



VOICES FROM ELLIS ISLAND

Applause Series CURRICULUM GUIDE
CIVIC CENTER OF GREATER DES MOINES

October 29 - November 2, 2012

Voices from Ellis Island

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the Applause Series presentation of *Voices from Ellis Island*. More than 12 million immigrants made their first stop in America at the Ellis Island Immigration Station between 1892 and 1954. Audience favorite Pippa White's *Voices from Ellis Island* honors the experiences of those brave souls who came seeking a new start and a better life. Through dramatic monologues and historical accounts, Ms. White brings their poignant stories to life—reminding us of our common humanity as well as the irrepressible hope that exists at the center of the immigrant experience.



Immigrant children, Ellis Island, New York, 1908. Photo by Brown Brothers.

As you prepare your students for the performance, we hope that this study guide helps you connect the performance to your classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a variety of discussion questions and activities. Some pages are appropriate to reproduce for your students; others are designed more specifically with you, their teacher, in mind. As such, we hope that you are able to “pick and choose” material and ideas from the study guide to meet your class’s unique needs.

See you at the theater,

Civic Center Education Team

Support for Civic Center education programs and the Applause Series is provided by:

Alliant Energy, American Republic Insurance Company, Bradford and Sally Austin, Bank of America, Dean and Sandra Carlson, CenturyLink, EMC Insurance Companies, Greater Des Moines Community Foundation, Hy-Vee, John Deere Des Moines Operations, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, Richard and Deborah McConnell, Pioneer Hi-Bred - a DuPont business, Polk County, Prairie Meadows, Sargent Family Foundation, U.S. Bank, Wells Fargo & Co., Willis Auto Campus, Windsor Charitable Foundation, West Bancorporation Foundation and more than 200 individual donors.

This study guide was compiled and written by Karoline Myers and edited by Michelle McDonald.

GUIDE CONTENTS

About the Civic Center
Page 3

Going to the Theater and Theater Etiquette
Page 4

Civic Center Field Trip Information for Teachers
Page 5

Vocabulary
Page 6

About the Performance
Pages 7

About the Artist, Pippa White
Page 8

About Ellis Island
Pages 9-10

“One Immigrant’s Experience”
Page 11

Pre-Show Exploration Activities
Pages 12-13

Discussion Questions
Page 14

Post-Show Assessment Activities
Pages 15-16

Resources and Sources
Page 17

ABOUT THE CIVIC CENTER



The Civic Center of Greater Des Moines is a cultural landmark of central Iowa and is committed to engaging the Midwest in world-class entertainment, education, and cultural activities. The Civic Center has achieved a national reputation for excellence as a performing arts center and belongs to several national organizations, including The Broadway League, the Independent Presenters Network, International Performing Arts for Youth, and Theater for Young Audiences/USA.

Five performing arts series currently comprise the season— the Willis Broadway Series, Prairie Meadows Temple Theater Series, Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield Family Series, the Dance Series, and the Applause Series. The Civic Center is also the performance home for the Des Moines Symphony and Stage West.

The Civic Center is a private, nonprofit organization and is an important part of central Iowa's cultural community. Through its education programs, the Civic Center strives to engage patrons in arts experiences that extend beyond the stage. Master classes bring professional and local artists together to share their art form and craft, while pre-performance lectures and post-performance Q&A sessions with company members offer ticket holders the opportunity to explore each show as a living, evolving piece of art.

Through the Applause Series— curriculum-connected performances for school audiences— students are encouraged to discover the rich, diverse world of performing arts. During the 2012-2013 season, the Civic Center will welcome more than 45,000 students and educators to 14 professional productions for young audiences.

Want an inside look? Request a tour.

Group tours can be arranged for performance and non-performance dates for groups grades 3 and above.

Call 515-246-2355 or visit CivicCenter.org/education to check on availability or book your visit.

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 250,000 patrons visit the Civic Center each year.

The Civic Center opened in 1979.

The Civic Center has three theater spaces:

- *Main Hall, 2744 seats*
- *Stoner Studio, 200 seats*
- *Temple Theater, 299 seats (located in the Temple for the Performing Arts)*

No seat is more than 155 feet from center stage in the Main Hall.

Nollen Plaza, situated just west of the Civic Center, is a park and amphitheater that is also part of the Civic Center complex. The space features the Crusoe Umbrella sculpture.

The Applause Series started in 1996. You are joining us for our 17th season of school performances.

GOING TO THE THEATER . . .



YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

Attending a live performance is a unique and exciting opportunity. Unlike the passive experience of watching a movie, audience members play an important role in every live performance. As they act, sing, dance, or play instruments, the performers on stage are very aware of the audience's mood and level of engagement. Each performance calls for a different response from audience members. Lively bands, musicians, and dancers may desire the audience to focus silently on the stage and applaud only during natural breaks in the performance. Audience members can often take cues from performers on how to respond to the performance appropriately. For example, performers will often pause or bow for applause at a specific time.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

- * What kind of live performance is this (a play, a dance, a concert, etc.)?
- * What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
- * What is the mood of the performers? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
- * Are the performers encouraging the audience to clap to the music or move to the beat?
- * Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

Seeing a live performance is a very special experience. Although it is not required, many people enjoy dressing up when they attend the theater.

THEATER ETIQUETTE

Here is a checklist of general guidelines to follow when you visit the Civic Center:

- * Leave all food, drinks, and chewing gum at school or on the bus.
- * Cameras, recording devices, and personal listening devices are not permitted in the theater.
- * Turn off and put away all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before the performance begins.
- * Do not text during the performance.
- * Respect the theater. Remember to keep your feet off of the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
- * When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- * **Talk before and after the performance only.** Remember, the theater is designed to amplify sound. Other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
- * Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end. If you must leave the theater during the show, make sure the first set of doors closes before you open the second — this will keep unwanted light from spilling into the theater.
- * Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage — they will let you know what is appropriate.
- * Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!

GOING TO THE THEATER information is adapted from the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts study guide materials.

CIVIC CENTER FIELD TRIP INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS



Thank you for choosing the Applause Series with the Civic Center of Greater Des Moines. Below are tips for organizing a safe and successful field trip to the Civic Center's Temple Theater.

ORGANIZING YOUR FIELD TRIP

- Please include all students, teachers, and chaperones in your ticket request.
- After you submit your ticket request, you will receive a confirmation e-mail within five business days. Your **invoice will be attached to the confirmation e-mail.**
- Payment policies and options are located at the top of the invoice. (Complete payment and cancellation policies may be viewed at civiccenter.org/education.)
- The Civic Center reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.
- Tickets are not printed for Applause Series shows. Your invoice will serve as the reservation confirmation for your group order.
- Schedule buses to arrive in downtown Des Moines at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow time to park, walk to the Temple for the Performing Arts, and be seated in the theater.
- Performances are approximately 60 minutes unless otherwise noted on the website and printed materials.
- All school groups with reservations to the show will receive an e-mail notification when the study guide is posted. Please note that study guides are only printed and mailed upon request.

DIRECTIONS

- The Civic Center's Temple Theater is located in the Temple for the Performing Arts located at Tenth and Locust Streets in downtown Des Moines.
- Directions from I-235: Take Exit 8A (downtown exits) and the ramp toward Third Street. Travel south on Third Street approximately six blocks to Grand Avenue. Turn west on Grand Avenue and travel to Thirteenth Street. Turn south on Thirteenth Street and then east on Locust Street.
- Buses will park on the south side of Locust Street in front of the Nationwide building. See next column for additional parking information.

QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Education department at 515.246.2355 or education@civiccenter.org. Thank you!

PARKING

- Police officers stationed at the corner of Tenth and Locust Streets will direct buses to parking areas with hooded meters near the theater. Groups traveling in personal vehicles are responsible for locating their own parking.
- Buses will remain parked for the duration of the show.
- Buses are not generally permitted to drop off or pick up students near the theater. If a bus must return to school during the performance, prior arrangements must be made with the Civic Center Education staff.

ARRIVAL

- When arriving at the theater, please have an **adult lead your group** for identification and check-in purposes. A Civic Center staff member may be stationed outside the building to direct you.
- Civic Center staff will usher groups into the building as quickly as possible.
- Seating in the theater is general admission. Ushers will escort groups to their seats; various seating factors including group size, grade levels, arrival time, and special needs seating requests may determine a group's specific location in the theater.
- We request that an **adult lead the group into the theater and other adults position themselves throughout the group**; we request this arrangement for supervision purposes, especially in the event that a group must be seated in multiple rows.
- Please allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging seats or taking groups to the restroom.

IN THE THEATER

- In case of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher.
- We ask that adults handle any disruptive behavior in their groups. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
- Following the performance groups may exit the theater and proceed to their bus(es).
- If an item is lost at the Temple Theater, please see an usher or call 515.246.2355.

VOCABULARY



berth: a shelf-like sleeping place. The character Luigi speaks of sleeping in a berth on a ship.

contagious: carrying or spreading an infectious disease. Immigrants underwent a medical inspection at Ellis Island to try to prevent the spread of contagious diseases to people already living in the United States.

detain: to keep from proceeding or moving forward. Immigrants who were not allowed to enter the United States were detained at Ellis Island.

ferry boat: a boat used to transport passengers across a small span of water.



Immigrants leave the ferry boat that carried them from their ship to Ellis Island.

immigrant: a person who migrates to another country, usually to take up permanent residence.

inspection: a formal examination. Immigrants at Ellis Island went through a medical and legal inspection to determine whether they could enter the country.



