

Grade 3 Unit 8: PBL Immigration and Ellis Islands

Unit Purpose

Think back to your most positive experience as a student — a time that was meaningful to you. Why did this leave a lasting impression? How did your teacher make this experience possible? What learning was embedded in this experience?

Talk with your colleagues about your experiences and memories. It's likely you'll find some consistent themes: working with peers, independence, choice, engagement, content-specific learning, and applying learning in a real-world context. Project-based learning offers all of this and more!

Watch this [video](#) from PBLWorks to see project-based learning in action. The teacher is knowledgeable and passionate about the topic. The children are making choices about what they do and how they do it, they're asking questions, reflecting, and interacting with peers and adults by discussing their ideas and feedback.

Project Based Learning (PBL) is a critical aspect of Success Academy's school design. Our scholars learn the thrill of becoming experts in a subject when they have extended time to immerse themselves in a fascinating topic from a cross-disciplinary perspective — including through field studies, art projects, and classes in science, reading, writing, and/or math. The culmination of PBL studies are museum presentations scholars can share with others; this allows scholars to demonstrate the learning and engagement they have achieved.

America has long been known as a nation of immigrants. The first two major waves of immigration happened during the Colonial Era and from 1815 to 1860. The third wave occurred from 1880 to 1930, during which nearly 12 million immigrants entered the country through Ellis Island, a federal immigration station in New York Harbor.

Pre-work

Before launching the unit with your scholars, read all of the texts in the unit to ensure you have the necessary content knowledge to facilitate this study.

- Study and discuss the following books with your grade team, with the guided questions in mind:
 - [*Coming to America: The Story of Immigration*](#) by Betsy Maestro
 - [*National Geographic Readers: Ellis Island*](#) by Elizabeth Carney
 - [*The Statue of Liberty*](#) by Ann Tatlock
- Study the nonfiction levels from *Understanding Texts and Readers* by Jennifer Seravallo.

Learning Objectives

- Use information gained from words and text features (e.g., maps, photographs) to demonstrate understanding (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur)
- Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic
- Describe the relationship between a series of historical events in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect
- Write informative texts examining a topic and developing the topic with facts and details
- Produce clear, logical, and organized writing
- Compose informative/explanatory writing, requiring students to articulate and support their ideas

Guiding Questions and Essential Understandings

- **What is immigration? What is an immigrant? What is the difference between emigration and immigration?**
 - Immigration is the process of moving to a new country, with plans to live there permanently.
 - Immigrants are people who move to a new country with plans to live there permanently.
 - Emigrants are people who permanently move away from their home country.
- **When did immigrants arrive in America?**
 - The first immigrants, Native American ancestors, arrived in North America over 20,000 years ago during the last Ice Age.
 - Colonial era:
 - 1500s–1770s
 - The French, Spanish, British, Dutch, and Swedish willingly immigrated and set up colonies in America.

- Africans were forced to immigrate as part of the Atlantic Slave Trade.
 - 1815–1860:
 - Many Irish people immigrated due to the Great Famine.
 - Many Chinese people immigrated due to the Gold Rush.
 - 1880–1930:
 - Many Italians, Jews, and Germans immigrated and passed through one of the first federal immigration stations — Ellis Island.
- **Why did people choose to immigrate to America?**
 - Economic reasons:
 - To escape poverty
 - To have better job opportunities
 - To own ample land
 - Religious reasons:
 - To escape persecution and worship freely
 - Political reasons:
 - To escape war
 - To live in a free country
 - Personal reasons:
 - To live close to family that immigrated earlier
- **Why were some people forced to immigrate to America?**
 - Africans were forced to immigrate to America to be sold as slaves.
- **Why did America want people to immigrate?**
 - There was a need for workers and ample land.
 - The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed immigrants to acquire 160+ acres of land.

