

Lesson Plan: Immigration – Push and Pull Factors

Why America, Push or Pull?

By James Randles

OBJECTIVES:

- Identify and explain the reasons why immigrants to the United States left their native lands.
- Demonstrate an understanding of why people wanted to come to America.
- Read and analyze immigration trends in a graph.

STANDARDS:

Social Studies Standard #1: History of New York State and the United States

Social Studies Standard #2: World History

Social Studies Standard #3: Geography

Social Studies Standard #4: Economics

MATERIALS:

- Push/Pull Worksheet
- U.S. Immigration chart

PROCEDURE:

- Ask your students if they would ever think about moving and living somewhere else? Follow this up by asking them where and why? Explain to them that there are two factors involved in their decision. Are they attracted to a different location or is there something unlikable about where they presently live?
- Introduce the terms **immigrate, emigrate, and push/pull factors**.
- Distribute **Push/Pull Worksheet** and read the historical context to your students. Ask your students to work with a partner, read each example, and evaluate whether or not it is an example of a **“push” or “pull” factor**.
- Discuss each example and provide further background information.
 - You may use my **Immigration** power-point presentation slides 1-16.
- Analyze the **U.S. Immigration Chart** on the back of the handout. Direct the students to answer the questions about the chart. Introduce or reteach the concept of **trends**.
- For the closure activity, discuss the answers to the questions and probe their opinions about what the best reasons were to come to the United States [Evaluate the **“pulls”**].

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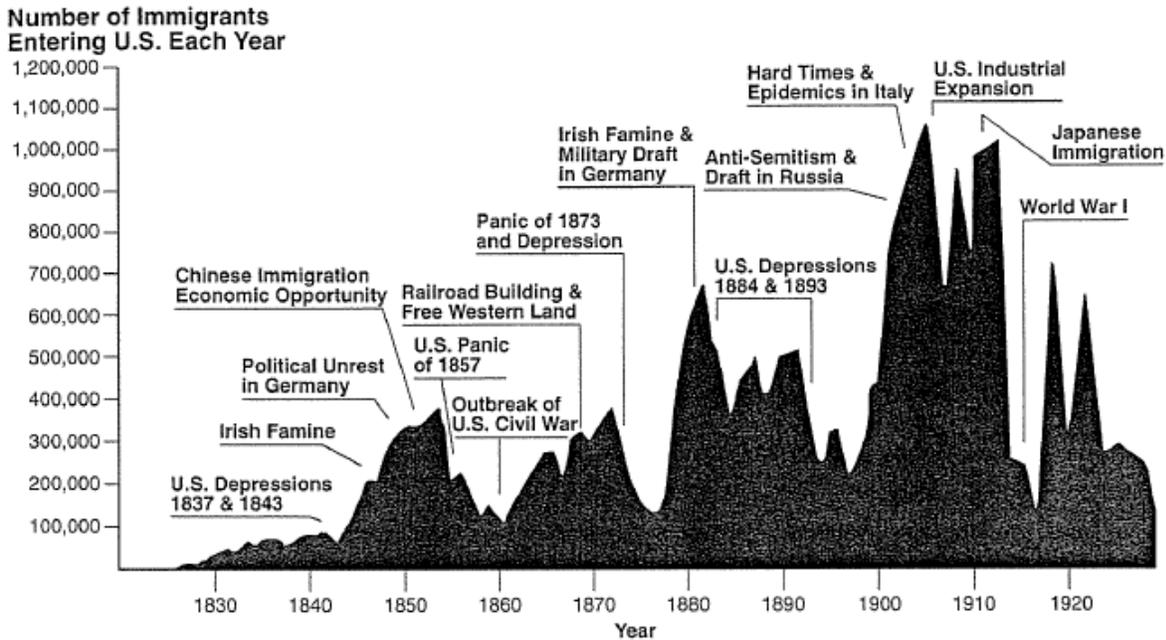
Why America, Push or Pull?
Worksheet

Historical Context: Millions of people left their homelands in the late 1800s to early 1900s and came to the United States. Many were “**pushed**” away from their homelands because of difficult conditions and “**pulled**” to America for new and better opportunities. These reasons are known as push/pull factors. Many people **emigrated**, or left their homelands because of crop failures, famine, overcrowding, warfare, religious persecution, or because of other economic troubles. On the other hand, many **immigrated** to America in search for freedom, economic opportunities, and land.

Task: Below is a list of examples of why some people left their homelands to come to the United States. Identify whether it is a **push or pull** factor by **circling** the correct word.