Immigrants dreaded the eye inspection, where doctors looked for trachoma — a contagious eye disease that can cause blindness.

louse (lice, plural): a small, flat-bodied, biting or sucking insect that lives as a parasite on many types of animals, including humans. Immigrants detained at Ellis Island were often treated for lice.

ABOVE: Immigrants undergo the legal inspection, where immigration officers ask them a series of questions and compare their answers to what is recorded in the ships' manifests.

measles: an infectious disease that occurs mostly in children. Symptoms include small red spots.

ringworm: a skin disease. The character of Rifka is afraid the inspectors will not let her enter America because of ringworm.

Shalom: a Hebrew word meaning peace. It is often used as a word of greeting or farewell. The character Rifka signs all of her letters with the word Shalom.

steerage: accommodations given to passengers who travel at the cheapest rate on a ship.

SOS: a signal sent by telegraph used by ships in distress to call for help.

steward: an employee on a ship who is responsible for the comfort of passengers.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE



Voices from Ellis Island is a one-person show that focuses on the stories of immigrants who passed through Ellis Island during the early 20th century.

Run time: Approx. 60 minutes

PERFORMER AND ROLES

Actress Pippa White is the only performer in *Voices from Ellis Island*. A theatrical performance with only one performer is called a “one-woman show” (or a “one-man show” as the case may be). Over the course of the performance, Ms. White will play seven different characters.

When playing each character, Ms. White will present their stories in the form of monologues. (A monologue is a speech by a single speaker.)

As Ms. White transitions between characters, pay attention to the changes to her costume, her voice and body in order to follow which character she is playing.

Ms. White will also serve as a narrator between sections.

SECTIONS

Voices from Ellis Island is divided into four main sections based on topic.

1) Crossing the Atlantic

Each character introduces him or herself and tells about his or her experiences crossing the Atlantic Ocean by ship from their home country in Europe.

2) First Impressions

The characters recount their first impressions of New York Harbor and being taken to Ellis Island.

3) Island of Hope/Island of Tears

The characters tell of the medical examinations and legal inspections immigrants went through to determine if they could enter America or if they would be sent back to their home countries.

4) New Americans

The characters recount their final interviews with the commissioners and their joy and feelings about being allowed to start their new lives in America.

THE CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance.)

Jeannie: A 22-year old woman from Scotland. Jeannie crossed the Atlantic in 1923.

Fannie: A 13-year old girl from Russia. Fannie crossed the Atlantic in 1903.

Luigi: A young boy from Italy. Luigi crossed the Atlantic with his mother in 1909.

Vera: A pregnant woman from Czechoslovakia. Vera was 25 years old when she crossed the Atlantic in 1928.

Hans: A 19-year old young man from Germany. Hans crossed the Atlantic in 1924.

Nora: A teenage girl from Ireland. Nora crossed the Atlantic in 1913.

Rifka: A 12-year old girl from Russia. Rifka crossed the Atlantic in 1919.

ABOUT THE ARTIST, PIPPA WHITE

Pippa White calls her One's Company Productions "part theatre, part storytelling, part history." Audiences call them unique, captivating, and touching.

To date, she has crisscrossed the country many times touring to over twenty-five states. She has performed at colleges, conferences, museums, libraries, festivals, and performing arts centers.

Ms. White is a teacher and student favorite and has been featured many times on the Applause Series. In fact, this year's performance of *Voices from Ellis Island* is Pippa White's twelfth engagement as part of the Civic Center's school series.

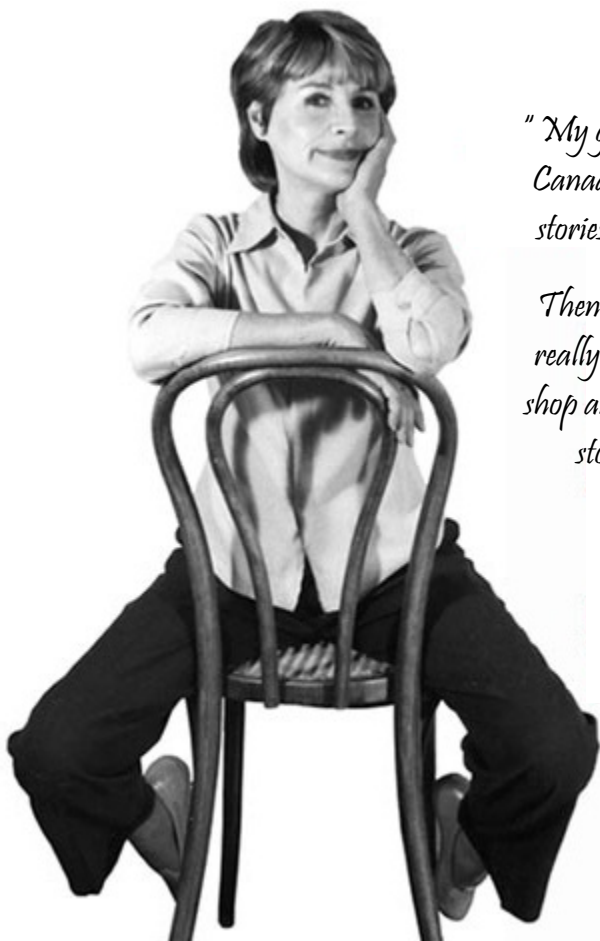
White has a BA in English from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She offers workshops and residencies, including on the topic "Mining the Gold in the History Books: Finding Great Stories in HiStory." She has been a teaching artist with the Arts Are Basic Program (associated with the College of Fine and Performing Arts at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln) and the Nebraska Arts Council for more than eighteen years.

