



## Heritage and Ancestry

Depending on the age and grade of the class, students will choose to complete an in-depth study of a country whose immigrant population has contributed to, or is currently contributing to, the growth of the United States of America. The assignment will also depend upon the focus of the class and the teacher's purpose for completion of the activities.

### A. Personal Heritage and Ancestry

Each student should talk to parents, grandparents, and other relatives in order to discover as much as possible about his/her own ancestry. Most children will find that they have a varied background, especially if they are able to delve further back into their family trees.

Each student should make a list of the many countries that have contributed to his/her own heritage. Some countries may be more common to the students in the class than others. Some may be more mysterious or more interesting to the students.

Each student should choose one country that has been a part of his/her own background and ancestry. That will be the country of focus for a variety of activities.

### B. Heritage and Ancestry of Relatives and/or Friends

In discussions, students will share their backgrounds with family members (ie: cousins, aunts, uncles) or with friends. Some countries may be more prevalent than others. Some countries may be part of the heritage of very few people.

After discussion and sharing, each student should choose a country that is of particular interest. That country may or may not be part of the student's own heritage. That country will be the student's focus for a variety of activities.

### C. Heritage and Ancestry of Americans

Through research, students will look at a variety of time periods in the exploration and settlement of the United States of America. The focus will be on the groups of people that immigrated to America during each particular time period. Students should locate the origin of each group of immigrants, determine the main reasons for the influx of immigration, and identify the main areas of settlement in America.



Each student should choose a particular immigration group for the purpose of in-depth study. The focus of the study should be on three main topics:

1) immigration before the heyday of steel (up to the 1870s)

- \* what is the country?
- \* where is it located?
- \* when did the main influx of immigration begin?
- \* what were the main reasons for immigration?
- \* how did the people plan for immigration?
- \* what processes/procedures had to be followed in order to immigrate to the United States?
- \* what kinds of things could the immigrants bring with them to the U.S.?
- \* what kinds of things had to be left behind?
- \* what was the main means of travel to the U.S.?
- \* where did they enter the U.S.?
- \* were they welcomed upon arrival?
- \* what happened to the immigrants upon arrival?
- \* where did the immigrants first settle?

2) immigration during the heyday of steel (1870s – 1970s)

- \* when did the main influx of immigration begin?
- \* how long did it last?
- \* where did most of the immigrants settle?
- \* what kinds of housing did most immigrants have?
- \* what were the main jobs taken by the immigrants?
- \* how did the immigration affect the family life?
- \* what kinds of customs and traditions were brought to America?
- \* how did the immigrants attempt to continue the customary and traditional practices?
- \* what customs and traditions were left behind?
- \* how were the groups of immigrants treated by others in the neighborhoods, schools, churches, and communities?

3) immigration since the decline of steel (late 1970s – present)

- \* what has happened to the groups of immigrants?
- \* do groups still maintain neighborhoods in certain communities, towns, or regions?
- \* do immigrant groups still gravitate to the same types of jobs?
- \* what are some of the outside influences that have caused changes in the family and personal lives of immigrants from that country?



- \* what customs and traditions are still followed by many of the immigrants from that country?
- \* what customs and traditions have been lost?
- \* what customs and traditions have been changed or assimilated into other customs or traditions?

Each student should also use the research to determine what kinds of customs and traditions are followed within his/her own family gatherings. If the country being researched is from a student's own ancestry, the student should delve more closely into the family traditions that have grown from the family's heritage. If the country being researched is not from the student's own ancestry, the student should compare and contrast his/her own family traditions and customs with those of the country in question.

Research information can be shared with the class through oral presentations, visual displays, or any number of combinations of activities.

The following is a list of immigration groups that have traveled to the United States since the founding of our nation. It is not an all-inclusive, comprehensive list; it is meant to be a list of possible choices only. Students should do extensive preparation and planning before making the choice of a country and people to study.

#### African-Americans

- \* freed slaves
- \* children of slaves or former slaves
- \* immigrants from Africa
- \* southern Blacks

#### Latin Americans

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| *Antiguans      | *Guatemalans  |
| *Argentinians   | *Guyanans     |
| *Bahamanians    | *Haitians     |
| *Barbadians     | *Hondurans    |
| *Barbudans      | *Jamaicans    |
| *Belizans       | *Mexicans     |
| *Bolivians      | *Nicaraguans  |
| *Brazilians     | *Panamanians  |
| *Colombians     | *Paraguayans  |
| *Costa Ricans   | *Peruvians    |
| *Chileans       | *Surinamians  |
| *Cubans         | *Tobagonians  |
| *Ecuadorians    | *Trinidadians |
| *El Salvadorans | *Uruguayans   |
| *Grenadans      | *Venezuelans  |



### Europeans

- \* Armenian
- \* Austrian
- \* Croatian
- \* Czech
- \* English
- \* French
- \* German
- \* Greek
- \* Hungarian
- \* Irish
- \* Italian
- \* Lithuanian
- \* Norwegian
- \* Polish
- \* Romanian
- \* Russian (European)
- \* Rusyn (Carpatho-Rusyn)
- \* Scottish
- \* Slovakian
- \* Slovenian
- \* Swedish
- \* Ukranian
- \* Yugoslavian

### Asians

- \* Chinese
- \* Indian
- \* Israeli
- \* Japanese
- \* Lebanese
- \* Russian (Asian)
- \* Syrian
- \* Thai

A student may also choose to study one of the many groups of Native Americans, especially if the student has found an ancestral link. In this case, the questions will not focus on the immigration to America and the assimilation into this society. The questions will focus, instead, on the influence of other groups on the society of Native Americans chosen for research and study.

The focus for research will again follow the structure of three main topics:

- 1) immigration before the heyday of steel (up to the 1870s)
  - \* what is the name of the tribe or nation?
  - \* where did the group live?
  - \* what was the economic livelihood of the group?
  - \* how did the family survive?
  - \* what were the roles of each parent within the family group?
  - \* what were the customs and traditions that the group upheld?



2) immigration during the heyday of steel (1870s – 1970s)

- \* what groups of immigrants invaded the territory of the tribe or nation?
- \* where did the immigrants settle?
- \* where did the Native Americans resettle?
- \* how did the groups interact?
- \* what were sources of aggression or disagreement between the groups?
- \* what were areas in which the groups cooperated?
- \* in what ways did the immigrants rely on the Native Americans?
- \* in what ways did the Native Americans rely on the immigrants?
- \* what were some comparisons or contrasts between the customs and traditions of the immigrant groups and the Native Americans?

3) immigration since the decline of steel (late 1970s – present)

- \* do the Native Americans maintain contact either physically (living in the same neighborhoods) or socially?
- \* do the Native Americans maintain contact for purposes of customs, traditions, celebrations, festivals, religious ceremonies, or other reasons?
- \* what customs and traditions have been continued?
- \* what customs and traditions have been lost?
- \* what customs and traditions have been changed or assimilated into other customs or traditions?

There were many Native American tribes or nations throughout the United States in the early days of exploration and settlement. In southwestern Pennsylvania, there were three main Indian tribes:

Seneca

Lenape ( Delaware )

Shawnee

There were many others who traveled here for a variety of purposes, including trading, searching for food, negotiations of treaties, or other reasons. If a student is able to find evidence of ancestral ties to another Native American tribe or nation, he/she could research the group. In doing so, an attempt should be made to discover if the group had any ties to the development of southwestern Pennsylvania and/or nearby regions.