

THE MEMORY COAT

11th Grade US History

In 1892, Ellis Island opened in New York harbor. Arriving immigrants were inspected here before being given final clearance to enter America. Inspections were everything. If you passed you could stay. If you failed you would be sent back to your home country, which often meant horrible circumstances. The Memory Coat by Elvira Woodruff tells the story of one boy's journey to America and his time at Ellis Island. Students will use the documents in the DBQ to explore the immigrant arrival experience at Ellis Island.

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION

Directions:

You will read *The Memory Coat* by Elvira Woodruff. This project is based on your ability to work with historical documents. Look at each document attached below A – M and answer the question or questions after each document. The Library of Congress Primary Sources Analysis Tool included in this packet will guide you with analyzing the documents. Use your answers to the questions and your analysis tool for each document to help you write your essay.

Historical Background:

In the late 1800's and early 1900's almost 30 million people came from Europe to the United States. Ellis Island was the main processing center for these immigrants.

Guided Questions for Book reading:

1. Are all immigrants treated equally?
2. Why would a person travel to America with no guarantee of being able to stay?
3. Why are inspections important?

Task:

Using the information from the documents and your knowledge of the topic, answer the questions that follow each document in Part 1.

Your answers to the questions will help you to write the Part 2 essay, in which you will be asked to:

Discuss the immigrant experience beginning with the decision to come to America and ending with the time spent at Ellis Island.

Explain how determinations were made about which immigrants were allowed to enter the United States and which were sent back. Do you agree with the procedures used at Ellis Island? Why or why not?

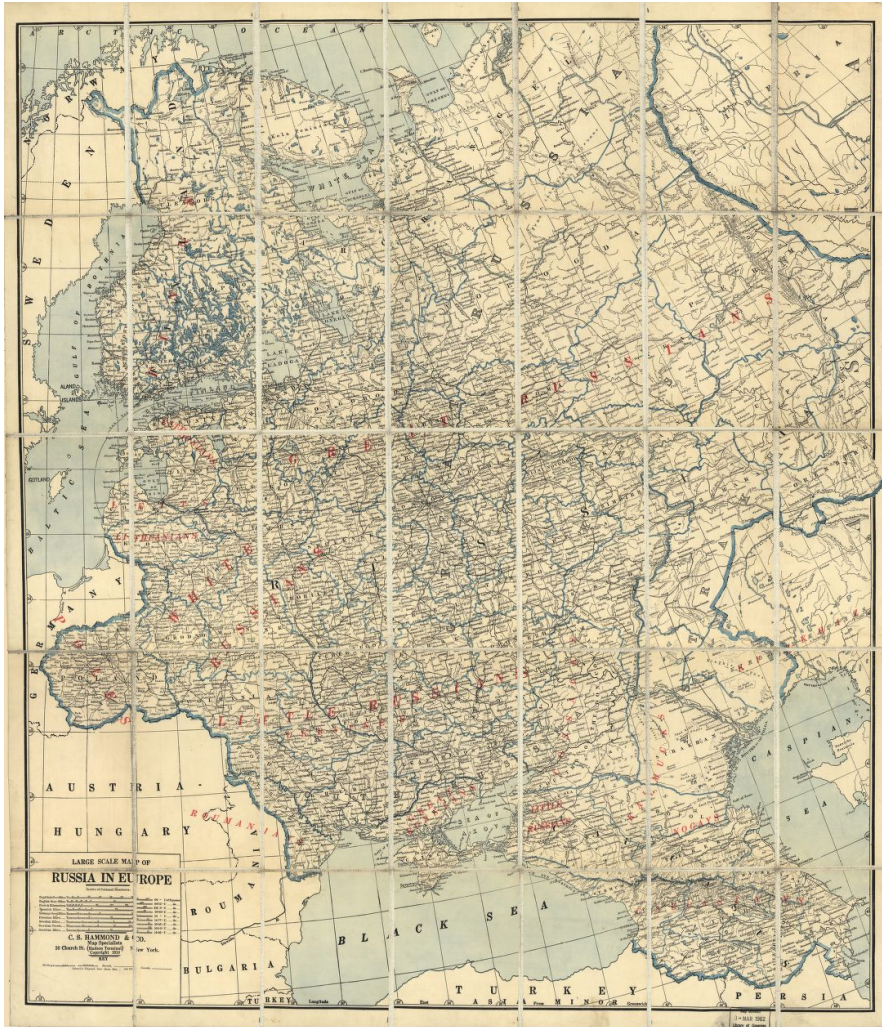
Part 1

Short-Answer Questions

Directions:

Carefully analyze the following documents (A-M) and answer the questions that follow each document.