Before doing solo work, she had an extensive background in theatre and television on the West Coast, including five years hosting a daily morning television show on ABC in San Francisco.

Ms. White has more than a dozen one-woman shows in her repertoire — each one written, developed and performed by her. Her dramatic performances serve as tributes to remarkable people whose stories may otherwise be forgotten.

Her show topics include:

- ◇ Immigrants' experiences at Ellis Island
- ◇ Children impacted by the orphan train movement
- ◇ Peoples of the prairie during western expansion
- ◇ Members of the resistance during World War II
- ◇ The women who gave us public health nursing
- ◇ Women who have served as "saints, soldiers, and spies" during times of war



"My great grandmother immigrated through Hudson Bay, Canada when she was 10 years old. I remember hearing her stories.

Then, in the early 1990's I visited the Ellis Island museum—really a fabulous museum. After the tour, I was standing in the gift shop and realized that there was something there for me. There were stories that I wanted to tell.

*Using stories from immigrant interviews I created *Voices from Ellis Island*."*

— Pippa White, on writing *Voices From Ellis Island*

PIPPA
WHITE

ABOUT ELLIS ISLAND



From 1892 to 1954, over twelve million immigrants entered the United States through the portal of Ellis Island, a small island in New York Harbor. Read on to learn more about Ellis Island and its place in United States history.

EARLY DAYS

Ellis Island is located in the upper bay just off the New Jersey coast, in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty.

The island itself has had a varied history. Once a sandy island that barely rose above the high tide mark, it served as a lynching site for pirates, a harbor fort, and ammunition and ordinance depot. Finally in 1890 President Benjamin Harrison designated Ellis Island as the first official Federal immigration station.

IMMIGRATION REGULATION

Prior to 1890, individual states—rather than the Federal government—regulated immigration into the United States. Castle Garden in lower Manhattan served as the New

York State immigration station from 1855 to 1890. These early immigrants came from nations such as England, Ireland, Germany and the Scandinavian countries. Throughout the 1800's political instability, restrictive religious laws, and deteriorating economic conditions in Europe began to fuel the largest mass human migration in the history of the world. It soon became apparent that Castle Garden was ill-equipped and unprepared to handle the growing numbers of immigrants arriving each year.

FEDERAL INTERVENTION

The Federal government intervened with the state-controlled immigration system and constructed a new Federally-operated immigration station on Ellis Island in 1892. The new structure on Ellis Island opened on January 1, 1892; Annie Moore, a 15 year-old Irish girl accompanied by her two brothers entered history and a new country when she became the very first immigrant to be processed at Ellis Island on January 2. Over the next 62 years, more than 12 million followed through this port of entry.

ARRIVAL AT ELLIS ISLAND

First and second class passengers who arrived in New York Harbor were not required to undergo the inspection process at Ellis Island. These passengers underwent a brief inspection aboard ship and were free to pass through customs and enter America at the pier. The theory was that if a person could afford to purchase a first or second class ticket, they were less likely to become a financial drain with health or legal issues in America.

However the process was far different for "steerage" or third class passengers; they were transported from the pier by ferry to Ellis Island where they underwent a medical and legal inspection.

If the immigrant's papers were in order and they were in reasonably good health, the Ellis Island inspection process would last approximately three to five hours. There were two main portions to each immigrant's inspection: medical inspection and legal inspection.

(About Ellis Island cont. pg. 10)

ABOUT ELLIS ISLAND, cont.



Medical Inspection

The inspections took place in the **Registry Room** (or Great Hall), where doctors would briefly scan every immigrant for obvious physical ailments. If a physical ailment was detected, doctors would make a mark with chalk on the immigrant's clothing so that a closer examination could be made.

If a doctor then diagnosed that an immigrant had a contagious disease that would endanger the public health, the immigrant was barred from entering the country. If he or she did not recover after some time at the Ellis Island Hospital, they were forced to return to their home country.

Legal Inspection

The legal inspectors at Ellis Island cross examined the immigrant with the papers they completed when they left their home country. Their job was to determine whether an immigrant was likely to become a public charge or an illegal contract laborer.

