

Hello New York!

1 Reading

Ellis Island is in New York harbour, near the Statue of Liberty. Between 1892 and 1954 more than 12 million immigrants entered the United States through Ellis Island. Usually immigrants stayed on Ellis Island for a few hours. They answered some questions and a doctor made sure they were healthy. But sometimes immigrants stayed on the island for up to a year if they were sick.

This is part of the diary of an immigrant called Helen Meinwald. She arrived in New York in 1920 when she was 14 years old.

6th March

We said goodbye to Poland today and to all my friends and family. My grandparents can't come with us. I feel very sad.

9th March

It is my third day on the boat now and it's horrid. Mother, Father, Lawrence and I share a bunk bed in the bottom of the boat. It's very crowded and I can't sleep. Why does everybody want to go to the USA! Mother is worried because we don't have much food left.

12th March

I felt very seasick today. I asked father to throw me over the side of the boat into the sea. The sea was very rough and Lawrence was frightened. I feel terrible.

14th March

Today I feel much better. Father says we are nearly there. He talked to me about our new lives in America. Aunt and uncle Cohen live there already. They have a house with two bedrooms. I am very excited about living in America.

17th March

Today was a great day. Mother was walking on deck when she first saw the Statue of Liberty. She ran to find Lawrence and me. It was like a party on the boat. Everybody was singing and dancing - we were all delighted to be in America.

20th March

My aunt and uncle came to take us to their home. They were very pleased to see us. I feel very free and happy. We stayed on Ellis Island for three days, but now the awful journey is over and my new life is about to start.

Answer the questions.

- 1 How many immigrants came through Ellis Island into the USA?
- 2 How long did the immigrants stay on Ellis Island?
- 3 Where was Helen Meinwald from?
- 4 Who did she travel to America with?
- 5 Did she have a good journey?
- 6 How long did she stay on Ellis Island for?
- 7 Was she happy to be in America?
- 8 Did she miss Poland?

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2 Vocabulary

Put the adjectives in the right box.

awful terrible happy horrid delighted
excited worried frightened pleased

positive	negative
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Which three negative words mean the same?

How would you feel if you saw a ghost?

How do you feel before an important test?

Which two words mean the same as happy?

How do you feel on your birthday?

3 Writing

Here is some information about another immigrant who came to America through Ellis Island. Imagine you are this person and write a letter to your family back home telling them about your journey and your new life. You may want to answer some of these questions:

How was the journey?

Did you meet anyone on the boat?

How did you feel about going to America?

How did you feel about leaving your mother and sisters behind?

How long did you stay on Ellis Island for?

How did you feel when you saw your father?

Name: *George Cholakians*

Age when arrived in USA: *16*

Country of birth: *Armenia*

Year arrived in America: *1921*

Journey time: *14 days*

Reason for immigration: *to be with his father*

Who did he travel with: *nobody*

Who did he leave behind: *mother and two sisters*

12th August 1921

Dear Mother,

I am writing to you with father sitting next to me. I am in America and very happy to be here...