Document A



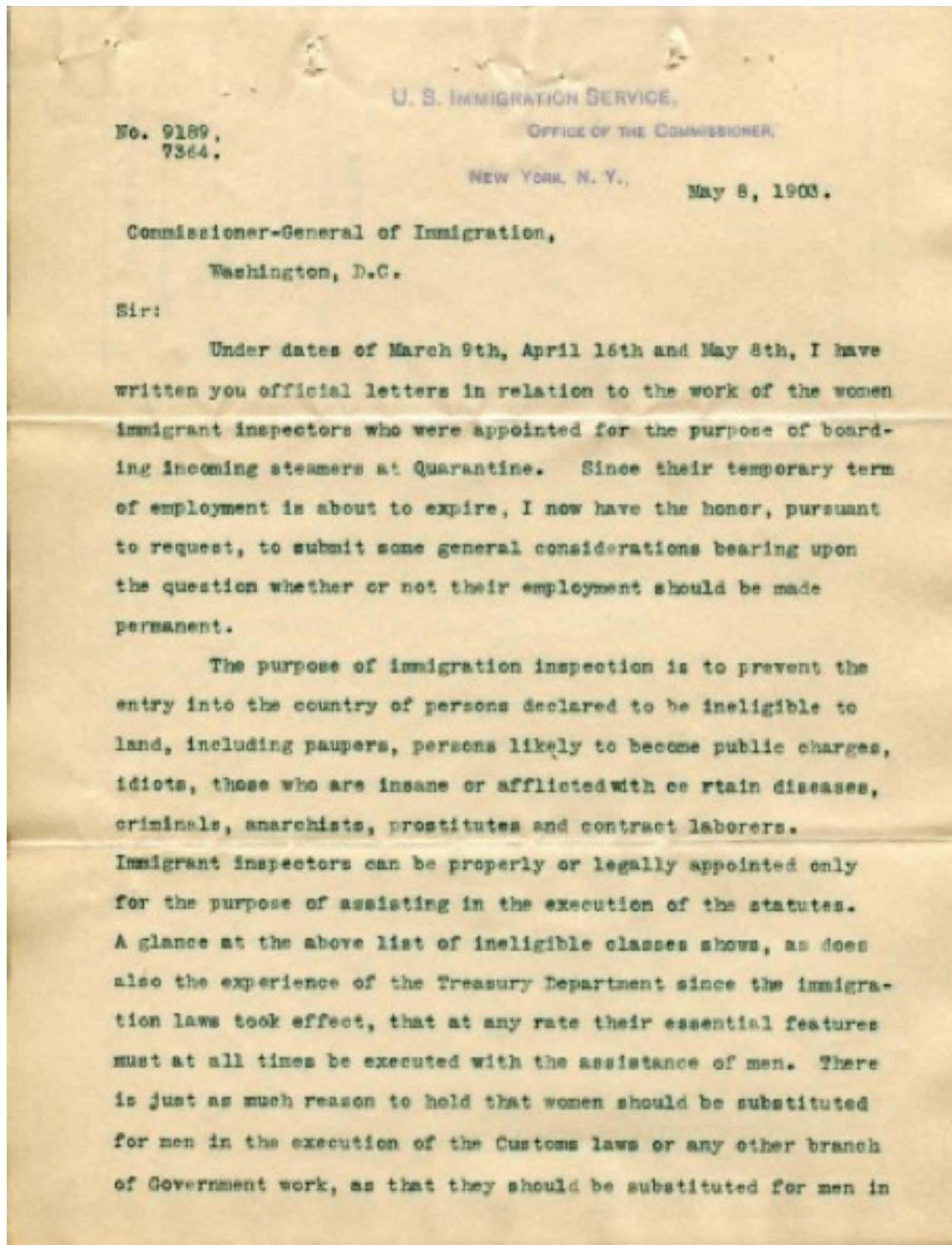
Large scale map of Russia in Europe 1918

<http://www.loc.gov/item/2003627052/>

What is the most direct route an immigrant could take from Russia to America?

