OurStory: Coming to America

Timelines Tell Stories

Parent Guide

Read the “Directions” sheets for step-by-step instructions.

SUMMARY
In this activity children will take a close look at an object that was made by an immigrant who came to the United States. Then children will consider important moments in their family history.

WHY
“Guided looking” helps children develop critical thinking and the ability to understand the messages suggested in words, pictures, and other media.

TIME
- 15–30 minutes, depending on 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.

CHALLENGE WORDS
- menorah: an object that holds seven or nine candles and is used to celebrate the Jewish holiday Hanukkah

YOU NEED
- Directions sheets (attached)
- Take a Closer Look sheets (attached)
- Step Back in Time sheet (attached)

More information at 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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For adults and kids to follow together.

1. Together, look at the Take a Closer Look sheets. Use the Looking and Reading Strategies to explore the pictures on page 1. Then read the information on page 2.

   **Tip** This activity will help children develop the skill of learning by looking at pictures and making guesses or inferences. It’s best to explore the pictures carefully before reading the information together.

2. Mr. Anson chose these events because he thought they were important to his culture. What is your family’s culture? Do you have more than one culture?

3. Think about events that might be important to your family’s culture or history. For example, if your family is from Sweden, Sweden becoming a country might be an important event in your family’s culture. Or if you are thinking about your family’s history, the year that each person was born could be important events in your family’s history.

   **Tip** This activity is most interesting with three or more events.

   For younger children, you might want to think about events in your immediate family, like birth years, family moves, or starting school. For older children, you might want to think about the culture or ethnicity that you consider important in your family.

4. Now arrange those events in order, from the one closest to today (most recent) to the one farthest from today (most distant past).
5. (optional) For more challenge, create a timeline of these events. Using either pencil and paper or the free online Timeline Tool from ReadWriteThink.org [http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/timeline/], show all of the events in order along one line. Make your timeline even more creative by using craft materials to add images, symbols, and colors that relate to the story of your family.

For more activities and information about Feivel’s Flying Horses and immigration in American history, visit [http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/immigration/].
LOOKING AND READING STRATEGIES:

- Just from your first look at this object, what do you think it might have been used for? After you've thought about some of the other questions, ask yourself if you have any new guesses.
- Does this object remind you of anything else?
- Many of the shapes are symbols. Do you recognize the symbols?
- What do you think this object is made of?
- Does this object look complete? What other objects might have gone together with this one?
- Look closely at the words and numbers under each statue. Do you recognize any of them? Do they give you any hints about the object or the person who made it?

Here's a close look at the feet of two of the statues. From left to right across all nine statues, the writing says:

- (First) Israel–1948
- Holocaust- 1938–1945
- Herzel, Zionist Congress, Basel, 1937
- Galut
- (Center) 1886–1986
- 2 Revolts Against Rome
- Judah Maccabee 168 BCE
- Babylonian Exile 597–538 BCE
- (Last) Exodus from Egypt
German immigrant Manfred Anson made this menorah in 1986 with small Statue of Liberty figures. The menorah is used to celebrate Hanukkah, a Jewish holiday. Here, each Statue of Liberty torch holds a candle. Under each Statue of Liberty, there are words and dates representing events in Jewish history.
OBJECTIVES
Students will be better able to:
- Create timelines.
- State important events in chronological order.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
- Described events are sorted in chronological order.
  (optional) Each item on the time line includes a date and description.
  (optional) Effective symbols and decorations are used on the time line.

STANDARDS
NCHS History Standards
K-4 Historical Content Standards
  1B: The student understands the different ways people of diverse racial, religious and ethnic groups, and of various national origins have transmitted their beliefs and values.

  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
  1C: Establish temporal order in constructing students’ own historical narratives.

  1F: Create time lines.

  4B: Obtain historical data.

5-12 Historical Thinking Standards
  4B: Obtain historical 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.
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21st-Century Skills

Learning and Innovation Skills
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Information, Media, and Technology Skills
- Media Literacy