- **What was Ellis Island?**
 - Ellis Island, a federal immigration station, opened in 1892 and was used to process new immigrants and allow or deny them entry into the country.
- **What was the journey like for immigrants?**
 - The journey to America was often challenging, especially for impoverished people in steerage.
- **What did seeing the Statue of Liberty for the first time mean to immigrants?**
 - The Statue of Liberty served as a beacon of hope for many immigrants.
- **What did immigrants experience after arriving at Ellis Island?**
 - Immigrants had to go through medical exams, legal exams, and background checks before being allowed to enter New York City or go on to their next destination.
 - Most immigrants were cleared to enter the United States. Less than 10% were detained, and only 2% were sent back to their home country.
- **What was life like in New York City for immigrants once they left Ellis Island?**
 - Immigrants often lived in small tenements and worked long hours.
- **What is happening at Ellis Island now?**
 - Ellis Island was closed in 1954 and not in use for years before it was restored to preserve its history.
 - Ellis Island is now run by the National Park Service and is a museum honoring immigrants and their contributions to America.
- **What contributions did immigrants make to New York City and America?**
 - Immigrants and their descendants made many social, economic, and political contributions to the United States.

PBL Museum

The culminating museum showcases scholars' project work and content knowledge of Immigration and Ellis Island. Communicate with parents throughout the unit about the study and museum.

Museums and project work should exhibit best effort and should be scholar created, eye-catching, and beautiful.

You will need lots of space! Plan for how to use your classroom to display scholar work. Include wall space both within and outside of your four walls.

Prepare scholars to present their museum to visitors, guide guests on a tour of their projects, and clearly demonstrate their excitement and expertise of immigration from 1880 to 1930.

PBL Materials

Scholars will work with a variety of materials as they create their projects.

- Construction paper
- Watercolor paint
- Watercolor pencils
- Crayons
- Markers
- Black Sharpie pens
- Black Sharpie markers
- Index cards

Scholars will use PBL journals and folders for their research and writing. Prepare these beforehand, making them special and exciting for scholars to use. These journals will be used as a way for scholars to record their thinking and learning about immigration and Ellis Island throughout the unit and must be displayed during the museum. See examples of journals from past units [here](#).

Text List

This [list](#) includes titles that can be used by teachers for building scholars' content knowledge through reading aloud and as mentor texts to show scholars models of great nonfiction writing. Make these texts accessible to scholars each day as they immerse themselves in the study and research.

Use this list to organize your reference materials for the unit. Click [here](#) for the booklist and texts by week.

Field Studies

- **Ellis Island**
 - Scholars will visualize the processes that immigrants encountered when they were processed at Ellis Island.
- **Tenement Museum, Museum at Eldridge Street, New York Historical Society, or Jewish Museum**
 - Scholars will attend a field study at one of these four options.
 - If attending the Tenement Museum, Museum at Eldridge Street, or Jewish Museum, scholars will receive a first-hand account of what life was like for immigrants on the Lower East Side after they passed through Ellis Island.
 - If attending the New York Historical Society, scholars will learn about immigration from around the globe and discover how immigrants helped shape New York City.

Projects and Writing Assignments

Projects are not the dessert; they are the main course of project-based learning. Scholars will explore and learn about immigration and Ellis Island through these exciting projects.

- **Class Glossary**
 - Scholars create a class glossary by writing important immigration terms and defining them on chart paper or sentence strips. This project will start in week 1 and continue throughout the unit.
- **Immigration Grow Chart**
 - Scholars create an immigration Grow Chart by identifying the major groups of immigrants and their characteristics. This project will begin in week 2 and continue throughout the unit.
- **Ellis Island Process Timeline**
 - Scholars create a timeline, capturing the processes immigrants experienced from leaving home to arriving on Orchard Street. This project will begin in week 3 and continue throughout the unit.
- **Immigration and Ellis Island Photojournalism**
 - Scholars will write a paragraph in response to a primary source photograph from Ellis Island. This project will take place during weeks 3–4 of the unit.
- **Immigration and Ellis Island Stamps**

- Scholars use watercolors to design and publish their own stamps featuring immigrants who came through Ellis Island. This project will take place during week 5 of the unit.
- **Immigration and Ellis Island Expert Book**
 - Each scholar researches, writes, and publishes an Expert Book on a topic of his or her choosing pertaining to Immigration and Ellis Island. They conduct research using books, articles, and virtual field studies. This project will take place during weeks 6 and 7 of the unit.