In addition to cross-examining them, legal inspectors checked to see if immigrants had at least \$25 in American money to use to start their new life and if they could read in their native language. If immigrants could pass these tests, it was believed that they would become productive, self-supporting members of American society.

ADMITTANCE

Despite the island's reputation as an "Island of Tears", the vast majority of immigrants were treated courteously and respectfully, and were free to begin their new lives in America after only a few short hours on Ellis Island. Only two percent of the arriving immigrants were excluded from entry.

LATER YEARS & TODAY

Ellis Island remained open for many years and served a multitude of purposes. During World War II enemy merchant seamen were detained in the baggage and dormitory building. The United States Coast Guard also trained about 60,000

Above: Immigrants being given a mental test at Ellis Island. Image courtesy of the National Park Service, Statue of Liberty National Monument

servicemen there. In November of 1954, the last detainee — a Norwegian merchant seaman named Arne Peterssen — was released, and Ellis Island officially closed.

In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson declared Ellis Island part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument. Starting in 1984, Ellis Island underwent a major restoration, the largest historic restoration in U.S. history. The \$160 million dollar project was funded by donations made to The Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation, Inc. in partnership with the National Park Service. The Main Building was reopened to the public on September 10, 1990 as the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. Today, the museum receives almost 2 million visitors annually.

Source: adapted from www.ellisland.org

ONE IMMIGRANT'S EXPERIENCE



"When I first arrived in this country, I was filled with so many hopes, dreams and fears. One of the greatest fears was of a place known as Ellis Island, but called by us the 'Island of Tears.'

In my village I had heard of this place to be inspected and sent home if you did not pass. 'Sent home to what? To where?' I worried. I tried to convince myself that America would never send me home once I had reached her doors.

I will never forget the joy I felt when I saw the tall buildings of New York and the Statue of Liberty after so many dark days on board that crowded ship. There was the symbol of all my dreams. Freedom to start out in a new life.

Then came Ellis Island.

When I landed the noise and commotion were unbelievable. There were so many languages being spoken. The shouting and pushing guards calling out the big numbers on the tags attached to our coats created more noise and confusion. Surely, I felt, the noise surrounding the Tower of Babel could not have been worse.

We were told 'Keep moving' and 'Hurry up' as my group was pushed along one of the dozens of metal railings that divided the room into several passageways. Immigrants walked along these passageways until they reached the first medical inspector who looked at face, hair, neck, and hands. Interpreters asked, 'What is your age?' 'What work do you do?'

I walked on to where a doctor inspected me for diseases. Again I move to another doctor, the "eye man" I had heard so many terrible rumors about. I passed inspection but the man in front was marked with an "E" in chalk on his coat and sent to another area. I had heard "E" meant deportation.

For a long time I sat on a bench in the main part of the great hall waiting for the final test. I talked anxiously with those around me and rehearsed the answers to questions I might be asked about jobs, money, and relatives. Some people said it was best to answer as fully as possible; others said it was best to say just 'Yes' or 'No.'

Above: Immigrants in line at Ellis Island after being transported there by ferry or barge.

Image courtesy of the National Park Service, Statue of Liberty National Monument .

Finally I went before some tired, stern-looking official who checked my name against the ship's passenger list and quickly fired questions at me: 'Can you read and write?' 'Do you have a job waiting for you?' 'Who paid your passage?' 'Have you ever been in prison?' 'How much money do you have?' 'Let me see it now?' On and on went the questions until I got more and more confused.

Suddenly I was handed a landing card. It was hard to believe the ordeal was over in an afternoon. My fears were unfounded; the statue in the harbor had not turned her back on me. America accepted me."

Source: Ellis Island Brochure, published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Parks service, administered by the Superintendent, Statue of Liberty National Monument, Liberty Island, NY 10004

HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF ELLIS ISLAND



April 11, 1890

Designated as an immigration station by the US Federal Government

January 1, 1892

Opened as an immigration station. Processed first immigrants on January 2.

June 14, 1897

Buildings destroyed by fire. All persons safely evacuated but records of early immigrants lost.

December 17, 1900

Reopened as an immigration station, on a larger and more majestic scale. New buildings were built to be "fireproof."

1917-1919

Served as a detention center for enemy aliens during WWI, a way-station for Navy personnel, and a hospital for the Army.

1919-1954

Served as a deportation center as well as an immigration station.

1924

Mass immigration ended. Most immigrants were inspected in countries of origin with the development of US Embassies abroad.

1936-1946

Part of Ellis Island was used as a Coast Guard Station.

Above: Immigrants aboard a ship heading for the Port of New York, circa 1892. Image courtesy of the National Park Service, Statue of Liberty National Monument.

1941-1954

Part of Ellis Island served as a detention center for enemy aliens during WWII.