List the countries and bodies of water the route contains.

Document B



Letter from U.S. Immigration Service Commissioner William Williams to the Commissioner General of Immigration Regarding Female Boarding Inspectors at Ellis Island
<http://research.archives.gov/description/625798>
<http://docsteach.org/documents/6257982/detail?menu=closed&mode=search&sortBy=relevance&q=ellis+island&commit=Go&type%5B%5D=written-document>

For what reasons could a person be declared ineligible to land?

Document C



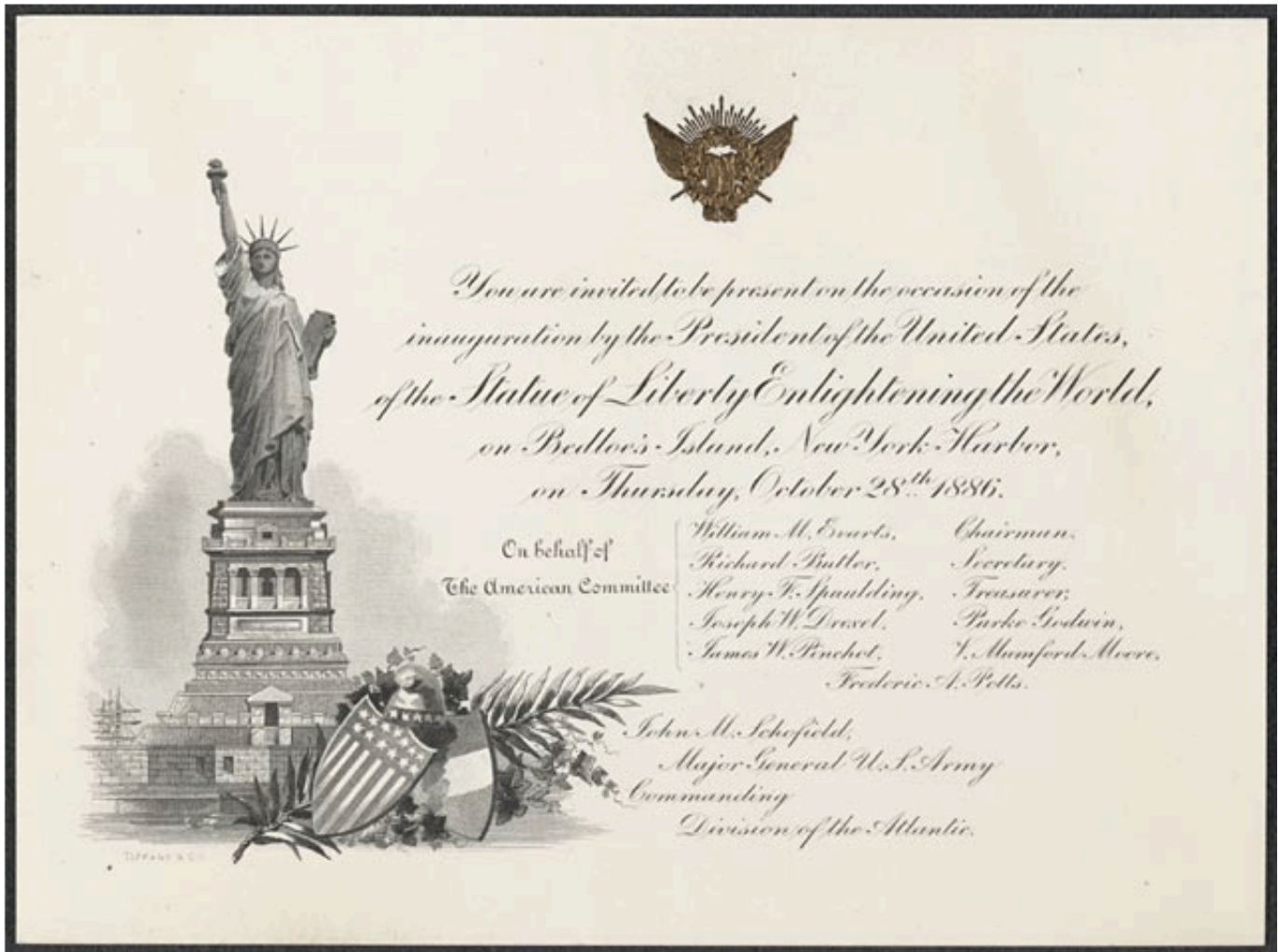
Ellis Island and Harbor, New York (picture taken 1900-1920)

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/det1994018425/PP/>

Based on the photograph, describe what an immigrant would have seen on approach to the Ellis Island immigration station.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of America's immigration processing station being located on an actual island (Ellis Island)?

