

Ellis Island Simulation

The second grade team was interested in making a real immigration experience at Ellis Island for our students. I had found a web site where a kindergarten teacher had given her students an Ellis Island experience. One of our second grade teachers had also been part of such an experience. Between his input, reading the experience from the internet, and our imagination, we developed our own Immigration Simulation at Stewart School.

The immigrants' day would consist of packing their things, taking their passport and loading a boat for America. Once at Ellis Island students would experience long lines, separation from family or friends, be evaluated, interviews, and questioned by officials, and finally deportation or admittance into America. We had also collected enough boxes for each student to have one as representation of trunks.

At the beginning of our unit, students took home Family Tiles to find out more about their family and where they immigrated from. We used that information to help students complete a passport. Small pictures of each child were also placed inside their passports. The passports included information about the child- first, middle and last name, height, date of birth, birthplace (country family was from), and signature. It also included where their passport was issued and signature from that place. The back of their passports were color coded with stickers letting us and them know which room was next on their trip.

Students selected a box, which later we told them what they would be used for. It was very interesting to see and hear the reactions after we explained they would be carrying these "trunks" with them to America and around Ellis Island. How quickly the students with BIG boxes wanted to trade! In their trucks students place a paper trunk they had filled out prior to this day. The trucks showed what the student would have brought with them to America. Some students also put some school supplies in their trunks. Students wore their coats and backpacks along with carrying their trucks.

With their passports in hand and trucks packed, they headed to their ship for America. We had taped off an outline of a boat with a loading deck in our gym. One student from each class was randomly selected to travel in first class (on the gym stage). The others were stuck in the crowded, hot boat down in steerage. We made it very crowded for them. While they were traveling we had ocean music playing in the background. We even had student pretending to be sea sick. After about five to ten minutes on the boat, immigrants were able to see The Statue of Liberty. One of our teachers held a poster of her coming out of our stage curtains. As they docked at Ellis Island, first class passengers were dismissed first. Officials were waiting to check their passports and let them know which room to visit first.

Students had five rooms to visit. They were Medical, Information, Baggage, Passport, and Interview. We had color coded each room (**medical=red**, **baggage=orange**, etc.). Each room had two or three parent volunteers and our principle was the main focus of the **passport room**. Students waited in lines to be evaluated and interviews.

MEDICAL – Students were examined by a nurse or doctor. Our school nurse was able to work in here too. They had their temperature taken (small candy canes were used as thermometers), skin looked at for rashes, eyes examined, and ears tested.

INFORMATION – We had a half page information sheet for immigrants to fill out. It included information from their passports and questions regarding their life in America. This room took the longest for students.

BAGGAGE – Immigrants trucks and backpacks were inspected. They were approved and signed by the principal. Some immigrants had their names changed.

INTERVIEW- Students were interviewed by officials. They were asked questions about their plans and intent in America. How would they earn money? Where were they planning to live?

At each room if immigrants were approved they would receive a stamp in their passport. They could then move on to the next room.

We did decide to include a **deportation room**. After much thought we really wanted students to have a true Ellis Island experience. Reality was, several immigrants were deported. We were very careful about this process. Teachers selected one or two students from their room who would have their feelings hurt if they were deported. We also made sure all deportees were let go in their final room, so they could experience all the rooms. We marked these students' passports with a black circle around their final sticker. When they went to the Deportation room, a teacher was there to talk with all the students about what had happened. They came into the gym and took part in our America celebration also. Several of us also explained our simulation as a game, some would make it some may not.

When all finished the immigrants went to our gym and celebration. We had patriotic music playing and students enjoyed red, white, and blue popsicles. We discussed the simulation and the whole Ellis Island process, including the deportation of some students.

We were very pleased with the outcome of the simulation. There were students who had not completely understood the immigration process until the end of our day. Students were very eager to share their thoughts and knowledge from the day. Our parent volunteers also enjoyed their part in the day. The simulation was a great way to end our unit. It was a fantastic activity for everyone.

