

For the teacher, ages 9-12

Norwegian Emigration to America

Ages 9-12

For the Teacher

The teaching plan facilitates reflection on population movements, particularly the Norwegian emigration to America from 1825 to 1939, but also encourages reflection on migration today.

This plan consists of classroom activities, assignments, and group discussions. Choose the ones that best fit the class and the available time.

Learning Objectives

Studying and analyzing the “push” and “pull” factors of immigration of the past helps us to understand the causes and consequences of human settlement and migration.

This increases our awareness of the ways in which human beings have viewed themselves and how they have been viewed by others, such as governments and institutions. The discovery of commonalities and differences in experiences across time and place can help us feel a connectedness to shared experiences of being human. We also begin to understand the linkages between human decisions and consequences, learning how the world has changed and how it might change in future. We can draw on our knowledge of history to make informed choices and decisions in the present.

Studying and analyzing migration patterns and stories of people in the past helps increase our understanding of the opportunities, challenges, and complexities of immigration in the past and present.

Historical experiences of people show patterns of continuity and change in societies that influence decisions made on personal, local, state, national, and international levels.

Studying patterns and narratives in history helps us locate ourselves in time and space. This can also connect to us to our personal roots and how our personal stories can be viewed as part of human history.

Studying and analyzing historical narratives, images, and objects cultivates our skills in observation and critical thinking. Through focused and deeper reading and looking, we practice asking questions, seek relevant evidence, and evaluate sources to help us identify, critique, and communicate our observations, answers, and solutions.

The digital game also touches on topics such as women’s history, World War 1 and industrialization.

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Implementation

This education package can be implemented over either two teaching hours + homework, four teaching hours, or several teaching hours + homework. Chose the option that best suits your teaching schedule and class.

Before starting it is recommended to read the "Teacher's background reading" to get an overview of Norwegian emigration to America in the 19th and early 20th century. If the classroom game is to be conducted, print out the game and read the instructions. It is also recommended to play through the digital game "Hands Across the Sea" beforehand.

Two lessons

Historical background

Start the lesson by going through the attached PowerPoint presentation. This will take about 20-30 minutes.

Interactive Part – Digital Game

In the remainder of the lesson, students play the digital game "Hands Across the Sea." Playing time is about 20-30 minutes. When done, the students write a brief synopsis of what happened in the game.

Finish the lesson with a group discussion (whole class or small groups)

Discuss how the choices you made in the game affected the story, and the opportunities when arriving in America.

How do the choices we make in our lives influence opportunities in our lives, in the present and future and future.

The order of the two parts can be switched if the teacher feels it works better.

Let the students read the "Students background text" and complete the questions. What is not completed during the lesson, can be done as homework.

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Four Teaching Hours (two sessions)

Session 1

Start the lesson by going through the attached PowerPoint presentation. This will take about 20-30 minutes

Interactive Part – Classroom Game

Rearranging the room so that the classroom game can be played (give the students a break if needed). Conduct the classroom game. It takes about 30-40 minutes to complete. Finish the game with the following reflection questions:

Reflection assignment

- 1) How did your place of origin in Norway (e.g. parsonage/cotter) affect your opportunities in the game?
- 2) How did skills, occupations, or other choices affect you opportunities to earn money and/or reach to North-America and establish a life?
- 3) What role did luck play in your journey?

The order of the subject and interactive parts can be switched if the teacher feels it works better.

Alternative

If you need a simpler game for the class, you can use the exhibition game that lets the students explore what professions/ lives they could have ended up having if they emigrated. Print the game, and post sheets in the walls of your class room.

Give the students "Students background text" to read

Session 2

Interactive Part

In the remainder of the lesson, students play the digital game "Hands Across the Sea." Playing time is about 20-30 minutes. When done, the students write a brief synopsis of what happened in the game.

Finish the lesson with a group discussion (whole class or small groups)

Discuss how the choices you made in the game affected the story, and the opportunities when arriving in America.

How do the choices we make in our lives influence opportunities in our lives, in the present and future and future.

The order of the two parts can be switched if the teacher feels it works better.

Let the students read the "Students background text" and complete the following questions. What is not completed during the lesson, can be done as homework.

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Several Teaching Sessions Over Time

Use the "Four Teaching Hours" plan and expand it with the following:

- Create your own exhibition about emigration from Norway to North-America

Create Your Own Exhibition About Emigration from Norway to the US

Make an exhibition showing telling the life story of a Norwegian immigrant to your community.

Make wall posters about

- the place they came from,
- the city they departed from,
- the journey across the Atlantic,
- arriving in the US
- their life in the US

You can draw inspiration from the exhibition "Emigrating to America" (emigratingtoamerica.no/museums). You can find readings and sources in the school library, local library, local history groups and local archives.