Week 1

Guiding Questions and Essential Understandings

- **What is immigration? What is an immigrant? What is the difference between emigration and immigration?**
 - Immigration is the process of moving to a new country, with plans to live there permanently.
 - Immigrants are people who move to a new country with plans to live there permanently.
 - Emigrants are people who permanently move away from their home country.
- **When did immigrants arrive in America?**
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 - Colonial era:
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 - Africans were forced to immigrate as part of the Atlantic Slave Trade.
 - 1815–1860:
 - Many Irish people immigrated due to the Great Famine.
 - Many Chinese people immigrated due to the Gold Rush.
 - 1880–1930:
 - Many Italians, Jews, and Germans immigrated and passed through one of the first federal immigration stations — Ellis Island.

Suggested Reading

- *Coming to America: The Story of Immigration* by Betsy Maestro
 - This book is of critical importance and will likely need to be read and discussed in more than one day.
 - Scholars are introduced to immigration in America, from the nomadic Native American ancestors in the Ice Age to the Ellis Island era and beyond. The chronological content in this book helps scholars understand the scope of

immigration throughout American history and prepare them for content learned later in the unit.

- As you read, discuss the content and make connections to previous and future PBL units. For example:
 - Pages 3–9 relate to the content learned in the Iroquois and Lenape unit.
 - Page 10 relates to the origins of slavery and racial injustice in the Americas.
 - Pages 15–16, as well as content in week 2, relate to the Westward Expansion unit scholars will have in Grade 4.

Writing Assignments and Project Work

● Know/Want to Know T-Chart

- As a class, discuss what scholars know and want to know about immigration, specifically from 1880 to 1930 and the Ellis Island era. Have a few scholars come up to the [chart](#) and add what they know or want to know to the class chart. Revisit and add to this chart throughout the study.
 - **Alternative:** Have scholars write in their journal what they know about immigration and Ellis Island and share with their peers. Then, as a class, discuss and chart what they want to know.
 - **Alternative:** Have scholars write their thoughts on sentence strips and add them to the chart.

● Immigration Class Glossary

- You will start the glossary this week and will add new words every day! As a class, decide which vocabulary words need to be added. Explain to scholars that this glossary is a tool for them to refer to as they research, read, and write. Just as you model using a glossary in many of the nonfiction texts throughout the study, model using the class glossary when faced with an unfamiliar word. Scholars write the words and definitions on index cards or sentence strips and display them. When applicable, scholars draw pictures to match. Click [here](#) to see an example list of words that might be added.

● Journal Entry: Photo Reactions

- Let each scholar research and choose a picture of immigrants arriving in America throughout history.
 - **Part 1:** Scholars study the picture.
 - **Part 2:** Scholars write their initial reactions to the picture. Some example guiding questions could include:
 - What do you see?
 - What does the picture make you think? Why?
 - How does the picture make you feel? Why?
 - How do you think the people in the picture are feeling? Why?

- **Part 3:** After writing, have a scholar-led discussion in which scholars show their photo to the class and explain their thinking about the photo.

Additional Activities

- **Virtual Field Study:** [The Immigration History of the United States](#)
 - **Note:** Only focus on the content in the first 11.5 minutes, as that is most relevant to the scope of this unit.
 - As you watch the video with scholars, stop the video at strategic places to discuss the content. For example:
 - Stop to discuss Native Americans and make connections to the Iroquois and Lenape Unit.
 - Stop to discuss and make connections to any relevant content presented in the readings such as Ellis Island, Irish immigrants, and the reasons for immigration (i.e., the push and pull effect).

Week 2

Guiding Questions and Essential Understandings

- **Why did people choose to immigrate to America?**
 - Economic reasons:
 - To escape poverty
 - To have better job opportunities
 - To own ample land
 - Religious reasons:
 - To escape persecution and worship freely
 - Political reasons:
 - To escape war
 - To live in a free country
 - Personal reasons:
 - To live close to family that immigrated earlier
- **Why were some people forced to immigrate to America?**
 - Africans were forced to immigrate to America to be sold as slaves.
- **Why did America want people to immigrate?**
 - There was a need for workers and ample land.
 - The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed immigrants to acquire 160+ acres of land.

Suggested Reading

- [Ellis Island: Gateway to America, by Joanne Mattern](#)
 - This text compares and contrasts the experiences of immigrants who made the voyage across the Atlantic to America. Some immigrants who were more affluent traveled in first class and had many benefits, while others who were

impoverished traveled in steerage.