Volunteer Recruitment and Information

Prepare Call for Volunteers Announcement

Immigration Simulation Volunteers Needed!

As a culmination activity to the third immigration unit, we will be having an Ellis Island simulation. The kids will be immigrants coming from their home country and trying to find their way around Ellis Island (AKA our school). We will have rooms set up like Ellis Island (Medical, Information, Baggage, Interview, and Passport). Each room will be set up with a list of questions or things for you to do with the kids. We need (if possible) a certified nurse/or doctor for the medical room to come dressed in their “work clothes”. All other rooms required no special expertise. The simulation will be **[insert date]** from **[insert time begin/end]**. If you are able to help, please let me know by **[insert date]**, so that I have all supplies ready for volunteers.

Prepare Volunteer Information

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you so much for helping with our simulation today. We hope that you find it as enjoyable and valuable as we think the students will.

On the following pages are names of the different immigration rooms and the directions for what will happen in each room. Your page/room is marked with a post it note. Read through your page and we will answer any questions that you may have.

At 1:00 all passengers will be boarding the ship (in the cafeteria).

At approximately 1:20, the passengers will depart ship and proceed to Ellis Island. The students will be going to the rooms in the order of their stickers on the back of their passports. Helpers that are monitoring the hallways may use those for assisting immigrants. Please do not tell them exactly where to go, just tell them that it might be in this direction.

Immigration Rooms	
Boat	insert location
Baggage	insert location
Medical	insert location
Interview	insert location
Information	insert location
Passport	insert location
America	insert location

It usually takes about an hour for all of the kids to go through all of the rooms. Please keep in mind that we want the kids to have to wait in line, as the immigrants did at Ellis Island, so don't feel like you have to rush when you have a line of students.

At the end of the simulation we meet in the [insert location] for a “**Coming to America Celebration**” for ALL students. When the students are in their last room, direct them to the 2/3 application room when finished.

Thanks again and please let us know if you have any questions.

Second Grade Team

Prepare Volunteer Assignment List

Location	Volunteers Needed
Baggage Room (Teacher's Room)	2 staff/volunteer names
Medical Room (Teacher's Room)	2 staff/volunteer names
Interview Room (Teacher's Room)	2 staff/volunteer names
Information Room (Teacher's Room)	2 staff/volunteer names
Passport Room (Teacher's Room)	2 staff/volunteer names
Deportation Room (Teacher's Room)	2 staff/volunteer names
Baggage Room Door Monitor	1 Staff/Volunteer name
Medical Room Door Monitor	1 Staff/Volunteer name
Interview Room Door Monitor	1 Staff/Volunteer name
Passport Room Door Monitor	1 Staff/Volunteer name
Hallway Monitors	As many as deemed necessary

The Immigration Simulation Rooms

The Medical Room (red)

Here is a list of things you could do. Please don't feel you need to do everything on every child. If you have other things you would like to do that are not listed please feel free as well.

- ❖ check heart rate
- ❖ check eyes (there are popsicle sticks if you want them to "follow the stick")
- ❖ check skin (look at arms, legs)
- ❖ check their temperature (candy cane)

Questions to ask:

- ❖ Have you ever had the chicken pox? If not, have you had the shot?
- ❖ Have you ever been in the hospital? For what reason?

One could also be posted in the hallway watching for slow movers, tiredness, etc. You could ask the questions: Why are you moving so slowly? Why are you breathing so hard? Etc.

After they “pass” the medical exam you will put a “red cross” stamp on the medical part of his/her passport.

For the last group you will send one student you examine to the deportation room. You decide the reason: fast heart rate, bad eyes, no chicken pox shot, etc. We will let you know who the students are that we want you to “deport”. You will mark with chalk on their backs a letter, symbolizing why they are being deported.

Don't hurry. We want the kids to have to wait as if they are at Ellis Island.

Thank you so much for taking the time and helping us with this exciting learning experience for the students!

