

*The
immigrants
facts and
figures*

1840-1860	1860-1880	1880-1900	1900-1920	1920-1960	1960-1985
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Following many English immigrants, the Irish came to the U.S as a result of the potato famine of 1845-49. There was also a massive German, Dutch and Scandinavian wave of immigration. The main reasons for leaving the country of origin were a high rate of unemployment, poverty and hope for better wages.

The Chinese came to build the railroads (trains linked the two coasts of the US in 1869). They were so poor in their own country that they were unable to raise their children. They arrived in America full of hopes and dreams.

Italians, Poles, and Czechs, as well as laws from all over Europe. Ukrainians, Russians, Greeks also came in large numbers hoping to find religious and political freedom and an easier life.

These were the peak years with many Italians and Eastern Europeans who continued to emigrate, fleeing (running away from) wars and revolutions and hoping for a better life.

The 1917 Immigration Act excluded all Asians and required literacy.

1920-1940 :
The National Origins Act of 1924 established quotas for each country outside the western hemisphere. It was particularly prejudiced against Eastern and Southern Europeans.

The Wall Street crash and the Great Depression brought immigration down to its lowest level in 100 years.

This period marked the start of the Mexican influx.

1940-1960 :
From the turn of the century, most immigrants and their children became Americanized.

In 1948, the U.S began to admit war refugees. From 1953 to 1955, 2.2 million Mexicans were deported.

Immigrants from the Third World were allowed in thanks to the Immigration Act of 1965. Refugees were admitted as immigrants too.

Today, poverty, war and political persecution remain the main reasons for people leaving their country and crossing the border to the U.S

