

READING CLOSELY GRADE 8 UNIT TEXTS

IMPORTANT NOTE: Because of the ever-changing nature of website addresses, the [resources](#) may no longer be available through the suggested links. Teachers and students can relocate these texts through web searches using the information provided.

AUTHOR	DATE	PUBLISHER	L	NOTES
Text #1: Ellis Island (Photos)				
Unknown	1902-13	NY Public Library	NA	Historical photos of immigrants being processed at Ellis Island provide rich details for scanning.
Text #2: Description of Ellis Island (Informational Text)				
Jacob Riis	1903 (?)	Publisher Unknown	1010L	Short passage describes immigrants leaving Ellis Island; provides descriptive and narrative details; accessible text.
Text #3: Ellis Island: Deconstructed (Video)				
History Channel	Unknown	History.com	NA	Short informational video "deconstructs" Ellis Island history; mixes imagery and factual text.
Text #4: Interactive Tour of Ellis Island (Website)				
Scholastic	NA	Scholastic	910L	Contains multiple resources and media related to immigration; combines imagery and text.
Text #5: On the Trail of the Immigrant, Ch. V (Informational Text)				
Edward Steiner	1906	Fleming H. Revel	1650L	Descriptive/narrative excerpt written by a professor/researcher; provides rich detail and immigrants' perspective.
Text #6: The Future in America, Ch. III (Literary Nonfiction)				
H. G. Wells	1906	Harper & Brothers	1410L	Excerpt provides subjective description of Ellis Island from a foreigner's perspective; complex language and syntax.
Text #7: The Promised Land, Ch. IX (Personal Narrative)				
Mary Antin	1912	Houghton Mifflin	900L	Narrative excerpt describes young girl's first experiences in America.
Text #8: Rebels into Anarchy, Ch. I (Personal Narrative)				
Marie Ganz & Nat Ferber	1920	Dodd, Mead and Co.	1240L	Narrative excerpt presents a woman's recollection of her first visit to America; juxtaposed viewpoints.
Text #9: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, Ch. XI (Personal Narrative)				
Frederick Douglass	1845	Boston Anti-slavery Office	1280L	Narrative excerpt details a slave's thoughts and emotions before and after he escapes to New York.
Extended Reading: The New Colossus (Poem)				
Emma Lazarus	1883	NA	1180L	Sonnet commemorates the installation of the Statue of Liberty; rich description and allusion; idealistic perspective.
Extended Reading: America (Poem)				
Claude McKay	1922	Harcourt, Brace and company	NA	Sonnet describes love/hate relationship of Jamaican-born poet with his adopted homeland; rich imagery and language.



TEXT #1

Photos from Ellis Island

Author Unknown

New York Public Library Digital Gallery

Early 20th Century



© New York Public Library

Photo 1

<http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/>



© New York Public Library

Photo 2

<http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/>



TEXT #2

Description of Immigrants Leaving Ellis Island

Jacob Riis

Publisher Unknown, 1903 (?)

<http://library.thinkquest.org/20619/Past.html>

The railroad ferries come and take their daily host straight from Ellis Island to the train, ticketed now with the name of the route that is to deliver them at their new homes, West and East. And the Battery boat comes every hour for its share. Then the **many-hued** procession - the women are hooded, one and all, in their **gayety** shawls for the entry - is
5 led down on a long pathway divided in the middle by a wire screen, from behind which come **shrieks** of recognition from fathers, brothers, uncles, and aunts that are gathered there in the holiday **togs** of Mulberry or Division Street. The contrast is sharp; an artist would say all in favor of the newcomers. But they would be the last to agree with him. In another week the rainbow colors will have been laid aside, and the landscape will be
10 poorer for it. On the boat they meet their friends, and the long journey is over, the new life begun. Those who have no friends run the **gauntlet** of the **boarding-house** runners, and take their chances with the new freedom, unless the missionary or "the society" of their people holds out a helping hand. For at the barge-office gate Uncle Sam lets go. Through it they must walk alone.



TEXT #3

Ellis Island: Deconstructed **The History Channel**

<http://www.history.com/videos/ellis-island-deconstructed#ellis-island-deconstructed>

TEXT #4

Interactive Tour of Ellis Island **Scholastic**

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/immigration/tour/index.htm>



TEXT #5

On the Trail of the Immigrant

Edward Steiner

Fleming H. Revel, 1906

<http://archive.org/details/ontrailimmigran03steigoog>

Excerpt: Chapter V

AT THE GATEWAY

The barges on which the immigrants are towed towards the island are of a somewhat **P1 antiquated** pattern, and if I remember rightly have done service in the Castle Garden days, and before that some of them at least had done full service for **excursion** parties up and down Long Island Sound. The structure towards which we sail and which gradually **5** rises from the surrounding sea is rather **imposing**, and impresses one by its **utilitarian dignity** and by its plainly expressed official character.