Writing Assignments and Project Work

- **Starting Our Grow Chart**

- Before you meet with scholars, prepare an outline of a grow chart that scholars will complete over time.
 - Use 5 × 8 index cards to create headings for the grow chart.
 - Tape the cards vertically to a large, open wall space. It could look something [like this](#) and will eventually grow to look something [like this!](#)
- Introduce the grow chart to scholars, explaining that this chart will “grow” throughout the unit. Each scholar will fill in a portion of the chart. Scholars capture the knowledge gained from their readings, discussions, videos, field trips, and inquiry-based projects by adding the information about the groups of people who immigrated to America to each part of the chart. This gives scholars an opportunity to share what they learned with the class and others and creates a resource to reference and add to throughout the study.
- Scholars should work in groups. They will talk with their group, read what they’ve written to each other, and revise when needed. Scholars add color to drawings and use details in their writings and illustrations. Provide ample blank 5 × 8 note cards for scholars to use as they work.
 - Share examples as they’re completed.
 - Tape note cards to the chart as they’re completed with scholars as an exciting way to show them how their chart grows and becomes a learning tool with all their collaborative work!

- **Group Project and Presentation: First Hand Accounts— Why I Came To America**

- *This project should be completed after reading the texts for the week.*
- **Part 1:** Affix [this paper](#) into each scholar’s journal.
- **Part 2:** Have scholars work in groups. Each group will read each box, discuss the details provided, and determine the reason each person immigrated to America. They will then write their answer in the corresponding boxes. Scholars need to be prepared to present their findings and evidence to the class.
- **Part 3:** Have each group share their findings listed in one of the boxes with the rest of the class. Discuss the findings as a class.

- **Journal Entry: Relive a Boy’s Journey to America**

- **Part 1:** Read [“Relive a Boy’s Journey to America”](#) with scholars.
- **Part 2:** Scholars respond to the question: Why did Seymour’s family choose to immigrate to America? How is Seymour’s story the same or different from those of other immigrants?

- **Journal Entry: Personal Items**

- Scholars respond to the following prompt: Pretend you are a child immigrating to America. It is 1904. What three items would you bring with you? Why?

Week 3

Guiding Questions and Essential Understandings

- **What was Ellis Island?**
 - Ellis Island, a federal immigration station, opened in 1892 and was used to process new immigrants and allow or deny them entry into the country.
- **What was the journey like for immigrants?**
 - The journey to America was often challenging, especially for impoverished people in steerage.

Readings

- [*If Your Name Was Changed at Ellis Island* by Ellen Levine](#)
 - This text provides scholars with background information on the nation’s largest federal immigration station and the focal point of this unit — Ellis Island.
- [“The Journey” from *Shutting out the Sky* by Deborah Hopkinson](#)
 - This text discusses the experience many immigrants had when crossing the Atlantic via steamship in steerage. Many immigrants faced tough conditions on the ship, including seasickness, disease, and unsanitary conditions.
- [*National Geographic Readers: Ellis Island* by Elizabeth Carney](#)
 - This book discusses why immigrants came to the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the difficulties of the journey, the establishment of Ellis Island Immigration Station and what went on there, and its decline and restoration.

Writing Assignments and Project Work

- [Photojournalism Project:](#)
 - Scholars learn about photojournalism and write a response to a photograph taken of immigrants throughout history or at Ellis Island.
 - **Part 1:** Scholars learn the tenets of photojournalism and practice writing a response using modern-day pictures.
 - **Part 2:** As a class, you will use Shared Writing to craft a response to a photograph of immigrants at Ellis Island.
 - **Part 3:** Scholars research photos of immigration or Ellis Island and write a response to the image. In their responses, scholars describe the story the photojournalist was likely trying to tell through the image.
 - **Part 4:** Scholars participate in a gallery walk of everyone’s responses and then discuss what stood out to them in their classmates’ writing and what they learned from other responses.
- **Journal Entry: The Journey**

- **Part 1:** Read and discuss “The Journey” and “Voyage of Hope, Voyage of Tears.”
- **Part 2:** Scholars respond to the prompt: Compare and contrast the experiences of those in first and second class and those in steerage.
 - Scholars can complete this journal entry in any mode of their choosing (e.g., a T-Chart, Venn diagram, or writing).

