

# Opening or Closing the Golden Door?: America Reacts to the New Immigrants

Notes on the New Immigrants:

Notes on the portrayal of the new immigrants in contemporary political cartoons

Read the description of each of the major immigration acts passed between 1865 and 1924. For each law:

- Circle---Who is being allowed or restricted from immigrating to the United States
- Underline---How the law is being enforced
- !=For anything that surprises you
- ?=For anything you do not understand or raises questions in your mind

## Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)

- Suspended all Chinese Immigration for 10 years
- Declared that Chinese immigrants were ineligible for naturalization
- Made permanent in 1902

## Federal immigration Law (1882)

- Office of Immigration created, established as part of the U.S. Treasury Department, this new office is later given authority over naturalization and moved to the U.S. Justice Department.
- Forbade criminals, paupers, and the insane to immigrate to the United States
- Required immigrants to prove that they would not become a “public charge” (those unable to support themselves.
- Later amended to include the insane, polygamists, prostitutes, alcoholics, anarchists, and those possessing contagious diseases, epileptics, professional beggars, imbeciles, the feeble-minded, tuberculars, persons with physical or mental defects, and persons under age 16 without parents are excluded.

## Contract Labor Law (1885)

- Prohibited the importation of workmen under contract

## Gentleman’s Agreement (1908)

- Denied passports to Japanese laborers wishing to come to the United States. In return, California promised to repeal school segregation laws directed at Japanese students

## Immigration Act of 1917

- All immigrants 16 years of age or older must demonstrate the ability to read a forty-word passage in their native language. Also, virtually all Asian immigrants were banned from entry into the United States. Vetoed by President’s Cleveland, Taft, and Wilson. Passed over President Wilson’s veto.

## Quota Act (1921)

- An annual immigration ceiling is set at 350,000
- A new nationality quota is instituted, limiting admissions to 3 percent of each nationality group's representation in the 1910 census.
- The law is designed primarily to restrict the flow of immigrants coming from eastern and southern Europe.

## Immigration Act of 1924

- A total quota of immigrants allowed into the United States was set at 164,000 per year
- Limited the number of immigrants entering the United States to 2% of each foreign born nationality living in the United States in 1890
- Cut the quota for northern and western European countries by 29%
- Cut the quota for southern and eastern Europe by 87%
- Prohibited any and all immigration from Japan

# The Museum of American Immigration

You have been invited to contribute to the new exhibit at the Museum of American Immigration. The museum is developing an exhibit on the New Immigrants of 1880-1925 that focuses on the reasons they came, their treatment in the United States, and the various reactions to their presence.

Your exhibit must include at least five items that would help a visitor to the museum understand the new Immigrants. Exhibits may include artifacts, documents, maps, biographies, or any other materials that help people understand the importance of the new immigrants. Consider the countries of origin for these immigrants, examples of them being accepted/rejected into American culture, and other characteristics of their journey over or stay in the United States.

Item Description	Justification for Inclusion in the Exhibit