With tickets fastened to our caps and to the dresses of the women, and with our own **P2** bills of landing in our trembling hands, we pass between rows of uniformed attendants, and under the huge **portal** of the vast hall where the final judgment awaits us. We are **10** cheered somewhat by the fact that assistance is promised to most of us by the agents of various National Immigrant Societies who seem both watchful and efficient.



Mechanically and with quick movements, we are examined for general physical defects and for the dreaded **trachoma**, an eye disease, the prevalence of which is greater in the imagination of some **statisticians** than it is on board immigrant vessels. **P3**

15 From here we pass into passageways made by iron railings, in which only lately, through the intervention of a humane official, benches have been placed, upon which, closely crowded, we await our passing before the inspectors. **P4**

Already a sifting process has taken place; and children who clung to their mother's skirts have disappeared, families have been divided, and those remaining intact, cling to **20** each other in a really tragic fear that they may share the fate of those previously examined. **P5**

A Polish woman by my side has suddenly become aware that she has one child less clinging to her skirts, and she implores me with **agonizing** cries, to bring it back to her. In a strange world, at the very entrance to what is to be her home, without the protection of her husband, without any knowledge of the English language, and with no one taking the **25** trouble to explain to her the reason, the child was snatched from her side. Somewhere it is bitterly crying for its mother, and each is unconscious of the other's fate. **P6**



TEXT #6

The Future In America: A Search After Realities

H. G. Wells

Harper & Brothers, 1906

<http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/3188262?n=59&imagesize=1200&jp2Res=.25&printThumbnails=no>

Excerpt: Chapter III, Section III, pp. 43-46

I visited Ellis Island yesterday. It chanced to be a good day for my purpose. For the first **P1** time in its history this filter of immigrant humanity has this week proved inadequate to the demand upon it. It was choked, and half a **score** of **gravid** liners were lying uncomfortably up the harbor, **replete** with twenty thousand or so of crude Americans from Ireland, and **5** Poland, and Italy, and Syria, and Finland, and Albania; men, women, children, dirt, and bags together...

...Here is a huge, gray, and tidy waiting room, like a big railway depot room full of a **P2** sinister crowd of miserable people, loafing about or sitting dejectedly, whom America refuses, and here a second and third, such chamber each with its tragic and evil-looking **10** crowd that hates us, and that even ventures to groan and hiss at us, a little four hour glimpse of its large dirty spectacle of hopeless failure, and here, **squalid** enough indeed, but still to some degree hopeful, are the appeal cases as yet undecided...

The central hall is the key of this impression. All day long, through an **intricate** series **P3** of metal pens, the long **procession** files, step by step, bearing bundles and trunks and



15 boxes, past this examiner and that, past the quick, alert medical officers, the **tallymen** and the clerks. At every point immigrants are being picked out and set aside for further medical examination, for further questions, for the busy little courts; but the main procession satisfies conditions, passes on. It is a daily procession that, with a yard of space to each, would stretch over three miles, that in any week in the year would more than equal in
20 numbers that daily procession of the unemployed that is becoming a regular feature of London in winter, that in a year could put a **cordon** round London or New York of close-marching people, could populate a new Boston. What in a century will it all amount to?...

On they go, from this pen to that, pen by pen, towards a desk at a little metal **wicket** - P4
the gate of America. Through this metal wicket drips the immigration stream - all day
25 long, every two or three seconds an immigrant, with a valise or a bundle, passes the little desk and goes on past the well-managed money-changing place, past the carefully organized separating ways that go to this railway or that, past the guiding, protecting officials - into a new world. The great majority are young men and young women, between seventeen and thirty, good, youthful, hopeful, peasant stock. They stand
30 in a long string, waiting to go through that wicket, with bundles, with little tin boxes, with cheap **portmanteaus**, with odd packages, in pairs, in families, alone, women with children, men with strings of dependents, young couples. All day that string of human beads waits there, jerks forward, waits again; all day and every day, constantly replenished, constantly dropping the end beads through the wicket, till the units mount to
35 hundreds and the hundreds to thousands...

Yes, Ellis Island is quietly **immense**. It gives one a visible image of one aspect at least P5
of this world-large process of filling and growing and **synthesis**, which is America.



