



## Checking In

### Grade K-3

### On-Site Lesson Plan

#### Overview:

For many immigrants, the legal examination in the Registry Room represented the greatest challenge for those processed at Ellis Island. Inspectors expected these newly-arrived passengers to remember information that they submitted up to four weeks earlier, right before the ship embarked for the United States. After arriving at Ellis Island, immigrants endured a medical inspection, and waited nervously for around five hours, before the legal examination was conducted. In this activity, students will play an immigrant about to be questioned at Ellis Island.

*Note: This activity requires that “manifest information” (explained later) be taken before the field trip. Or if time and with enough supervision, ask students these questions on the boat. Answers need to be recorded on a “manifest chart” or similar sheet.*

#### Time Frame:

30-35 minutes

#### Materials:

Pencils, Paper, a blank manifest record (resembling one that immigrant officials used at Ellis Island, is available found on the Ellis Island website) or something similar based on historical ships manifests already completed before arriving at Ellis Island.

#### Objectives:

By the end of this activity, students will be able to:

- Describe some of the difficulties immigrants faced when processed at Ellis Island.
- Identify with some of the hopes and reservations (feelings) of immigrants arriving to the United States.
- Discuss some of the reasons why the American government questioned immigrants to be granted entry.

## Procedure:

1. Head to the Great Hall, on the second floor, toward the wooden desks. Inform students that they will pretend to be immigrants about to be “checked in” to the United States. Pair students into groups of three-to-four and inform them that they will be a family waiting to be questioned. Explain that, during this “checking in” process, immigrants had to answer several questions before they were admitted to the country. Today, they will experience what it was like for immigrants.
2. Have students line up in two lines as they approach the wooden podiums. Using the already-completed “manifest chart,” ask the student some of or all of the questions asked of them before (i.e.: “What do you want to be when you grow up?” or “what city do you live in?” See “manifest chart”). One line should be established for each inspector (teacher, chaperone, etc.) The questions can be interchangeable to perhaps reflect what is going on in current events or to topic currently discussed in class.
3. Explain that the students will have to answer the questions asked before the trip. The group will line up as a family, but will answer separately when it is their turn to be interrogated. Also, inform students that whoever provides a different answer to one written on the sheet will be sent to political detention (or in “pretend trouble”).
4. After all students had their turn, the following questions should be asked and discussed.
  - How did it feel to be processed at Ellis Island? How do you think the immigrants felt as they were standing on line?
  - For those students detained, ask: What do you think it was like for passengers not allowed to immigrate to the United States?
  - How hard/difficult was it to answer questions, even easy questions, under pressure?
  - Now imagine that you and the inspector speak different languages! What problems might that cause? (Note: Luckily, interpreters/translators were there but it still would have been difficult to speak through an interpreter).

### Manifest Record:

Before immigrants got on board, the shipping company clerks recorded information from passengers that will be verified when arriving at Ellis Island. This extensive survey asked immigrants a list of twenty-nine different questions, ranging from a person’s birth and occupation, to whether the passengers declared themselves to be crazy or anarchists. Immigrant officials at Ellis Island referred to the responses of the manifest records for verification, often speed-firing nine-to-ten questions in sixty-seconds. Based on the answers, immigrants will either be admitted or be detained (held) for further questioning. A blank manifest record, resembling one that immigrant officials used at Ellis Island, is on the following page and is available at the “For Teachers” page on the Ellis Island website.

**SALOON, CABIN, AND STEERAGE ALIENS MUST BE COMPLETELY MANIFESTED**

**THIS SHEET IS FOR STEERAGE PASSENGERS.**

**LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED STATES IMMIGRATION OFFICER AT PORT OF ARRIVAL.**

Required by the regulations of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor of the United States, under act of Congress approved February 20, 1907 to be delivered to the United States Immigration Officer by the Commanding Officer of any vessel having such passengers on board upon arrival at a port in the United States

S.S. \_\_\_\_\_ sailing from \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_ Arriving at Port of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_

1 No. on List	2 Name		3 Age	4 Sex	5	6	7 Able to		8	9 Race or People	10 Last address		*12	15	16	18	23	25	26	27 Color of:		29 Place of Birth	
	Last	First			Married?	Calling or Occupation	Read?	Write?	Nationality		Country	City	Final Destination	Who paid for passage?	How much money do you have?	Name and Address of Friend or Relative	Healthy?	Height	Complexion	Hair	Eyes	Country	City
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Notes:

Similar to manifests used starting in 1907; the original document would have been at least double this size and usually spread across two pages.

\*Some questions were not included in order to fit on one letter sized page. We hope you find our attempt to make to make this form computer- and class-friendly helpful.