November 29, 1965

Ellis Island is officially closed.

May 11, 1965

Ellis Island was added to the Statue of Liberty National Monument by Presidential Proclamation.

1976

Opened to the public for limited seasonal visitation.

1984

Closed for \$160,000,000 renovation.

September 10, 1990

Reopened with extensive new museum exhibits and facilities.



Eight orphan children arrive from Russia in May 1908 on the SS Caronia.

PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES

1) MAP IT OUT

Goal: To gain an understanding of the diversity of people and nationalities that passed through Ellis Island.

Explanation: In this activity, students will find the home countries of the different characters in *Voices from Ellis Island* on a world map.

Activity:

1. Share with students that they will be seeing a play about immigrants who passed through Ellis Island on their way to America in the early 20th century.
2. Review with students the descriptions of each of the characters found on page 7.
3. Using reference materials, invite students to color each of the countries from which the characters in the play originate. (Blank world map provided on pg. 14)
4. Students should label each country's name along with the name of the character.
5. Conclude the activity by having students label the location of Ellis Island, New York, and the Atlantic Ocean.

Follow-up Questions:

1. What do you notice about where the immigrants whose stories are featured in *Voices from Ellis Island* came from?
2. Why do you think Pippa White chose to feature immigrants from these countries?
3. Did you have any difficulty finding the locations of any of the countries? Why or why not? Have any of them changed names since the time the play takes place to today? (The character Vera is from Czechoslovakia, which peacefully split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993.)

Extension Activity:

1. Have students create a timeline of when the different characters passed through Ellis Island. Have students then compare this timeline to a timeline of Ellis Island's history.
2. Invite students to interview their parents, grandparents or other relatives about their family's ancestry. Have students add their family's place(s) of origin to their map.

2) ONE IMMIGRANT'S STORY

Goal: To better understand the hopes and fears immigrants felt as they passed through Ellis Island.

Explanation: In this activity, students will read and analyze a historical account of an immigrant's experience at Ellis Island through discussion and tableau.

Tableau: [*tab-loh*] a dramatic convention in which individuals use their bodies to create a "frozen picture" that expresses actions, locations, feelings or situations.

Activity:

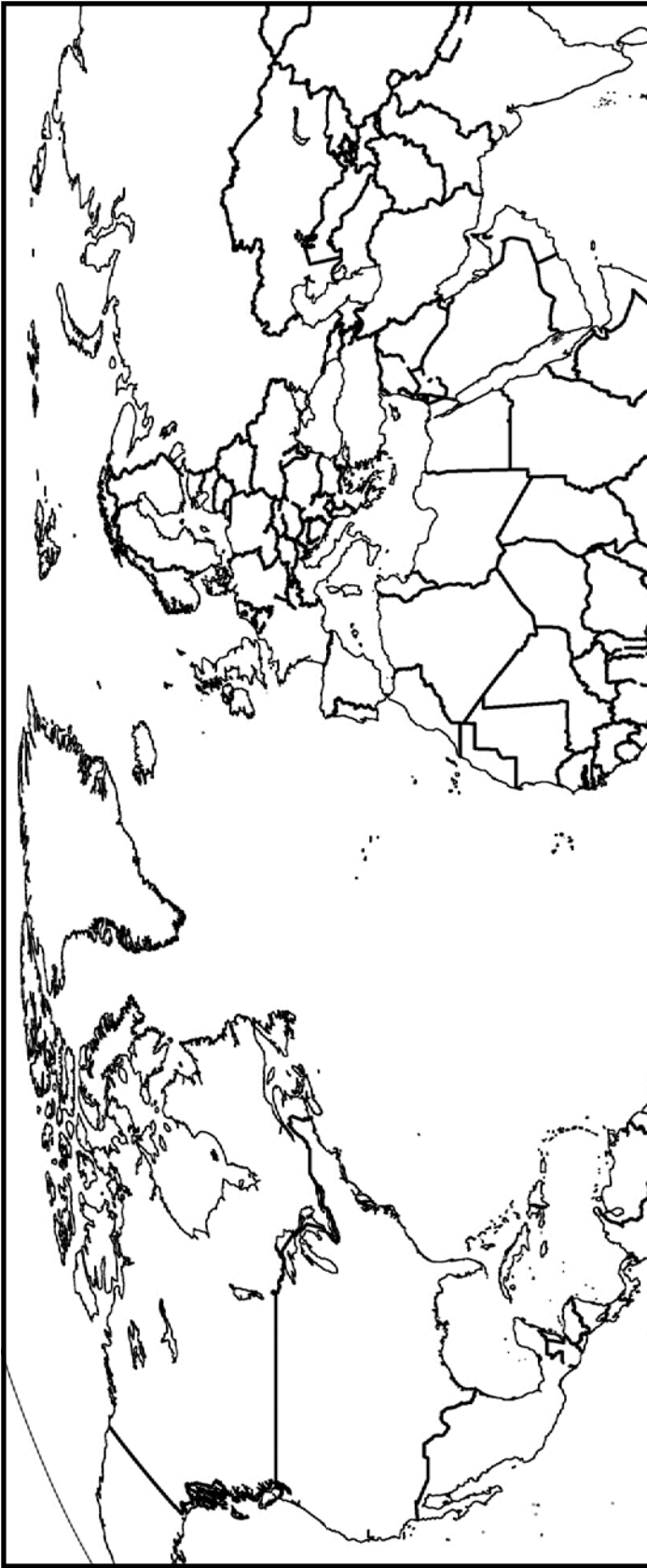
1. Provide each student with a copy of "One Immigrant's Story" on page 11.
2. Read the passage individually or as a class.
3. Ask students to re-examine the passage and to circle three details in the text that stood out to them.
4. Next, place students in pairs. Ask them to share with one another what details they circled and why that detail stood out to them.
5. Next, combine pairs of partners to create groups of four students.
6. Give groups a total of 2 minutes to pick a scene or idea from the reading and to create a tableau (frozen picture with their bodies) that clearly expresses that scene or idea.
7. Give students a thirty second warning for when every member of their group should be in place and frozen in their picture.
8. Once groups are frozen, check in with 1-2 groups and ask them what they have chosen to depict and what each person is representing.
9. Discuss with the class if there are ways that they can make their tableau clearer and more interesting. (Think about facial expressions, the use of low, middle and high levels, and strong physical choices.)
10. Give each group 60 seconds to revise their tableau and to come up with a two-sentence narration of what is happening in their tableau.
11. Have each group share their tableau and narration with the class.