Additional Activities

- **Virtual Field Study:** [Immigrants at Ellis Island](#) and [Scholastic Interactive Tour](#)
 - **Part 1:** Have scholars watch the History Channel video “Immigrants at Ellis Island.” This History Channel video explains the process of arriving at and being processed at Ellis Island. As scholars watch, have them take notes in their journals on what they notice.
 - **Part 2:** Put the Scholastic Interactive Tour on the SMART Board. As you go “travel” through each room, discuss each step of the processes immigrants underwent as they passed through Ellis Island.

Week 4

Guiding Questions and Essential Understandings

What did seeing the Statue of Liberty for the first time mean to immigrants?

- The Statue of Liberty served as a beacon of hope for many immigrants.

Readings

- [The Statue of Liberty](#) by Ann Tatlock
 - This book explains the history and purpose of the Statue of Liberty.
- *Emma’s Poem: The Voice of the Statue of Liberty* by Linda Glaser
 - The book describes the life of Emma Lazarus, author of “The New Colossus,” and how her poem led to the State of Liberty becoming a beacon of hope for many immigrants.
- *Her Right Foot* by David Eggers
 - This book explains the history and construction of the Statue of Liberty but focuses on something obscure — her right foot was constructed to show that she is walking!
- Begin *Letters from Rifka* by Karen Hesse
 - Rifka knows nothing about America when she flees from Russia with her family in 1919. But she dreams she will at last be safe from the Russian soldiers and their harsh treatment of the Jews in the new country. Throughout her journey, Rifka carries with her a cherished volume of poetry by Alexander Pushkin. In it, she records her observations and experiences in the form of letters to her

beloved cousin she has left behind. Strong-hearted and determined, Rifka must endure a great deal: humiliating examinations by doctors and soldiers, deadly typhus, separation from all she has ever known and loved, murderous storms at sea — and as if this is not enough, the loss of her glorious golden hair. And even if she does make it to America, she's not sure America will have her.

Writing Assignments and Project Work

- [Photojournalism Project](#)
 - Scholars continue the photojournalism project they began last week.
- **Journal Entry: Statue of Liberty**
 - Scholars respond to the following prompt: Why do you think some immigrants had an emotional reaction when seeing the Statue of Liberty for the first time?

Additional Activities:

- **Virtual Field Study: [“The New Colossus”](#)**
 - **Note:** This virtual field study should be taken after scholars read *Emma’s Poem: The Voice of the Statue of Liberty*.
 - Scholars listen to and watch an illustrated reading of Emma Lazarus’s poem “The New Colossus,” which is now on a plaque in the pedestal of the statue. As you watch, stop in strategic places to discuss the content and make connections to the unit.
- **Virtual Field Study: [Two Minute Tour: Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island](#)**
 - Scholars go on a 2-minute tour of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island where they can go on the roundtrip journey from Lower Manhattan.

Week 5

Guiding Questions and Essential Understandings

What did immigrants experience after arriving at Ellis Island?

- Immigrants had to go through medical exams, legal exams, and background checks before being allowed to enter New York City or go on to their next destination.
- Most immigrants were cleared to enter the United States. Less than 10% were detained, and only 2% were sent back to their home country.

Readings

- “The Medical Exam” from [Cornerstones of Freedom by Melissa McDaniel](#)
 - This text explains one of the processes immigrants experienced as they were being processed at Ellis Island — the Medical Exam.
- [“Legal Inspection” from What Was Ellis Island? By Paricia Brennan Demuth](#)

- This text presents scholars with a list of questions that immigrants needed to answer as they went through the legal inspection at Ellis Island.
- *The Memory Coat* by Elvira Woodruff
 - Coming into Ellis Island from Russia, Rachel and her family are ready to start a new life in America, so when cousin Grisha is singled out by an inspector, Rachel has to think quickly and uses an old tattered coat in an unusual way to keep everyone together.
- Continue *Letters from Rifka* by Karen Hesse
 - Rifka knows nothing about America when she flees from Russia with her family in 1919. But she dreams she will at last be safe from the Russian soldiers and their harsh treatment of the Jews in the new country. Throughout her journey, Rifka carries with her a cherished volume of poetry by Alexander Pushkin. In it, she records her observations and experiences in the form of letters to her beloved cousin she has left behind. Strong-hearted and determined, Rifka must endure a great deal: humiliating examinations by doctors and soldiers, deadly typhus, separation from all she has ever known and loved, murderous storms at sea— and as if this is not enough, the loss of her glorious golden hair. And even if she does make it to America, she's not sure America will have her.

