

Investigating Immigration Patterns

Parent Guide

SUMMARY

In this activity children and adults will investigate patterns in immigration through data tables and data maps. They can also develop their own graphs to view the information in other ways.

WHY

Graphs, maps, and tables are used often in math class, but also in newspapers and textbooks. This activity will help children apply math skills to real-life information.

TIME

- 15–20 minutes, depending extension activities

RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

This activity will work best for children in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades.

GET READY

- Read *Feivel's Flying Horses* together. *Feivel's Flying Horses* is a fictional story that describes an immigrant's first years in America. For tips on reading this book together, check out the Guided Reading Activity (http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/immigration/immigration_reading.pdf).
- Read the [Step Back in Time](#) sheet.

YOU NEED

- Questions for Exploring Data Maps sheets (*attached*)
- Questions for Exploring A Data Table sheets (*attached*)
- Step Back in Time sheet (*attached*)
- Computer with Internet connection (*recommended*)

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/immigration/>.

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Step Back in Time

For more information, visit the National Museum of American History Web site <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/immigration/>.

With its long history of immigration, almost everyone in America today has an immigration story somewhere in his or her family. From the colonists of the 1700s to immigrants who arrived just yesterday, people have been coming to live in America for longer than America has been its own country!



The journey to America can be hard. Many immigrants also have difficult choices to make as they prepare to leave their old worlds for America—who in your family can make the trip? What will you bring from your old world? Even just traveling to America can be expensive, dangerous, and emotional.

Once they arrive, immigrants face challenges like getting a job, learning English, finding a house, or starting at a new school. It can take a long time for immigrants to feel comfortable in America. On one hand, many immigrants may want to fit in with what they think is ordinary for Americans. On the other hand, many immigrants want to pass on something from their old world, like words in another language or holiday celebrations. The traditions, skills, and ideas that are passed down through these families enrich American culture.

Today, the United States is one of the most diverse countries on earth, with people whose families have come from nearly all world cultures.

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Questions for Exploring A Data Table

This data table shows information in a grid. The labels at the top of the columns and left side of the rows explain what each number represents. For example, 23,322 is the number of new immigrants who came to America (column label) in 1830 (row label).

Year	Number of People in America	Number of New Immigrants	Percent of Americans Who Are New Immigrants
1830	12,858,670	23,322	0.18%
1850	23,191,876	369,980	1.60%
1870	38,925,598	387,203	0.99%
1890	62,622,250	455,302	0.73%
1910	101,115,487	1,041,570	1.03%
1930	137,008,435	241,700	0.18%
1950	154,233,234	249,187	0.16%
1970	203,184,772	373,326	0.18%
1990	248,709,873	1,535,872	0.62%
2010	281,421,906	1,042,625	0.37%

- Which year had the most immigrants coming to America? Which year had the fewest?
- Is there an immigration story in your family history? If yes, take a look at the table and find the closest year to when your family immigrated. How many other people immigrated to America that year?
- In *Feivel's Flying Horses*, Feivel came to America in the late 1800s. Which year or years on the table are closest to the "late 1800s?" Looking at the last column, were those years busy years for immigration? (The higher the percent, the busier the year.)
- Use the free online Data Grapher tool from Illuminations to make a graph (<http://illuminations.nctm.org/ActivityDetail.aspx?ID=204>):
 - Pick one year. Make a pie chart showing the number of new immigrants compared to the number of people already in America (Number of People in America - Number of New Immigrants = Number of People Already in America)
 - Pick five years. Make a line graph showing the number of new immigrants during those years.

This information was gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau. Explore the documents at www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial.

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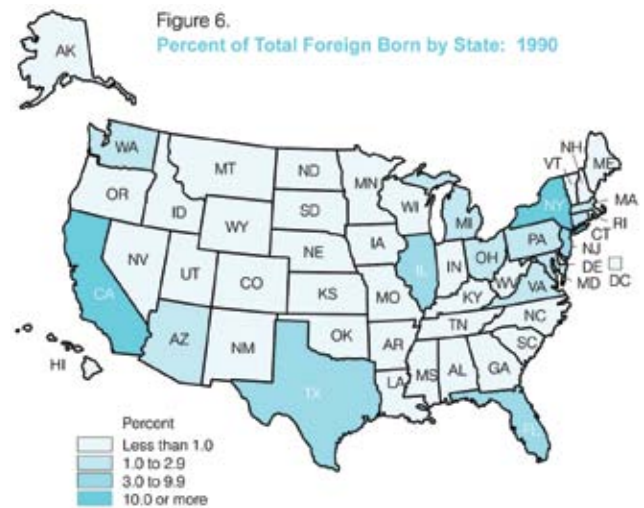
Questions for Exploring Data Maps

Data maps use colors to compare information across different places. These data maps compare the number of foreign born people in each state of the United States.



This map shows what percent of people in each state were born in other countries. The information is from 1990. The darkest colored states have the highest percentages of people who were born in other countries.

This map was made with Illumination's State Data Map Tool (<http://illuminations.nctm.org/ActivityDetail.aspx?ID=151>). You can use the same tool to make your own map.



This map shows what percent of people in each state were born in other countries. The U.S. Census Bureau published this map in 1993. The bluer states have higher percentages of people who were born in other countries.

- On each map, decide what the four or five darkest states are. Are those states the same on both maps?
- Just looking at the coloring on the maps, do you notice what states tend to have the most people who were born in another country? (In 1990, New York and the states near New York had the most immigrants. In 2000, most of the states with the most immigrants were on the borders of the country.)
- Find your home state on each of the maps. In each one, decide if it is very dark (many immigrants), dark (some immigrants), light (not many immigrants), or very light (very few immigrants). Does your state look the same in both maps?

This information was gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau. Explore the documents at www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial.

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OBJECTIVES

Students will be better able to:

- Use data tables and data maps as sources of information.
- Describe patterns of immigration in American history.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Develops reasonable conclusions from the information presented.

STANDARDS

NCHS History Standards

K-4 Historical Content Standards

5A: Demonstrate understanding of the movements of large groups of people into his or her own and other states in the United States now and long ago.

K-4 Historical Thinking Standards

2G: Draw upon the visual and mathematical data presented in graphs.

5-12 Historical Thinking Standards

2F: Utilize visual and mathematical data.

5-12 U.S. History Standards

Era 6: The Development of the Industrial United States (1870–1900)

2A: The student understands the sources and experiences of the new immigrants.

21st-Century Skills

Information, Media, and Technology Skills

- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy
- ICT (Information, Communications, and Technology) Literacy

National Educational Technology Standards for Students (NETS.S)

6. Technology Operations and Concepts

a. Understand and use technology systems

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National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Standards

Data Analysis and Probability Standard: Grades 3-5 Expectations

- Represent data using tables and graphs such as line plots, bar graphs, and line graphs.