

**Aim:** What can primary sources tell us about how people responded to the challenges of immigration in the decades around the turn of the 20th century?

**Materials:** *How the Other Half Lives*, Jacob Riis; photographs of immigrants from other sources; correspondence letters between immigrant/emigrant household members from Poland; letters from the *Bintel Brief* series in the *Jewish Daily Forward*. ADD A SETTLEMENT HOUSE SOURCE and a source from (workmen's circle? mutual aid society?)

**Objectives:** each experience captures a truth about the impact of the rapid rise of immigrant populations, the conditions they found here, the separations from the larger society they found and from those they left behind, and the lives they constructed. While there was great poverty and inhuman working conditions, there were also responses to these challenges by the immigrants themselves and by many in the larger society who wished to see them assimilate.

**Questions for each source:**

- who is the intended audience of this source? who is prepared for? who was expected to see / read it?
- what is the subject of the source? what information is it intended to convey, and what's the evidence?
- what evidence is there of persuasion to an argument, position, or idea - and what is the idea? what do you think the intended audience was supposed to think about?
- how successful do you think the source in conveying (putting out there) the intended persuasion or idea?
- is there evidence of bias? do you think the bias can be justified?
- to what extent do you think the source accurately portrays its subject?

**Method:**

- small groups are each given a source for 15 minutes, and will answer the questions provided.
- each group will be distributed the remaining materials, will listen to report, and will have three minutes to challenge or defend the reporter group
- class will summarize evidence based on 4 concepts:
  - evidence of desperation and despair
  - evidence of immigrants' efforts and perceptions to improve their lives
  - evidence of non-immigrant society to try to improve lives
  - evidence of success or failure in achieving goals

**Summarize:** To what extent do any of the primary sources tell us a true story of the American immigrants' experience around the turn of the 20th century?