

For Students Taking Grade 11 U.S. History II Honors Summer Assignment 2019

Questions regarding this assignment should be directed to Mr. Cannella at cannellc@cgschools.org

This assignment should be printed, completed, and turned in on the first day of school.

Read the following two primary Source Texts. Answer the questions that follow each text on the lines provided.

#1. A Disillusioned Immigrant. Adapted from *Hungry Hearts* by Anzia Yeziarska

We traveled in steerage {the section of the ship where those who paid the cheapest fares were crowded together under the decks} – dirty bundles – foul odors – seasick humanity – but I saw and heard nothing of the foulness and ugliness around me. I floated in showers of sunshine; visions upon visions of the new world opened before me.

From lips to lips flowed the golden legend of the golden country:

"In America you can say what you feel – you can voice your thoughts in the open streets without fear of a Cossack."

"In America is a home for everybody. The land is your land. Not like in Russia where you feel yourself a stranger in the village where you were born and raised – the village in which your father and grandfather lie buried."

"Everybody is with everybody alike, in America. Christians and Jews are brothers together."

"An end to the worry for bread. An end to the fear of the bosses over you. Everybody can do what he wants with his life in America."

"There are no high or low in America. Even the President holds hands with Gedalyeh Mindel."

"Plenty for all. Learning flows free like milk and honey."

"Learning flows free."

The words painted pictures in my mind. I saw before me free schools, free colleges, free libraries, where I could learn and learn and keep on learning.

In our village was a school, but only for Christian children. In the schools of America I'd lift up my head and laugh and dance – a child with other children. Like a bird in the air, from sky to sky, from star to star, I'd soar and soar.

"Land! Land!" came the joyous shout.

"America! We're in America!" cried my mother, almost smothering us in her rapture.

All crowded and pushed on deck. They strained and stretched to get the first glimpse of the "golden country," lifting their children on their shoulders that they might see beyond them.

Men fell on their knees to pray. Women hugged their babies and wept. Children danced. Strangers embraced and kissed like old friends. Old men and women had in their eyes a look of young people in love.

Age-old visions sang themselves in me – songs of freedom of an oppressed people.

America! – America!

* * *

BETWEEN buildings that loomed like mountains, we struggled with our bundles, spreading around us the smell of the steerage. Up Broadway, under the bridge, and through the swarming streets of the ghetto, we followed Gedalyeh Mindel.

I looked about the narrow streets of squeezed-in stores and houses, ragged clothes, dirty bedding oozing out of the windows, ash-cans and garbage-cans cluttering the sidewalks. A vague sadness pressed down my heart – the first doubt of America.

"Where are the green fields and open spaces in America?" cried my heart. "Where is the golden country of my dreams?"

A loneliness for the fragrant silence of the woods that lay beyond our mud hut welled up in my heart, a longing for the soft, responsive earth of our village streets. All about me was the hardness of brick and stone, the stinking smells of crowded poverty.

"Here's your house with separate rooms like in a palace." Gedalyeh Mindel flung open the door of a dingy, airless flat.

"Oi weh!" my mother cried in dismay. "Where's the sunshine in America?"

She went to the window and looked out at the blank wall of the next house. "Gottuniu! Like in a grave so dark . . . "

"It ain't so dark, it's only a little shady." Gedalyeh Mindel lighted the gas. "Look only" – he pointed with pride to the dim gaslight. "No candles, no kerosene lamps in America, you turn on a screw and put to it a match and you got it light like with sunshine."

Again the shadow fell over me, again the doubt of America!

In America were rooms without sunlight, rooms to sleep in, to eat in, to cook in, but without sunshine. And Gedalyeh Mindel was happy. Could I be satisfied with just a place to sleep and eat in, and a door to shut people out – to take the place of sunlight? Or would I always need the sunlight to be happy?

And where was there a place in America for me to play? I looked out into the alley below and saw pale-faced children scrambling in the gutter. "Where is America?" cried my heart.

My eyes were shutting themselves with sleep. Blindly, I felt for the buttons on my dress, and buttoning I sank back in sleep again – the deadweight sleep of utter exhaustion.

"Heart of mine!" my mother's voice moaned above me. "Father is already gone an hour. You know how they'll squeeze from you a nickel for every minute you're late. Quick only!"

I seized my bread and herring and tumbled down the stairs and out into the street. I ate running, blindly pressing through the hurrying throngs of workers – my haste and fear choking each mouthful.

I felt a strangling in my throat as I neared the sweatshop prison; all my nerves screwed together into iron hardness to endure the day's torture.

For an instant I hesitated as I faced the grated window of the old dilapidated building – dirt and decay cried out from every crumbling brick.

In the maw of the shop, raging around me the roar and the clatter, the clatter and the roar, the merciless grind of the pounding machines. Half maddened, half deadened, I struggled to think, to feel, to remember – what am I – who am I – why was I here?

I struggled in vain – bewildered and lost in a whirlpool of noise.

"America – America – where was America?" it cried in my heart.

The factory whistle – the slowing-down of the machines – the shout of release hailing the noon hours.

I woke as from a tense nightmare – a weary waking to pain.

In the dark chaos of my brain reason began to dawn. In my stifled heart feelings began to pulse. The wound of my wasted life began to throb and ache. My childhood choked with drudgery – must my youth too die – un-lived?

The odor of herring and garlic – the ravenous munching of food – laughter and loud, vulgar jokes. Was it only I who was so wretched? I looked at those around me. Were they happy or only insensible to their slavery? How could they laugh and joke? Why were they not torn with rebellion against this galling grind – the crushing, deadening movements of the body, where only hands live and hearts and brains must die?

A touch on my shoulder. I looked up. It was Yetta Solomon from the machine next to mine.

"Here's your tea."

I stared at her, half hearing.

"Ain't you going to eat nothing?"

"Oi weh! Yetta! I can't stand it!" The cry broke from me. "I did n't come to America to turn into a machine. I came to America to make from myself a person. Does America want only my hands – only the strength of my body – not my heart – not my feelings – my thoughts?"

2. "Fear the Immigrant" From *Unguarded Gates* by Thomas Bailey Aldrich

Wide open and unguarded stand our gates,
And through them presses a wild motley
throng -
Men from the Volga and the Tartar steppes,
Featureless figures of the Hoang-Ho,
Malayan, Scythian, Teuton, Kelt, and Slav,
Flying the Old World's poverty and scorn;
These bringing with them unknown gods and
rites,
Those, tiger passions, here to stretch their
claws.
In street and alley what strange tongues are
Loud...

O Liberty, white Goddess! is it well
To leave the gates unguarded? ...
Lift the down-trodden, but with hand of steel
Stay those who to thy sacred portals come
To waste the gifts of freedom. Have a care
Lest from thy brow the clustered stars be torn
And trampled in the dust...

Name _____

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This assignment will be graded.**

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Questions for: “A Disillusioned Immigrant” Adapted from *Hungry Hearts* by Anzia Yezierska

1. What expectations did Anzia Yezierska and her family have?

2. What caused her first doubts about America?

3. Do you think that her experiences in America were typical for most immigrants in the 1800's and early 1900's? Why?

Questions for “Fear the Immigrant” by Thomas Bailey Aldrich

1. How does Aldrich picture the United States in the first stanza?

2a. Where do members of the “motley throng” come from?

2b. What and the two frightening things they bring with them?

3. What consequence is Aldrich most worried about?

4. What laws were passed to guard the gates?

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