



**American Immigration Law Foundation
Immigration Curriculum Center Lesson Plan**

Digital Natives=Digital Storytelling

Grade Level: 3rd – 8th Grades

Goal: The goal of this project is to involve students in an activity in which they can identify their own ancestry and understand the important role immigrants to this country have had in developing our nation. By using the latest technologies and literacy-based activities, students will increase their understanding of the background and experiences of their family's heritage. They will become more cognizant of what issues caused people to leave their former lives behind, the problems involved in adapting to a new world, the cultural richness they brought to this country, and how these characteristics have endured time to enrich our lives.

Objectives: Students will develop their critical thinking, research, and technology skills.

Specifically, students will:

- Locate on a world map the countries from which their ancestors immigrated and other European countries from which other immigrants traveled.
- Be able to explain the procedure immigrants had to follow as they came through Ellis Island
- Understand that all immigrants did not come through Ellis Island and be able to locate other countries from which immigrants have come and the circumstances that brought them here
- Research the important contributions immigrants have made to this country
- Use research skills to investigate their own personally family history
- Create a podcast or photo story highlighting the immigration experience of their family or a family of similar cultural background

Materials:

Computers with Internet Access, Selected print resources from the school library media center, Online Databases provided by the school library media center, PBS WNED Video Streaming, [iLife](#) for the Classroom (if Macs are not available, PC users can do a similar project using [Photo Story 3](#) (free download), Scanner, [Kidspiration](#) (software), Resources from the local Historical Society, “Park in a Pack” realia kit from National Park Service at Ellis Island, Write to Attn: Education Specialist at National Park Service, Statue of Liberty National Monument, Liberty Island, New York, NY 10004, or call (212) 363-3200.

Procedure/Timeline (Two Weeks Project approx.)

1. Students will be introduced to the unit through classroom discussion and lecture. A model podcast created by the library media specialist and the classroom teacher will be featured to model what a podcast is and how the students will be working to create their own podcast as the final project of this learning experience.
2. Students will explore the topic by visiting interactive website such as [The History Channel's Ellis Island Gateway](#) and [Scholastic's Interactive Tour of Ellis Island](#). They will also do activities included in the “Park in a Pack” from Ellis Island. Students will be prompted to discuss where their families and ancestors are from.
3. Each student should be able to identify on a classroom map these countries. With a Post-It-Note or push pin students can label these countries allowing the class as a whole to see the ancestry make-up of the class. They may even add a school photo to the schematic to personalize it further. The class discussion can evolve to increase their understanding of other areas of the world that have brought many immigrants to the U.S. to create our great melting pot culture.
4. Students will investigate their own ancestry by interviewing their families, gathering family photos and documents, and online ancestry sites such as the one found at Ellis Island.
5. Students will be instructed by the Library Media Specialist or the classroom teacher on an appropriate research model such as the [Big 6](#). The model will provide the foundation for researching and gathering the information needed for their podcast.
6. As students have gathered the information about their ancestry they will be introduced to the technology resources they will use to create a family tree using the software *Kidspiration*. If this software program is not available students could use traditional paper and pencil methods to create their family tree.
7. The culminating activity will be the creation of a podcast showcasing their family heritage. By using the software program iLife with the component Garage Ban, students will be able to create a multimedia production. Students will create

slides using family photos, immigration pictures from sources at [The Library of Congress American Memory](#), the family tree they created, original artwork, etc. to tell the story of their family's immigration experience. IF the iLife program is not available Microsoft has a free download program called Photo Story 3 which produces a similar result.

8. Using the iLife program they will record their story to fit the montage of visual information. Underlying these two techniques they will then incorporate a supporting musical score, which also would reflect their heritage. These podcasts will then be posted to the teacher's web page and share with classmates and the school community as a whole.

Extension Activities: Interviews with recent immigrants, Interviews with family members, Field Trip to the local historical society.

Assessment: Students will be assessed on the variety of culminating activities that are offered in this lesson, including the family trees, electronic presentations, research, writing activities, etc.

NYS Social Studies Standards:

1. History of the United States and New York
2. Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.
3. Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which they live – local, national, and global- including the distribution of people, places and environments over the Earth's surface.

NYS Language Arts

1. Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.
2. Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.
3. Students will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction.

National Educational Technology Standards

1. Basic operations and concepts
2. Social, ethical, and human issues
3. Technology productivity tools
4. Technology research tools
5. Technology problem-solving and decision-making tools.