Document D



Invitation to the inauguration of the Statue of Liberty by the President (Grover Cleveland), Oct 28, 1886.

Printed invitation engraved with gold seal and lithograph of statue. William Maxwell Evarts Papers.

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (45)

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002715406/>

What did the Statue of Liberty symbolize for immigrants arriving to America?

Document E



A Happy New Year (postcard created between 1900-1920)

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004672480/>

What objects do you see in the postcard?

Describe the symbolism you see.

Document F



Welcome to all!

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002719044/>

According to the political cartoon, what are five reasons immigrants want to come to America?

Explain why each reason is important.

Document G



Landing at Ellis Island

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/97501086/>

What does the photograph reveal about the personal belongings immigrants brought with them on their journey to America?

Document H



Recently arrived persons at Ellis Island, N.Y.

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2012646346/>

Describe the clothing of the immigrants in the photograph.

Does clothing reveal clues about social class? Why or why not?

Document I



Immigrants at Ellis Island

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ggb2004008804/>

Describe the clothing of the immigrants in the photograph.

Does clothing reveal clues about social class? Why or why not?

Document J



Physical examination of female immigrants at Ellis Island, New York City
<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/95506353/>

Describe the interactions depicted in the photograph.

Document K

beat. dir

PUBLICATIONS OF THE IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION LEAGUE No. 38.

Immigration Figures for 1903.

(From data furnished by the Commissioner-General of Immigration.)

LIBRARY RECEIVED DEC-1 1903

Comparison of the Fiscal Years ending June 30, 1902 and 1903.

	1902.	1903.
Total immigration	648,743	857,046
Percentage of increase over 1902		32
Percentage of increase over 1901	33	76
Percentage of increase over 1899	108	175
Percentage of increase over 1898	183	274
Number debarred from entrance and returned within one year after landing	5,429	9,316
Per cent. debarred and returned	0.8	1.1
Number of illiterates over 14 years of age. [See Note 1.]	165,105	189,008
Per cent. of illiterate in total immigration over 14 years of age	28.7	25.0
Immigration from countries of Northern and Western Europe. [See Note 2.]	138,700	203,689
Per cent. of total immigration	21.4	23.8
Immigration from countries of Southern and Eastern Europe. [See Note 2.]	480,331	610,813
Per cent. of total immigration	74.0	71.3
Immigration from Asia	22,271	29,966
Per cent. of total immigration	3.4	3.5
Average money brought, in dollars	16	19
Per cent. of immigrants who have been in the United States before	9.5	8.9
Per cent. of total immigration having no occupation, including women and children	23.6	23.3
Per cent. of total immigration who were farm-laborers, laborers, or servants	60.6	57.3
Per cent. of total immigration destined for the four States of Ill., Mass., N.Y., and Pa.	67.8	65.4

NOTE 1. — Although the percentage of illiteracy shows an improvement this year over last, it should be remembered that these figures are based upon the manifests, which in turn are made up from the statements of the immigrants. One test recently made at New York showed that 175

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Immigration figures for 1903

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rbpe.07902500>

According to the chart, what region were most immigrants from?

What was the average dollar amount brought in by each immigrant in 1903?

How many immigrants arriving over the age of 14 were illiterate in 1903?

38TH CONGRESS,
2D SESSION.

S. 403.

[S. Mis. Doc. No. 13.]

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JANUARY 19, 1865.

Mr. SHERMAN asked, and by unanimous consent obtained, leave to bring in the following bill; which was read twice, and referred to the Committee on Finance.

JANUARY 23, 1865.

Ordered to be printed.