TEXT #7

The Promised Land

Mary Antin

Houghton Mifflin, 1912

<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/20885>

Excerpt: Chapter IX

Our **initiation** into American ways began with the first step on the new soil. My father **P1** corrected us even on the way from the pier to Wall Street, which journey we made crowded together in a **rickety** cab. He told us not to lean out of the windows, not to point, and explained the word greenhorn. We did not want to be **greenhorns**. So we paid the **5** strictest attention to my father's instructions.

The first meal was an **object lesson** of much variety. My father produced several kinds **P2** of food, ready to eat, without any cooking, from little cans that had printing all over them. He tried to introduce us to a queer, slippery kind of fruit, which he called a banana. But he had to give it up for the time being. After the meal he had better luck with a curious **10** piece of furniture on runners, which he called a rocking chair. There were five of us newcomers, and we found five different ways of getting into the American machine of **perpetual** motion and as many ways of getting out of it. We laughed over various experiments with the **novelty**, which was a wholesome way of letting off steam after the unusual excitement of the day.



15 In our flat there was no bathtub. So in the evening of the first day my father conducted **P3** us to the public baths. As we moved along in a little **procession**, I was delighted with the lighting of the streets. So many lamps, and they burned until morning, my father said, and so people did not need to carry lanterns. In America, then, everything was free; the streets were as bright as a synagogue on a holy day. Music was free; we had been serenaded, to **20** our delight, by a brass band of many pieces soon after our installation on Union Place.

Education was free. That subject my father had written about repeatedly as comprising **P4** his chief hope for us children, the **essence** of American opportunity, the treasure that no thief could touch, not even misfortune or poverty. On our second day I was thrilled with the realization of what this freedom of education meant.

25 A little girl from across the alley came and offered to conduct us to school. My father **P5** was out, but we five between us had a few words of English by this time. We knew the word school. We understood. This child, who had never seen us till yesterday, who could not pronounce our names, who was able to offer us the freedom of the schools of Boston! No application made, no questions asked, no examinations, rulings, exclusions; no fees.

30 The doors stood open for every one of us. The smallest child could show us the way. This incident impressed me more than anything I had heard in advance of the freedom of education in America.

Even the **interval** on Union Place was crowded with lessons and experiences. We had **P6** to visit the stores and be dressed from head to foot in American clothing. We had to **35** learn the mysteries of the iron stove, the washboard, and the speaking tube. We had to learn to trade with the fruit peddler through the window and not to be afraid of the policeman. And, above all, we had to learn English.



TEXT #8

Rebels: Into Anarchy And Out Again

Marie Ganz and Nat J. Ferber

Dodd, Mead and Company, 1920

<http://archive.org/details/rebelsintoanarc00ferbgoog>

Excerpt: Chapter I

It was a home of two tiny rooms. The room in the rear was not much larger than a P1
 good-sized clothes closet, and not the stuffiest of closets could be more lacking in sunlight
 and air. The walls were as blank as an underground dungeon's. There was neither window
 nor **ventilating** shaft. The room In front, almost twice as large, though half a dozen steps
 5 would have brought anybody with full-grown legs across its entire length, was a kitchen
 and living-room by day, a bedroom by night. Its two little windows gave a view of a
 narrow, stone-paved court and, not ten feet away, the rear wall of another **tenement**. The
 sunlight never found its way into that little court. By day it was dim and damp, by night a
 fearsome place, black and **sepulchral**.

10 In this little bit of a home lived five persons, my father and mother, myself, my baby P2
 brother, and Schmeel, our boarder. What squalid home in New York's crowded ghetto is
 without its boarder? How can that ever-present **bogy**, the rent, be met without him? He
 must be wedged in somehow, no matter how little space there may be. My father had
 established this home, our first in the New World, through God knows how much toil and
 15 worry and self-sacrifice. It took him two years to do it, and he must have **haggled** with all



the bartering instinct of his race over the price of many a banana in the stock on his pushcart in Hester Street before his little hoard of savings had grown large enough to hire and furnish those two miserable rooms and to send tickets to his family in Galicia.

I was only five years old when in the summer of 1896 we joined him in America, but I **P3**
20 remember well the day when he met us at Ellis Island. He was like a stranger to me, for I had been not much more than a baby when he left us on our **Galician** farm, but no child could be on distant terms with him long. Children took to him at once. He understood them, and was never so happy as when joining in their play. A quiet, **unobtrusive** man was my father, tall and slender, with a short yellow beard and mild blue eyes, and I have
25 not forgotten the childlike glow of happiness that was in his face as he welcomed us.