Follow-up Questions:

1. What did your group choose to portray with your tableau? Why did you think this was an important scene or idea in the reading?
3. Why do you think we did this activity?
4. How did using drama help you to understand what it was like to be an immigrant at Ellis Island?

NAME: _____

For use with "Map It Out" Activity on page 13.



DIRECTIONS:

1. Color and label the following countries:
- ◇ Czechoslovakia
 - ◇ Germany
 - ◇ Ireland
 - ◇ Italy
 - ◇ Russia
 - ◇ Scotland

2. Add the names of the characters in the play next to their country:
- ◇ Jeannie
 - ◇ Fannie
 - ◇ Luigi
 - ◇ Vera
 - ◇ Hans
 - ◇ Nora
 - ◇ Rifka

3. Also label the following:
- ◇ Atlantic Ocean
 - ◇ New York City
 - ◇ Ellis Island



Map courtesy of science-story.com.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION

1. Brainstorm. What do students know about immigration? Did their ancestors immigrate to the United States? When? Do they know any stories or memories of their ancestors?
2. Review ONE IMMIGRANTS STORY, page 11. Were all the check-ups and tests necessary? Why were they performed?
3. Why was Ellis Island called the Island of Tears? Tears of sadness or tears of joy?
4. Many immigrants referred to Ellis Island as “The Front Door to Freedom,” “The Gateway to America,” “Island of Hope.” Why did it have those nick-names? What does that tell you about the immigrants? About their past? About the United States?
6. Most children came to the United States with their families, but some came alone to meet up with other family members already here. How would a young person feel at Ellis Island? Do you think they knew how to speak English? How much “culture shock” do you think they experienced?
6. Do you know anyone personally that immigrated to the United States? What have they shared about their experience?
7. *Voices from Ellis Island* contains poetry used during transitions between scenes. One of the poems contains lines that can be found on the base of the Statue of Liberty — one of the first sights newly arrived immigrants saw when they reached New York Harbor.

“Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

What do you think these words mean? What do they say about America? What do they say about the immigrants who hoped to start a new life here?
8. How do you think one actor will be able to portray seven different characters in the show?

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION

1. Describe the experience of one of the stories told in the performance. How would you have reacted in that situation?
2. What were some of the stories that the characters share about their experiences crossing the Atlantic Ocean? How has travel changed since the era of Ellis Island?
3. What details do you remember from when the characters described their first impressions of New York Harbor and Ellis Island?
4. Why do you think first and second class passengers did not have to go to Ellis Island but third class passengers did? Was this fair? Why or why not?
5. Why were the doctors at Ellis Island so concerned with detecting contagious diseases? What were they worried about?
6. Several of the characters in the play were children. What stood out to you about their experiences? What do you remember them saying about their parents?
7. What were some of the requirements that women specifically had to meet in order to enter the United States? Think about the characters of Vera, Rifka, and Jeannie in particular. What were the officials afraid might happen without these rules? How have expectations and treatment of women changed since the era of Ellis Island?
8. Why were so many immigrants’ names changed at Ellis Island? What reasons might some immigrants want to change their name for? Do you think some immigrants did not have a choice when their name was changed? If you were moving to a new country with a different culture, do you think you would want to change your name? Why or why not?
9. How does immigration today compare to the era of immigration at Ellis Island? How is it different? How is it the same?
10. How did Pippa White show the differences between the characters that she was playing? Did she use more than one technique?