- | | | | |
|--|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| 1. In 1845 a disease infected Ireland’s main crop, the potato, which caused a massive famine . This food shortage led to the deaths of nearly one million people. | Push | or | Pull |
| 2. The United States gave away free land out West with the passage of the Homestead Act in 1862. | Push | or | Pull |
| 3. There was political unrest in Germany after a failed democratic revolution in 1848. | Push | or | Pull |
| 4. Industrial expansion in the United States led to the increased demand for factory workers. | Push | or | Pull |
| 5. Italians experienced hard times with epidemics, poverty, and overcrowding which made jobs scarce. | Push | or | Pull |
| 6. Russians experienced warfare, military drafts, and anti-Semitism . | Push | or | Pull |

U.S. Immigration Chart



Source: Martin W. Sandler, *In Search of America*, Ginn (adapted)

Task: Answer the following questions based on the above graph.

1. Most of the immigrants who arrived in the United States in the late 1840s most likely came from which two countries?

2. What happened to the immigration **trends** during U.S. wars, economic panics, and depressions? Why?

3. Which **decade** witnessed the greatest number of immigrants to the United States? Why?

4. **Discussion Question:** What was the best reason to come to the United States between 1820 and 1920? Be prepared to explain why?

*Why America, Push or Pull?
Worksheet*

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Push or **Pull**

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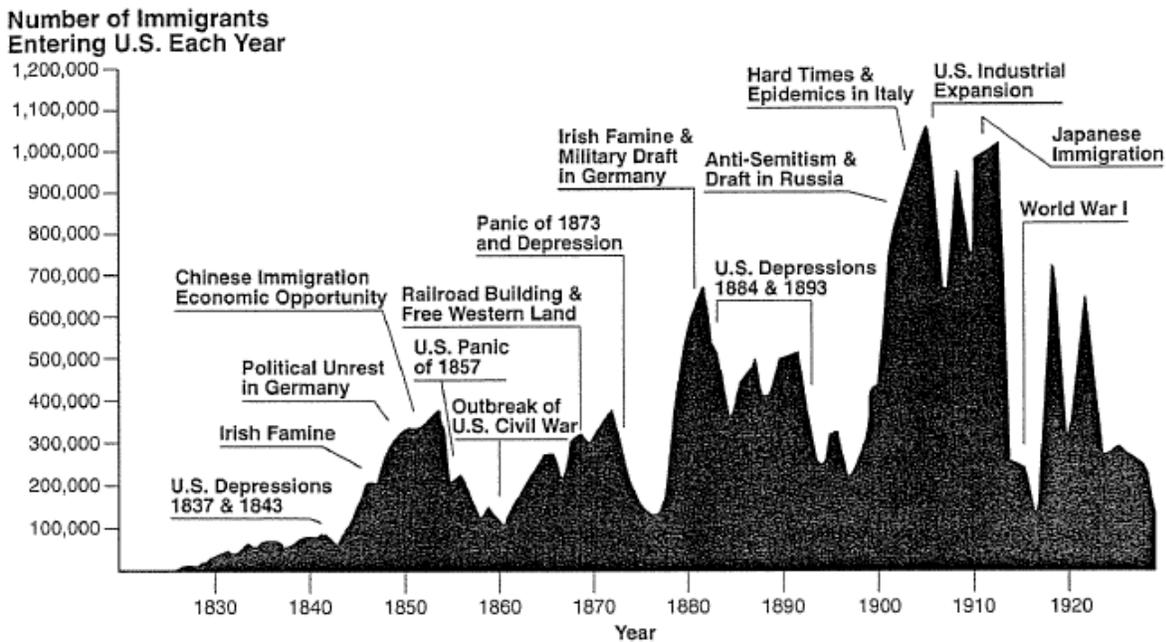
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Push or **Pull**

U.S. Immigration Chart



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Task: Answer the following questions based on the above graph.

1. Most of the immigrants who arrived in the United States in the late 1840s most likely came from which two countries?

Most immigrants came from Ireland and Germany.

2. What happened to the immigration **trends** during U.S. wars, economic panics, and depressions? Why?

Immigration trends decreased during times of war and economic depressions of the dangers of war zones and the lack of jobs available to immigrants.

3. Which **decade** witnessed the greatest number of immigrants to the United States? Why?

1900-1910 witnessed the largest numbers of immigrants to the U.S. because there were many factory jobs available during America's industrial expansion.

4. **Discussion Question:** What was the best reason to come to the United States between 1820 and 1920? Be prepared to explain why?

Answers may vary: Homestead Act [free land], jobs, freedom, better life, etc...

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1. List two specific **push factors (1820-1920)**.

A. _____

B. _____

2. List two specific **pull factors (1820-1920)**.

A. _____

B. _____

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1. List two specific **pull factors (1820-1920)**.

A. _____

B. _____

2.. List two specific **push factors (1820-1920)**..

A. _____

B. _____