

# Lesson 26: The Great Wave of Immigration

*What was life like for immigrants in the early 1900s?*

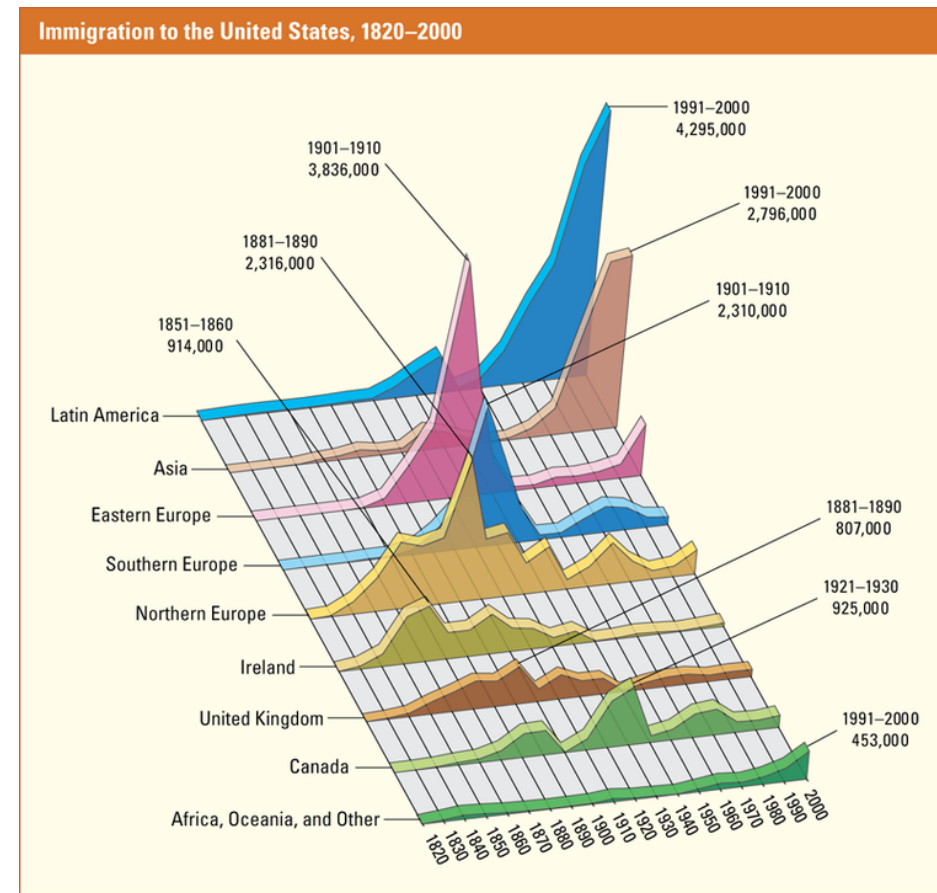
# Lesson 26 - Section 1: Immigration from Around the Globe

- Patterns of immigration to the United States changed in the 1880s.
- Before this time, most immigrants came from northern Europe, particularly Ireland and Germany.
- But by 1890, most were coming from countries in southern and eastern Europe, such as Italy, Greece, Russia, and Poland.
- Other people came from China, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines, and still others crossed the borders from Canada and Mexico.



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- Many of these newcomers were refugees escaping violence or poverty in their homelands.
- Compared to earlier arrivals, they tended to be poorer, less educated, and less likely to speak English.
- Among these refugees were many Jews and Catholics, as well as Buddhists and Confucianists—a major change for a country that had always been largely Protestant.



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- Americans wondered how the throngs of immigrants would affect the country.
- Most favored the assimilation of foreign-born people into the culture of their new homeland, and they expected immigrants to become “Americanized”—to talk, dress, and act like their native-born neighbors.



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- Others believed that the new immigrants, especially nonwhites, were too “different” to be assimilated.
- Their prejudices were reinforced when ethnic groups clustered in their own towns or neighborhoods, in part for mutual support and in part because they were not accepted elsewhere.



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- Some immigrants did cling to their own languages and ways of life, but even those who made a great effort to assimilate often encountered abuse and discrimination.
- Immigrants also faced resentment from workers who saw them as competition in the job market.



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- Immigrants also brought a vibrant diversity to their adopted land.
- The United States became a society enriched by the customs, foods, languages, and faiths of people from around the globe.