Writing Assignments and Project Work

- **Stamp Project:**
 - Scholars learn about the purpose of stamps and the images that are often depicted on them. Then, they design their own stamp portraying a theme rooted in immigration and Ellis Island.
 - **Part 1:** As a class, read and discuss [this brief article](#) about stamps.
 - **Parts 2 and 3:** Scholars plan and complete the first draft of their stamps.
 - **Part 4:** Scholars finalize their stamps on their final paper.
 - **Part 5:** Scholars write a caption describing their stamp.
 - When scholars have finalized their stamps and captions, hang them in the classroom.

Additional Activity

- **Virtual Field Study:** [Ellis Island Medical Examination, Interrogation, and Leaving the Island](#)
 - Discuss with scholars the process of the medical exam, interrogation/legal inspection, and leaving the island by going through three pages of this website.
 - **Page 1: The Medical Exam**
 - This page discusses the various doctors that inspected immigrants upon arrival at Ellis Island.

- When finished, click on “Those who were approved by the doctor went on to interrogation.”
 - **Page 2:** Interrogation
 - Explain that interrogation was when inspectors asked immigrants many questions to determine if they could enter America. This was also known as the “Legal Inspection.”
 - When finished, click on “To leave Ellis Island.”
 - **Page 3:** Leaving Ellis Island
 - 98% of immigrants were inspected and approved to enter America. This page discusses what happened after immigrants were approved to enter America.
- **Virtual Field Study:** [National Park Service Virtual Tour – Ellis Island](#)
 - Scholars take a virtual tour of modern-day Ellis Island.
 - You can choose to do this as a whole class or by giving partnerships a Chromebook and allowing scholars to explore on their own.

Week 6

Guiding Questions and Essential Understandings

- **What was life like in New York City for immigrants once they left Ellis Island?**
 - Immigrants often lived in small tenements and worked long hours.
- **What contributions did immigrants make to New York City and America?**
 - Immigrants and their descendants made many social, economic, and political contributions to the United States.

Readings

- Lower East Side Maps
 - Before reading with scholars, research and maps of New York City and the Lower East Side, so they have a frame of reference for where the neighborhood is.
- "At Home" from [Immigrant Kids by Russell Freedman](#)
 - This text explains where immigrants settled upon arriving in New York City and how many lived in tenements, generally on the Lower East Side.
- "At Work" from [Immigrant Kids by Russell Freedman](#)
 - This text describes working conditions for many immigrants and discusses how immigrant children often worked to help support their families.
- Continue *Letters from Rifka* by Karen Hesse
 - Rifka knows nothing about America when she flees from Russia with her family in 1919. But she dreams she will at last be safe from the Russian soldiers and their harsh treatment of the Jews in the new country. Throughout her journey, Rifka carries with her a cherished volume of poetry by Alexander Pushkin. In it,

she records her observations and experiences in the form of letters to her beloved cousin she has left behind. Strong-hearted and determined, Rifka must endure a great deal: humiliating examinations by doctors and soldiers, deadly typhus, separation from all she has ever known and loved, murderous storms at sea — and as if this is not enough, the loss of her glorious golden hair. And even if she does make it to America, she's not sure America will have her.

Writing Assignments and Project Work

Expert Book:

- Scholars write an Expert Book on any topic pertaining to immigration or Ellis Island.
- Apart from the requirements, scholars have complete ownership over how they choose to organize their Expert Books. This means every scholar's Expert Book may be organized differently.
 - **Example:** One scholar might choose to include a map and a glossary, and another scholar might include a diagram, timeline, and chart.
- Teachers should not provide scholars with a stapled or bound Expert Book before writing. Instead, make sufficient copies of the [various pages](#) and keep them in an area of the classroom that is easily accessible to scholars. Allow scholars to get pages as needed.
- Expert Books will be stapled/bound at the culmination of the unit once all scholars have finished writing.
- Expert Books are displayed in the PBL Museum.

