curriculum requires eighth grade students to understand the immigration experience of the late 1800s and early 1900s including the “push/pull” theory of immigration to the United States and case studies of particular immigrant groups. In this lesson, the students will compare/contrast the Ellis and Angel Island experience based upon prior knowledge, Angel Island poetry and media.

**New York State Learning Standard (s) assessed:**

Standard 1: History of the United States and New York

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their knowledge of major ideas, eras, themes, developments and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Students will review reasons why people emigrated/ came to America in the late 1800s and early 1900s and the conditions that existed at Ellis Island through a brainstorming exercise.
- Students will identify/compare and contrast the conditions that immigrants faced at both Ellis and Angel Island.
- Students will analyze poetry and view a film clip in order to draw further conclusions about Angel Island.

*Note: This lesson would best be completed in a computer lab where web access would be available for all students.*

**Essential Questions:**

- Why do people emigrate?
- How realistic are our perceptions (myth vs. reality)?
- How realistic were the perceptions of the immigrants?

**Time Allotment** (classroom time): 2 days/ 40 minute periods each day

## Materials and Resources

- Web access/ LCD projector and/or use of a computer lab
- <http://www.kqed.org/w/pacificlink/history/angelisland>
- **Group Activity Packet:** Document Analysis Worksheets, Helpful Vocabulary Sheet and Venn diagram Template.
- Lai, Him Mark, Genny Lim, Judy Yung. **Island Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940.** University of Washington Press, 1980.  
(*This source is a helpful resource for teachers but not necessary for the actual lesson.*)

## Procedure

- *Prerequisite: The students should have some understanding of European Immigration in the late 1800s and early 1900s and the experience at Ellis Island.*
- As an introductory focus question, students will be asked to respond to the following...  
“Last summer, what did you think that this year (Grade 8) would be like? Were your perceptions/beliefs accurate and from whom/what did you base your original beliefs/opinions about the eighth grade?” *A teacher-led discussion should follow in order to connect the day’s lesson to the essential questions.*
- The whole class will then review/brainstorm reasons why various immigrants came to America in the late 1800s and early 1900s and facts about Ellis Island from previous lessons, student notes, textbook and vocabulary.
- Students will then be assigned to groups.
- Group Assignment:
  - 1) Each group will receive a Group Activity Packet
  - 2) Each group will choose and analyze three poems (<http://www.kqed.org/w/pacificlink/history/angelisland>) found at Angel Island by reading/answering the questions on the document analysis worksheets. Each group will also complete a Venn diagram that compares and contrasts Ellis and Angel Island.
  - 3) Each group will present poem analysis answers for one of their poems.
  - 4) The whole class/groups will then view the *Discovering Angel Island* ten-minute, video clip (<http://www.kqed.org/w/pacificlink/history/angelisland>.)
  - 5) The whole class will then be asked to write a paragraph that either supports or refutes the following statement,  
  
**‘Angel Island was the Ellis Island of the West.’**
- **Wrap-Up Activity:** One member from each group will read/present their paragraph responses with the class. Groups will then be asked to reflect on the essential question: How realistic were the perceptions of the immigrants?

**Assessment:**

- Student groups will be observed throughout all phases of the activity.
- Paragraph (see rubric)
  
- Culminating Unit Project (50 points): Students will be asked to choose from and complete one of the following assignments related to the Immigration Unit and time period.
  - A fictional diary entry, letter or journal describing an immigrant's experience
  - A scrap-book relating to push/pull factors and other immigration topics
  - A drawing/painting/ carving depicting the harsh realities of immigration
  - A 3-D model depicting the harsh realities of immigration
  - A re-creation of poetry related to immigration (painting, carving, collage)
  - An interview with an immigrant
  - A computer generated brochure/ PowerPoint relating to immigration
  - A video or skit relating to immigration hardships
  - An original political cartoon that compares Ellis and Angel Island

## **HELPFUL VOCABULARY LIST (Attachment)**

1. **push/pull factors** – conditions that either attracted people to move to a new area or encouraged people to move away from their homeland.
2. **steerage-** the lower and cramped portion of ship where many immigrants traveled.
3. **Ellis Island-** an immigration receiving/-processing center located on the East Coast in New York harbor. Many European immigrants were processed there.
4. **Angel Island-** and immigration receiving/processing center located on the West Coast in San Francisco Bay. Many Asian immigrants were processed there.
5. **ethnic group-** a group of people who share a common culture
6. **nativist-** persons who wanted to preserve the United States for native-born white Protestants and who wanted to limit immigration
7. **assimilation-** process of becoming part of another culture
8. **Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) -** the first act of legislation to exclude a specific national group from immigrating to the U.S