POST-SHOW ASSESSMENT

1) WRITE A REVIEW

Goal: To write a review of the performance.

Explanation: In this activity, students will reflect on the performance by writing their own review.

Activity:

1. Ask students to imagine that they are a critic for the school newspaper. They are going to write a review of *Voices from Ellis Island* to inform others about what they experienced.
2. In the review they should describe with detail:
 - what they saw
 - what they heard
 - how the performance made them feel
 - what the performance reminded them of
 - what their favorite part was and why
3. Remind students that they must paint a picture of the experience with their words so that others who did not see the performance can imagine it as vividly as possible.

Follow-up Question:

1. What did you include in your review? Why was it important to include?

2) STARTING A NEW LIFE

Goal: To understand some of the difficult decisions immigrants had to make when leaving their homes

Explanation: In this activity, students will decide which of their family belongings they would take with them if moving to a new country.

Activity:

1. Invite students to imagine that they are leaving their home and moving to a new country. They can only take with them items that can fit in one suitcase.
2. Invite students to make a list of things that their family owns.
3. Students should then re-write the list in two columns headed "To Take" and "To Leave".
4. Remind students that what is in the suitcase will be the only possessions that they will have for establishing their new home and life.

Follow-up Question:

1. What did you choose to take with you?
2. How did you choose whether or not to take something with you?

3) AN IMMIGRANT'S JOURNAL

Goal: To better understand immigrants' experiences before, during and after their time at Ellis Island.

Explanation: In this activity, students will write a journal from the perspective of an immigrant who passed through Ellis Island

Activity:

1. Explain to students that they are going to write several journal or diary entries from the perspective of an immigrant who traveled through Ellis Island.
2. In mirroring the sections of the play, their journal will have at least four entries devoted to the following topics:
 - ◇ Crossing the Atlantic Ocean
 - ◇ Their first impressions of New York Harbor or Ellis Island
 - ◇ Their experience with the inspections at Ellis Island
 - ◇ Their feelings at being admitted into the United States (or not being allowed to enter)
3. Students should choose the age, gender and home country of the fictitious immigrant whose perspective they are writing from. They should also include details about who they are traveling with, if they are traveling alone, and who is waiting for them in America.
4. If possible, provide students with print or electronic resources about Ellis Island so that they can conduct further research and look at images to help them enrich the details in their writing.
5. Encourage students to use as much specific imagery in their writing as possible about what their person saw, heard, smelled and felt on their journey.

Follow-up Questions:

1. What sort of person did you write about? Why do you think he or she wanted to start a new life in America?
2. What sources did you draw from when writing your journal? Details from the play? Books? Online resources?
3. What gaps in their story did you have to fill in with your imagination? How did those details help your story feel more real?

RESOURCES AND SOURCES



Inside the Great Hall at Ellis Island, where immigrants are waiting to be processed. The 46-star American flag dates this photo between 1907-1912. Photo courtesy of the National Park Service.

BOOKS

Check out your school library for these and other books about Ellis Island.

Fiction:

Hesse, Karen. Letters from Rifka. New York: Penguin Group. 1993.

Nixon, Joan Lowery. Land of Hope (Ellis Island Series). New York: Laurel Leaf. 1993.

Woodruff, Elvira. The Orphan of Ellis Island (Time Travel Adventures). New York: Scholastic. 1997.

Non-Fiction:

Levine, Ellen. If Your Name was Changed at Ellis Island. New York: Scholastic, 1993.

Stein, Conrad R. Cornerstones of Freedom: The Story of Ellis Island. Children's Press. 1992.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

"Immigration: Stories of Yesterday and Today." Scholastic. <http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/immigration/index.htm>
Interactive website that includes an interactive tour of Ellis Island, oral histories, immigration data, and interviews with real kids who have recently immigrated to the United States.

"Port of Entry: Immigration." Library of Congress. <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/activities/port/>
An investigative journey through Library of Congress collections, including photographs and eyewitness accounts.

The Statue of Liberty — Ellis Island Foundation, Inc. www.ellisland.org
Contains interactive timelines, stories of families researching their ancestry, passenger search engine, and information about visiting the Ellis Island Museum.

STUDY GUIDE SOURCES

Ellis Island Brochure, published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Parks service, administered by the Superintendent, Statue of Liberty National Monument, Liberty Island, NY 10004

The Statue of Liberty — Ellis Island Foundation, Inc. www.ellisland.org

One's Company with Pippa White. <http://www.pippawhite1co.com/>