

Process Statement: Why Immigrants Come to America

2-Purple has been studying the past and present of immigration. We have read many books, including *Coming to America*, *Ellis Island*, and immigrant kids that tell about the immigrant experience throughout history.

We began by exploring the reasons and causes for immigration, such as jobs, money, religion, education, and freedom. We learned about why immigrants choose to come to America, both in the past and today.

Next, we explored our own family history. We did interviews with family members to learn about our families past. We learned where our ancestors lived, what their lives were like, and most of us were able to find out how our families came to America. Our parents and grandparents shared these stories with us. Then we used the interview research information we had to write family history books that tell all about our families. Now we are studying our personal and family cultures more closely through a library unit on personal culture where we are identifying and photographing elements of our personal culture and turning them into a book.

We continued studying immigration through a closer look at Ellis Island, which is the place where the largest number of historical immigrants passed through.

We learned about what it was like to come to America on ships for many weeks, and what it was like for immigrants when they really arrived at Ellis Island.

Through our reading, we found the profiles of real-life children who passed through Ellis Island, and took notes on their stories. We used these profiles to create an Ellis Island replica in our classroom. Each student took on the identity of a child who passed through immigration inspection at Ellis Island and became an America. We set up the immigration stations in our classroom, and we each passed through the physical, mental, and legal examinations that were required to get clearance into the United States at the time. This dramatization allows us to get a much clearer picture of what this experience was really like.

To follow up this experience, we all did a writing piece called "My Ellis Island Diary" where we recording the reflections and experiences of the Children we portrayed. This helped us to think through our experiences and reflect on what the historical immigrant children had gone through.

Now we are almost done with our immigration unit, but next week we will do a short study in the Statue of Liberty, and her symbolism for the immigrant experience both in the past and today.