

American Diversity

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Warm-up Activity:

Which of the families above is American? *(Explain your thinking)*

Key Terms:

E Pluribus Unum –

Diversity –

E Pluribus Unum – Out of Many, One

African Americans

In 1619, a group of about 20 West Africans was brought to Jamestown, Virginia to be temporary servants. However, enslaved Africans quickly became the preferred labor source of European settlers as the brutal practice of slavery spread. By 1680, there were 7,000 African slaves in the American colonies, and by 1790, the number of slaves in the United States would grow to 700,000. Congress outlawed the external slave trade in 1808, but the internal slave trade continued until the end of the Civil War (1861-1865). Nearly 4-million enslaved people were freed at the end of the Civil War, but the path to full citizenship would be long and difficult for African Americans.

Asian Americans

During the mid-1800s, a significant number of Asian immigrants settled in the United States. Inspired by news of the California gold rush, some 25,000 Chinese had migrated there by the early 1850s. However, Asian immigrants were not always welcomed. One of the first significant pieces of federal legislation aimed at restricting immigration was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which banned Chinese laborers from coming to America. European Americans in California had pushed for the new law, partly because they blamed Chinese workers for a decline in wages. It would take 40 years for Congress to pass a new immigration policy that stopped excluding Chinese immigrants.

European Americans

In 1607, the English founded their first permanent settlement in America at Jamestown in the Virginia Colony. A wave of European immigration occurred from around 1815 to 1865. The majority of these newcomers came from Northern and Western Europe, with about one-third coming from Ireland, and many others coming from Germany. Beginning in the 1890s, many immigrants from Central, Eastern and Southern Europe came to the United States. By 1920 more than 4-million Italians had entered the United States. Jews from Eastern Europe fleeing religious violence also arrived in large numbers, with over 2-million entering the United States between 1880 and 1920.

Latino Americans

The history of Latino migration to the U.S. is rooted in America's territorial expansion. Technically, the first large group of Latino immigrants to enter the U.S. came just after most of the modern border between the U.S. and Mexico was established at the end of the Mexican-American War (1846-1848). Under the terms of the Treaty of that ended the war, Mexico was forced to give up more than one-third of its territory, including the land that is now California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas. The treaty also offered US citizenship to nearly 100,000 former citizens of Mexico who chose to remain north of the new border at the end of the war. Today, there are well over 50-million Latino Americans.

Native Americans

The ancestors of modern Native Americans hiked over a land bridge from Asia to what is now Alaska more than 12,000 years ago. By the time European explorers arrived in the 15th century, scholars estimate that more than 10 million people lived in the area that is now the United States. However, European immigrants devastated many Native American communities through disease, slavery, and war. As the United States expanded westward, Native American tribes were forced by the US government to leave their homelands and to move onto reservations. Today, there are over 500 federally recognized Native American tribes in the United States.

Adapted from:

<http://www.history.com/topics/u-s-immigration-before-1965>

<http://www.history.com/topics/native-american-history/native-american-cultures>

<https://www.nps.gov/heritageinitiatives/latino/latinothemestudy/immigration.htm>