

Document Based Assignment – Immigration

The New Colossus – Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

- What is the sentiment expressed towards immigrants in the above passage? To what extent would you say this view is the dominant view of immigration in the U.S. today? Historically? Explain.

Task – Examine documents 1-5. Analyze the factors that contributed to a nativist response to immigration during the period 1840 to 1920.

Document 1 – The American Party (Know Nothing) Platform – 1856

3. Americans must rule America, and to this end native-born citizens should be selected for all State, Federal, and municipal offices of government employment, in preference to all others.

5. No person should be selected for political station (whether of native or foreign birth), who recognizes any allegiance or obligation of any description to any foreign prince, potentate or power*, or who refuses to recognize the Federal and State Constitution (each within its sphere) as paramount to all other laws, as rules of political action.

* reference to the Pope

Question – What concern towards immigrants is expressed in the Know Nothing Platform?

Document 2 “Our Misery and Despair”: Denis Kearney, President Workingman’s Party, 1878

Our moneyed men have ruled us for the past thirty years. . . .

To add to our misery and despair, a bloated aristocracy has sent to China—the greatest and oldest despotism in the world—for a cheap working slave. It rakes the slums of Asia to find the meanest slave on earth—the Chinese coolie—and imports him here to meet the free American in the Labor market, and still further widen the breach between the rich and the poor, still further to degrade white Labor.

These cheap slaves fill every place. Their dress is scant and cheap. Their food is rice from China. They hedge twenty in a room, ten by ten. They have no wives, children or dependents.

They are imported by companies, controlled as serfs, worked like slaves, and at last go back to China with all their earnings.

California must be all American or all Chinese. We are resolved that it shall be American, and are prepared to make it so. May we not rely upon your sympathy and assistance?

Question – Why did the Workingman party oppose Chinese immigration?

Document 3 – The Secret Oath of the American Protective Association, 1893

I do most solemnly promise and swear that I will always use my utmost power to strike the shackles and chains of blind obedience to the Roman Catholic church from the hampered and bound consciences of a priest-ridden and church-oppressed people;

I furthermore promise and swear that I will not consider the nomination of a Roman Catholic for any office in the gift of the American people, and that I will not vote for, or counsel others to vote for, any Roman Catholic, but will vote only for a Protestant, so far as may lie in my power. Should there be two Roman Catholics on opposite tickets, I will erase the name on the ticket I vote; that I will at all times endeavor to place the political positions of this government in the hands of Protestants, to the entire exclusion of the Roman Catholic church, of the members thereof, and the mandate of the Pope.

1. What was the goal of the American Protective Association? Why?

Document 5 – Madison Grant – *Passing of the Great Race, 1916*

These new immigrants were no longer exclusively members of the Nordic race as were the earlier ones who came of their own impulse to improve their social conditions. The transportation lines advertised America as a land flowing with milk and honey, and the European governments took the opportunity to unload upon careless, wealthy, and hospitable America the sweepings of their jails and asylums. The result was that the new immigration, while it still included many strong elements from the north of Europe, contained a large and increasing number of the weak, the broken, and the mentally crippled of all races drawn from the lowest stratum of the Mediterranean basin and the Balkans, together with hordes of the wretched, submerged populations of the Polish Ghettos

1. What concern did Madison Grant have concerning immigrants? What social philosophy does he seem to be influenced by?

Document 6 – 1919 Cartoon



1. What does the man holding the bomb represent? What comment is the cartoonist making regarding immigrants?

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1. Explain Four reasons why some Americans supported greater restrictions on immigration during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
 2. To what extent do arguments for further limits on immigration today parallel the reasons offered by some people during the late 19th and early 20th centuries?

Document	Reason for Nativism

THESIS STATEMENT: