

Immigrants and Immigration

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CONTEXT

Thanks to the immigration boom in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the decades leading up to World War I populated America with millions of immigrants seeking jobs and economic security. Many of these immigrants came from the same countries that engaged in the events of World War I. As the war unfolded, some Americans kept a close watch on immigrants in their community, suspicious that they might still have ties to their old country that would affect their loyalty and patriotism to their new home. German and Austro-Hungarian immigrants as well as the children of immigrants and newly arrived immigrants faced discrimination as they became “enemy-aliens” of the Allied Powers. This activity asks students to analyze two pieces of advice for immigrants from the war years. It allows students to understand and react to this suspicion of foreigners while working on their analytical skills.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Pamphlet, Honorable Joseph Buffington,
“Friendly Words to the Foreign Born,” 1917 (excerpt)
University of Pennsylvania
<https://archive.org/details/5068087upenn/page/n3>

Political Cartoon, *Removing the Hyphen*
New York Times, May 16, 1915

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this activity, students will be able to:

- Evaluate primary sources to determine purpose, point of view, and intended audience;
- Analyze the different ways immigrants were warned to remain loyal to America during World War I; and
- Analyze the effect of contemporary events on views of immigrants.

Teacher Instructions

- Make one copy of the Source Comparison Guide and distribute to each student. An answer key is included for teacher reference.
- Print out (or share electronically) the political cartoon as well as excerpts from the pamphlet for each student.
- Assign students to discussion groups of two students each.
- Assign one student the political cartoon and the other student the pamphlet excerpt. Ask them to complete their corresponding side of the Source Comparison Guide and share with their partners.
- Lead a discussion on the following question, *Based on these sources, what effect did World War I have on immigrants in the United States?* What effect did it have on the perception of immigrants in the United States?

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PAMPHLET, HONORABLE JOSEPH BUFFINGTON, "FRIENDLY WORDS TO THE FOREIGN BORN," 1917 (EXCERPT)

University of Pennsylvania

<https://archive.org/details/5068087upenn/page/n3>

Context: This pamphlet is the transcription of a speech given to newly naturalized citizens. It was then recreated to be distributed to immigrants.

"My advice...to every foreign-born man and woman who is staying in the United States to-day is to keep clear of any disloyalty; keep clear of any one who counsels or advises it. Indeed, any one, native, naturalized, or alien, who knows of such disloyal plans, purposes, or schemes is already on dangerous ground, although he may not himself have done a thing; for as your friend I should tell you that there is not only treason which consists of overt acts, but there is a lesser treason which consists in knowing of treason by others against the United States and not making it known... Here is what the law provides about this lesser treason... [I]t applies to all persons living in the United States, whether native-born, naturalized, or not naturalized, for they all owe allegiance: "3. Whoever, owing allegiance to the United States, and having knowledge of the commission of any treason against them, conceals, and does not, as soon as may be, disclose and make known the same to the President or to some judge of the United States, or to the Governor or to some judge or justice of a particular State, is guilty of misprison of treason and shall be imprisoned not more than seven years and fined not more than one thousand dollars."...

"Be loyal, true, straight, and square to the Government, and you will be sure you are not committing treason. I am not trying to tell people how near they can approach the line of treason without crossing it. I am telling them how far they can keep from the line by simply being loyal to the flag and to America.

"When a man is driving along a precipice he tries to drive as far away from the edge as he can. My advice to every foreign-born man who comes to me will be: **Put a flag at your door, another on your coat, and above all keep one in your heart.** If you do, you will stand four-square as countrymen of Washington and Lincoln, and no nation has ever loved any leader, be he King or Kaiser, Sultan or Czar, as all nations today love George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. In following their loyal footsteps no man of any race can go astray."

THIS PAMPHLET IS AVAILABLE IN BOHEMIAN, POLISH, GERMAN,
ITALIAN, HUNGARIAN, AND RUSSIAN.

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POLITICAL CARTOON, REMOVING THE HYPHEN

New York Times, May 16, 1915



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Source Comparison Guide

POLITICAL CARTOON, <i>REMOVING THE HYPHEN</i> MAY 16, 1915	PAMPHLET, "FRIENDLY WORDS TO THE FOREIGN BORN" 1917
What is the historical context of this cartoon?	What is the historical context of this pamphlet?
Who is the cartoonist's intended audience ?	Who is the author's intended audience ?
What is the cartoonist's point of view ?	What is the author's point of view ?
What is the cartoonist's purpose ?	What is the author's purpose ?
History Hints! What objects stand out in the cartoon? What words stand out in the cartoon? How could the date help you understand the cartoon's message?	History Hints! Which words has the author bolded or italicized? Why? Are these words friendly? Why or why not? How could the date help you understand the pamphlet's message?
Based on these sources, what effect did World War I have on immigrants in the United States? What effect did it have on the perception of immigrants in the United States?	

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Source Comparison Guide Answer Key

POLITICAL CARTOON, <i>REMOVING THE HYPHEN</i> MAY 16, 1915	PAMPHLET, “FRIENDLY WORDS TO THE FOREIGN BORN” 1917
<p>What is the historical context of this cartoon?</p> <p>Date: May 16, 1915, shortly after the sinking of the <i>Lusitania</i> by a German U-Boat</p>	<p>What is the historical context of this pamphlet?</p> <p>Date: 1917, shortly after American entry into the war</p>
<p>Who is the cartoonist’s intended audience?</p> <p>German-Americans in the United States, specifically those who may have been against the war. Also, the overall readership of the <i>New York Times</i>, who may be angered by the sinking.</p>	<p>Who is the author’s intended audience?</p> <p>New immigrants, but also foreigners who live in the United States, whether or not they are citizens.</p>
<p>What is the cartoonist’s point of view?</p> <p>German-Americans need to abandon any strong feelings toward Germany and consider the Germans an enemy now. If not, they are associating with the type of people who murder civilians on ocean liners.</p>	<p>What is the author’s point of view?</p> <p>Immigrants need to overtly display their loyalty and patriotism. Because they are immigrants, they need to work even harder than the average American do demonstrate their love for the United States.</p>
<p>What is the cartoonist’s purpose?</p> <p>Ensure that a line is drawn after the <i>Lusitania</i>, a line that shows that being pro-German at this point is no longer acceptable.</p>	<p>What is the author’s purpose?</p> <p>Develop loyalty among foreigners now living in the United States, and to enlist them in discovering any foreigners who may be harboring sympathies for the Central Powers.</p>
<p>History Hints!</p> <p>What objects stand out in the cartoon?</p> <p>What words stand out in the cartoon?</p> <p>How could the date help you understand the cartoon’s message?</p>	<p>History Hints!</p> <p>Which words has the author bolded or italicized? Why?</p> <p>Are these words friendly? Why or why not?</p> <p>How could the date help you understand the pamphlet’s message?</p>
<p>Based on these sources, what effect did World War I have on immigrants in the United States?</p> <p>What effect did it have on the perception of immigrants in the United States?</p>	