

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Migration

“Left Home for a New Place”

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1. Humans have been migrating for thousands of years. You might remember that the earliest modern humans date back 200,000 years to Ethiopia. In the first migration, humans entered the Eurasian landmass and then moved along the coast to India, Southeast Asia and Australia. Scientists aren’t sure exactly why our early ancestors left Africa about 60,000 years ago. Most likely, sudden climate changes were a main factor.

Notes

2. A push factor is an aspect of a country that might “push” people away. Push factors can be based on the environment, culture, economy and/or politics.

Notes

Environmental push factors include severe weather and natural disasters like hurricanes and earthquakes. War and unstable governments are examples of political push factors while unemployment, or lack of jobs, is an economic push factor.

3. While push factors push people from their homes, pull factors pull people to new locations. Better education or medical care, family ties or a fondness for a particular place are all reasons that might attract a person to a new home.

Notes

Like push factors, pull factors are based on the environment, culture, economy or politics. A family might move to eastern France to take advantage of the climate and landscape near the Alps, a long mountain range in Europe. This family would be pulled by an environmental factor.

4. Don’t get confused! The terms immigrant and emigrant can refer to the same person. An easy way to remember it is to look at the first letters of the words. An emigrant exits and an immigrant moves into. If a German woman left her home in Berlin, she emigrated from Germany. If she settled in London, she immigrated to England. A migrant is a person who moves but might not be planning a permanent relocation.

Notes

5. Imagine leaving your home, family and friends to move to a new place with a new language and culture. Even when migration is voluntary, it isn't easy.

Notes

From 1880 to 1920, as the Industrial Revolution took away jobs and caused overcrowding in Southern and Eastern Europe, over 20 million people immigrated to the US. These people emigrated from many countries, including Italy, Greece, Poland and Russia. In New York, where the population had doubled every decade, immigrants often worked in factories and lived in crowded apartments called tenements. Tenements typically lacked running water and windows. Disease spread quickly. In addition to harsh living conditions, immigrants often faced discrimination due to religious and cultural differences.

6. When Europeans came to what would become the US, there were people already living there. In fact, Native American tribes had been living on the land for thousands of years. Nonetheless, settlers often tried to expand their territory and clashed with the Native Americans who called that land home.

Notes

In 1830, the US government passed the Indian Removal Act. This law allowed President Jackson to negotiate land treaties with the Cherokee, Seminole, Creek, Choctaw and Chickasaw nations. Though it was supposed to be a voluntary migration, when nations resisted, Jackson forced them to leave. The Seminole who stayed on their land were met by US military. Thousands died in years of violence known as the Seminole Wars. In 1838, the US government forced the Cherokee nation to give up their land. The Cherokees' forced migration west is known today as the Trail of Tears. Many Cherokee people died of cold, hunger and disease before they arrived.

7. Today, there are an estimated 16 million refugees in the world. Major refugee populations include Palestinians, Afghans, Iraqis, Somalis, Congolese, Sudanese and Myanmar people.

Notes

From 2012-2015, roughly 120,000 Rohingya refugees fled their country by boat. The Rohingya are Muslims living mainly in Myanmar (formerly Burma). They face continued discrimination and violence due to their ethnicity. Myanmar denies the Rohingya Muslims citizenship, freedom to travel and education. Many neighboring countries, including Thailand and Malaysia, have turned these refugees away fearing overcrowding and social issues. In May 2015, thousands of Rohingya refugees were stranded at sea as a result.

8. It's estimated that 40% of all current US citizens have an ancestor who passed through Ellis Island in New York Harbor. This federal immigration station was open between 1892 and 1954. Third-class passengers—those who could not afford more expensive tickets to the US—had to pass medical and legal inspections at Ellis Island before being allowed into the country.

Many immigrants at this time came from Russia and eastern Europe, escaping war, drought, famine and religious persecution. Shira and her family left Russia due to violent attacks against the Jews known as pogroms.

The Statue of Liberty, located on Ellis Island, would have been the first sign of arrival for Shira and many immigrants like her. In 1903, Emma Lazarus's poem "The New Colossus" was engraved on a bronze plaque at the base of Lady Liberty. The poem ends with these famous lines:

...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!