The Information Room (blue)

Students will be handed an information sheet to be filled out upon arriving in the information room. Please have them find a spot at one of the tables and fill out the information sheet.

Please stamp their passports when they are finished with this room.

As we near the end of our experiment, we will be deporting a few immigrants to the deportation room. We will provide you with a list of students that we would like you to deport. Reason: Information sheet not correctly filled out.

Have fun and thank you so much for making this such a great learning experience for our students!



Immigrant Information Sheet

My name is _____

I am _____ years old. I speak (language) _____

I come from _____

I earn a living by _____

I left my country because _____

I journeyed to America in (year) _____

When I first saw the Statue of Liberty I said, _____

The Baggage Room (green)

Immigrants will enter and must wait in line until it is their turn to have their bags inspected. Please do not hurry. We want them to have to wait in line, just like at Ellis Island.

- ❖ Ask to see their passport. Make sure the photo is the same as the person you are inspecting (look at them, look at passport- do that a few times).
- ❖ Please inspect their bags, boxes, coats, and backpacks.
- ❖ Ask each immigrant a couple of questions...
 - Why are you bringing this to America?
 - What is this?
 - Why is this important to you?
 - Do you have any money with you?
 - What are you going to do with it?
 - How are you going to make money then?

When or IF you give their baggage the okay, stamp the baggage section of their passport with the luggage stamp.

As we near the end of our experiment, we will be deporting a few immigrants to the deportation room. We will provide you with a list of students that we would like you to deport. Make up a reason: brought a red crayon, scissors are too sharp, don't have any money, etc.

Have fun and thank you so much for making this such a great learning experience for our students!

The Passport Room (yellow)

Students will stand in line and wait to be interviewed. Some questions to ask are:

- ❖ What is your family name?
- ❖ What is your first name?
- ❖ What is your place of birth?
- ❖ What is your year of birth?
- ❖ What is your age?
- ❖ What is your height?
- ❖ What is your hair color?
- ❖ What is the color of your eyes?

Please stamp their passports when they are finished with this room.

As we near the end of our experiment, we will be deporting a few immigrants to the deportation room. We will provide you with a list of students that we would like you to deport. Reason: Information on their passport was not accurate.

There will be two tables set up. One person will ask the passport questions and they will send them to the other to get their passports signed (**[identify person to act as signatory]**).

The Interview Room (orange)

Students will stand in line and wait to be interviewed. Some questions to ask are:

- ❖ Why did you immigrate here?
- ❖ What country did you immigrate from?
- ❖ What are your plans now that you are here?
- ❖ How are you going to support your family?

Have them locate where they came from on a globe.

Please stamp their passports when they have completed this room.

As we near the end of our experiment, we will be deporting a few immigrants to the deportation room. We will provide you with a list of students that we would like you to deport. A reason could be: no money to support family, no plan to get a job, too many immigrants from that country in America already, etc.

Have fun and thank you so much for making this such a great learning experience for our students!



The Deportation Room (purple)

Immigrants who have been deported need to sit quietly on the floor. They may read immigration books. Volunteers for this room will not be needed until near the end of the simulation.

Thank you so much for making this such a great learning experience for our students!



Deportation Information

During the last station, we are going to have several students be deported. The teachers have identified these students by putting a circle around the last sticker on the back of their passports. As the students come in to their last station, look at the back of the passport to see if they should be deported. You may let them start the station and then direct them to the deportation room (**[insert room location]**).

Here are the students to be deported:

Orange Room: (list the names of 2 students)

Green Room: (list the names of 2 students)

Yellow Room: Nick (list the names of 2 students)

Red Room: (list the names of 2 students)



Express Thanks to all the Volunteers

We want to thank you so much for taking the time and volunteering at our Immigration Simulation. We hope you had as much fun as the kids did. It is a wonderful learning experience for them. We would not have been able to do it without you.

Thanks again,

[name(s)]