Journal Entry: Tenement Residents

- **Part 1:** Watch the [New York Times feature on Rita Ascione](#), one of the last living residents of the Lower East Side building that is now the Tenement Museum. She recently returned with her daughter to see her old apartment.
- **Part 2:** Scholars respond to the following prompt:
 - Rita was 9 years old when she lived in the tenement she visited in the video. Based on what you saw and what she said, what do you think life was like for her and other immigrant children on the Lower East Side?

Additional Activities

- **Virtual Field Study:** [Tenement Museum Video](#) and [From Ellis Island to Orchard Street](#)
 - **Part 1:** Watch the Tenement Museum Video and discuss the information in the video, specifically:
 - What were tenements like in the early 1900s?
 - What was the Lower East Side like in the early 1900s?

- What was life like for immigrants on the Lower East Side in the early 1900s?
 - **Part 2:** Scholars participate in “From Ellis Island to Orchard Street.”
 - In this interactive exhibit from the Tenement Museum, scholars will get to experience life as an immigrant living on the Lower East Side.
 - You can either do this as a whole class or allow scholars to work individually or in partnerships on Chromebooks.
 - After participating in the field study, have scholars discuss what they noticed and how it relates to the content learned in the readings.
 - **Note:** Flash Player needs to be enabled in order to view the online exhibit.
- **Primary Sources**
 - These excerpts from interviews of immigrants who passed through Ellis Island describe the experiences many had as they arrived in America and began a new life.

Week 7

Guiding Questions and Essential Understandings

- **What is happening at Ellis Island now?**
 - Ellis Island was closed in 1954 and not in use for years before it was restored to preserve its history.
 - Ellis Island is now run by the National Park Service and is a museum honoring immigrants and their contributions to America.
- **What contributions did immigrants make to New York City and America?**
 - Immigrants and their descendants made many social, economic, and political contributions to the United States.

Readings

- “The Open Door Slams Shut” from [What Was Ellis Island? by Paricia Brennan Demuth](#)
 - This text describes the introduction of immigration laws and eventual closing of Ellis Island as a result of these laws.
- “Back from Ruins” from [What Was Ellis Island? by Paricia Brennan Demuth](#)
 - This text describes restoration efforts that took place at Ellis Island after its closing in 1954. Eventually, Ellis Island would reopen to tourists as a historic site that celebrates the many contributions of immigrants.
- [“Famous U.S. Immigrants”](#)
 - This text provides a snapshot into the lives of many famous immigrants who have contributed greatly to society.
- Finish *Letters from Rifka* by Karen Hesse

- Rifka knows nothing about America when she flees from Russia with her family in 1919. But she dreams she will at last be safe from the Russian soldiers and their harsh treatment of the Jews in the new country. Throughout her journey, Rifka carries with her a cherished volume of poetry by Alexander Pushkin. In it, she records her observations and experiences in the form of letters to her beloved cousin she has left behind. Strong-hearted and determined, Rifka must endure a great deal: humiliating examinations by doctors and soldiers, deadly typhus, separation from all she has ever known and loved, murderous storms at sea — and as if this is not enough, the loss of her glorious golden hair. And even if she does make it to America, she's not sure America will have her.

Writing Assignments and Project Work

- **Expert Book**
 - Scholars complete the Expert Book they began in Week 6.
- **Journal Entry: Answering Our Questions**
 - Scholars reflect and write about why it was important to study immigration and Ellis Island.
 - Scholars use the ideas in their journal entries to have a class discussion. Ask scholars what they learned and what they still would like to learn about the Immigration and Ellis Island.
 - Explain that the study of immigration doesn't stop here. In fact, this is only the beginning! Scholars have tools to do further independent research and should pursue their interests.
- **Museum Preparations**
 - This is the most exciting part of the study. Scholars showcase all the work they have done and share their knowledge with others. All artwork, pictures, charts, and writing should be finalized and displayed for families and other classes to see.
 - Use this time to make exhibits colorful and inviting.
 - Prepare scholars to take an active role as a "Museum Educator" and present their expertise on Immigration and Ellis Island to museum visitors.