A BILL

To amend the act entitled "An act to encourage immigration," approved July four, eighteen hundred and sixty-four, and the act entitled "An act to regulate the carriage of passengers in steamships and other vessels," approved March third, eighteen hundred and fifty-five, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
3 That any person, except the officers of the customs, the health
4 or deputy health officer, and his employees at the port of New
5 York, and the agents or licensees of the Commissioners of
6 Emigration of the State of New York, who shall go on
7 board of any vessel arriving at said port with immigrant pas-
8 sengers on board, or who shall have any intercourse with
9 such passengers, before they shall have been landed, except

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10 by the written permission of the Superintendent of Immigra-
11 tion at said port, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and on
12 conviction shall be fined not less than one hundred dollars,
13 nor more than five hundred dollars, or imprisoned for a term
14 not less than three nor more than six months, or both, such
15 fine and imprisonment in the discretion of the court wherein
16 the trial may be had. Any person violating this section may
17 be arrested by any inspector of passenger vessels without
18 warrant, and by him be brought forthwith before any United
19 States commissioner, committing magistrate, or other officer
20 having power to commit the person thus arrested.

1 SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That any person who
2 shall be guilty of restraining of his liberty, except by due
3 course of law, any immigrant on board of any ship or vessel
4 on which such immigrant may at the time be a passenger,
5 shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction shall be
6 fined not less than one hundred dollars nor more than five
7 hundred dollars, or imprisoned for a term not less than three,
8 nor more than six months, or both such fine and imprison-
9 ment, in the discretion of the court wherein the trial may
10 be had. Any person violating this section may be arrested
11 by any inspector of passenger vessels without warrant, and
12 by him be brought forthwith before any United States com-
13 missioner, committing magistrate, or other officer having
14 power to commit the person thus arrested.

Bills and Resolutions, Senate, 38th Congress, 2nd Session Bill 403

<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsb&fileName=038/llsb038.db&recNum=1629>

What is the title of the act that was approved on March 3, 1855?

According to the bill, list the only people authorized to board a newly arrived immigrant vessel and interact with the passengers?

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the jury, which
an indictment
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ELLIS ISLAND OPEN SUNDAYS.

**The President Orders That Immigrants
Be Received There Every Day.**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 8.—In accordance with a direct order from President Roosevelt received from Oyster Bay to-day instructions were issued to Acting Commissioner Murray, in charge of Ellis Island, to keep the immigration station open Sundays for the landing of immigrants. Early in July, on the recommendation of Commissioner Watchorn, authority was granted to close the Ellis Island station on Sundays during August, September and October.

To explain his desire to have the station closed on Sundays in the months named the Commissioner said that his officials were overworked and he saw no reason why they should not have relief in the dull months of the year. He suggested that the experiment should be made at once and that if the Sunday closing did not work well it could be abandoned.

On last Sunday several thousand immigrants were kept aboard ships all day. The authorities have been criticised for what was declared to be inhuman treatment, and the matter having been brought to the attention of the President he directed that the order for Sunday closing at Ellis Island be vacated.

Officials here say that the members of the force at Ellis Island who work on Sunday will be excused on some other day in the week.

The sun. (New York [N.Y.]), 09 Aug. 1906. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers.* Lib. of Congress. <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030272/1906-08-09/ed-1/seq-1/>>

What are the authorities criticized for?

Part 2

Essay

Historical Context:

In the late 1800's and early 1900's almost 30 million people came from Europe to the United States. Ellis Island was the main processing center for these immigrants.

Directions:

In your own words, write a well-organized essay that includes an introduction, several paragraphs, and a conclusion. Use the documents, the answer to the questions in Part 1, your analysis tool sheets, and your knowledge of the topic to complete the essay.

Your essay should cover the following:

Discuss the immigrant experience beginning with the decision to come to America and ending with the time spent at Ellis Island.

Explain how determinations were made about which immigrants were allowed to enter the United States and which were sent back. Do you agree with the procedures used at Ellis Island? Why or why not?

STUDENT DOCUMENT ANALYSIS TOOL

Directions:

For each document A – M complete a separate Library of Congress Primary Source Analysis Tool. List your name and the document title on the top of each sheet. Additional copies and an online interactive copy can be found at:

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/primary-source-analysis-tool/>

PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS TOOL

Name _____

Document Title _____



OBSERVE

REFLECT

QUESTION

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FURTHER INVESTIGATION