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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1988 Volume II: Immigrants and American Identity

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## The American Experience

Guide for Curriculum Unit 88.02.06  
by Wanda Avallone Velez

This unit is a brief study of the history of immigration in America. Nearly fifty million people have left their countries and have come to America. They have come for many reasons: religious tolerance, political freedom, and economic opportunity. Often they faced a dangerous journey, and once in this country they had to learn a new language, many times a new trade, and adjust to a new way of life. They also faced prejudice, rejection, discrimination and loneliness for their countries and their families, and friends. I have tried to look briefly at the different major ethnic groups that have immigrated to America, and described some of the experiences that all immigrants have in common.

The purpose of this unit, however, is to try to make the students aware of the difficulties faced by immigrants in the past and in the present. We ourselves are immigrants or descendants of immigrants and therefore products of these experiences. We have ethnical ties with almost every nation in the world, and the cultural heritages of these countries have influenced and shaped our culture. The dreams and desires of many displaced and poor people have been fulfilled and completed in this nation, and in many ways this diversity has been our continuous source of renewed strength.

(Recommended for Social Studies classes, grades 7 and 8)

### **Key Words**

*Immigration American History General*

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