

In this unit, students will explore the concept of immigration in the United States and why this country is often referred to as a country of immigrants.

What's the story?

Students will discover why people immigrated to the United States. They will learn about the **factors** that pushed them from their homelands and **brought them to the United States** and why many immigrants settled in particular cities and regions upon their arrival.

What will my student learn?

Students will explore what it means to become a **citizen**. They will learn about the **Constitution** and the **Bill of Rights** and will be introduced to one of the key creators of these documents: **James Madison**. Learning about immigration is an opportunity for students from immigrant families to find out more about their **family history, customs, and traditions** and what brought them and/or their ancestors to this country.

Students will write **short summaries** of what they have learned about immigration. They will also explore the genre of **letter writing** as they plan and draft a letter to a fictional family member or friend in the country from which they emigrated. Finally, students will work with their classmates to craft their own "**Classroom Constitution**."

Conversation starters

Ask your student questions about the unit to promote discussion and continued learning:

1. What is an immigrant?
Follow up: What were some of the reasons why immigrants chose to leave their countries and come to the United States? Why did immigrants often choose to live in big cities in the United States? If you had been an immigrant, what do you think you would have liked about living in a big city?
2. Who was Charles Steinmetz?
Follow up: Why did he immigrate to the United States? Where did his ship dock when he came to this country? Tell me what you have learned about Ellis Island.
3. What kinds of jobs did Chinese immigrants have?
Follow up: What immigration center did they come through when they arrived in the United States? What are some factors that made them leave China?

4. Why is the United States known as the land of opportunity?

Follow up: What are some of the pull factors that caused people to immigrate to the United States? What are some of the difficulties that immigrants face when coming to a new country?