**Written Document Analysis Worksheet**

**Directions: Please use this template to analyze each poem.**

1. TYPE OF DOCUMENT:(poems)

2. DATE(S) OF DOCUMENT:

3. AUTHOR (OR CREATOR) OF THE DOCUMENT:

POSITION (TITLE):

4. FOR WHAT AUDIENCE WAS THE DOCUMENT WRITTEN?

5. DOCUMENT INFORMATION (There are many possible ways to answer A-D.)

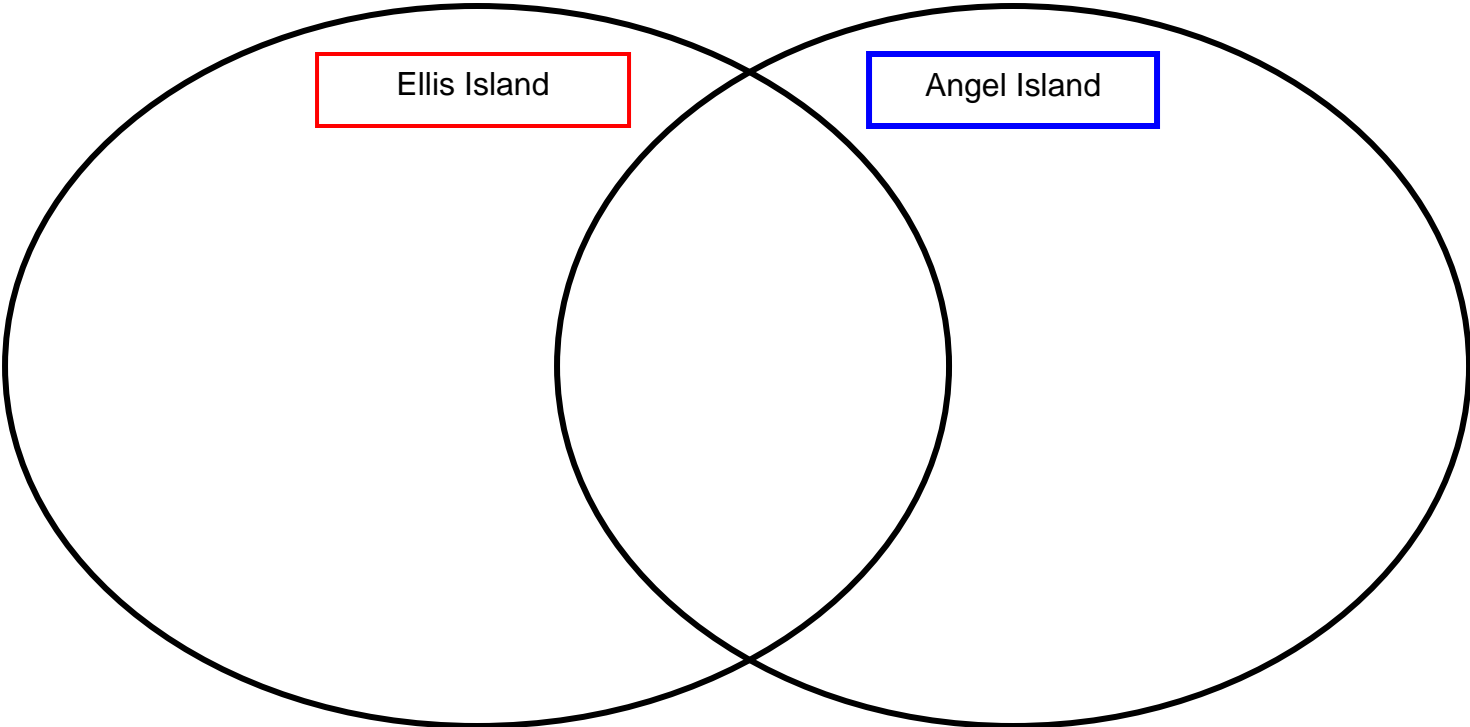
A. List three things the author said that you think are important:

B. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.

C. List two things the document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written.

D. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document:

(Form adapted from National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408)



CATEGORY	4 - Above Standards	3 - Meets Standards	2 - Approaching Standards	1 - Below Standards	Score
<b>Intro.</b>	The introduction has a strong hook and is related to the topic.	The introduction has a hook or attention grabber, but it is weak or rambling.	The author has an introduction but the connection to the topic is not clear.	The introduction is not interesting AND is not relevant to the topic.	
<b>Evidence and Examples</b>	All of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Most of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	At least one of the pieces of evidence and examples is relevant and has an explanation that shows how that piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Evidence and examples are NOT relevant AND/OR are not explained.	
<b>Grammar &amp; Spelling</b>	Author makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	