I suppose it is the experience of most people that among the little scraps of our past **P4**
lives that we carry with us the most insignificant things are apt to stand out more clearly than others of greater moment. I have found it so. I like to go **groping** into the past now and then, stirred by curiosity as to how far memory will carry me. It is a fascinating game,
30 this of peering into the dim **vistas** of the long ago, where the mists of time are shifting as if blown by the wind. Now against the far horizon one scene stands out clearly, then another, as the mists fall apart and close again. Now the perfume of flowers comes to me, and I see our garden in front of the old Galician home — the bright little spot which is all I remember of the Old World. Now a breath of salt air is in my face, and I see a rolling sea
35 and a distant, low-lying shore — my one memory of our journey to America.

But however disconnected and far apart the few scenes that still come back to me **P5**
from the first years of my life, I have glimpses of our arrival in New York that are as vivid as if it had been only yesterday. In a quiet hour alone I wave the years away, and I am a child



again, trudging along beside my father, who, weighted down with the great rolls of
40 bedding we had brought with us from the old home, is guiding us through strange, noisy streets. I am staring in wonder at the great buildings and the never-ending crowds of people. I am frightened, **bewildered**, ready to cry. I keep a tiny hand twisted in the tail of my father's coat, fearing to lose him.

45 At last we turn into a dark, dirty alley, which runs like a tunnel under a tenement house **P6** and leads us to our future home in the building in the rear.

Oh, how hot and stuffy were those two little rooms that we entered! The city was **P7** scorching under one of the hot waves that bring such untold misery to the tenements. Not a breath of air stirred. The place was an oven. But, flushed with heat and perspiring
50 though he was, my father ushered us in with a great show of joy and enthusiasm. Suddenly his smile gave way to an expression that reflected bitter disappointment and injured pride as he became aware of the disgust which my mother could not conceal.

"So we have crossed half the world for this!" she cried, thinking bitterly of the **P8** comfortable farmhouse we had left behind us. I can see her now as she stood that
55 moment facing my father, her eyes full of **reproach** - a pretty, slender woman with thick, black hair and a face as fresh and smooth as a girl's.

I am sure it had never occurred to poor, dreamy, impractical Lazarus Ganz that his wife **P9** might be disappointed with the new home he had provided for her, or that he had ever fully realized how **squalid** it was. He was one of the most sensitive of men, and the look of
60 pain in his face as he saw the impression the place made on her filled me with pity for him, young as I was. A five-year-old child is not apt to carry many distinct memories from that age through life, but that scene I have never forgotten.



TEXT #9

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave Frederick Douglass Boston Anti-slavery Office, 1845

<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/23>

Excerpt: Chapter XI

Things went on without very smoothly indeed, but within there was trouble. It is **P1** impossible for me to describe my feelings as the time of my **contemplated** start drew near. I had a number of warmhearted friends in Baltimore,—friends that I loved almost as I did my life,—and the thought of being separated from them forever was painful beyond

5 expression. It is my opinion that thousands would escape from slavery, who now remain, but for the strong **cords** of affection that bind them to their friends. The thought of leaving my friends was decidedly the most painful thought with which I had to contend. The love of them was my tender point, and shook my decision more than all things else. Besides the pain of separation, the **dread** and **apprehension** of a failure exceeded what I

10 had experienced at my first attempt. The **appalling** defeat I then **sustained** returned to torment me. I felt assured that, if I failed in this attempt, my case would be a hopeless one—it would seal my fate as a slave forever. I could not hope to get off with any thing less than the severest punishment, and being placed beyond the means of escape. It required no very vivid imagination to depict the most frightful scenes through which I



15 should have to pass, in case I failed. The **wretchedness** of slavery, and the blessedness of freedom, were perpetually before me. It was life and death with me. But I remained firm, and, according to my **resolution**, on the third day of September, 1838, I left my chains, and succeeded in reaching New York without the slightest interruption of any kind. How I did so,—what means I adopted,—what direction I travelled, and by what mode of
20 **conveyance**,—I must leave unexplained, for the reasons before mentioned.

I have been frequently asked how I felt when I found myself in a free State. I have never **P2** been able to answer the question with any satisfaction to myself. It was a moment of the highest excitement I ever experienced. I suppose I felt as one may imagine the unarmed mariner to feel when he is rescued by a friendly **man-of-war** from the pursuit of a pirate. In
25 writing to a dear friend, immediately after my arrival at New York, I said I felt like one who had escaped a den of hungry lions. This state of mind, however, very soon **subsided**; and I was again seized with a feeling of great insecurity and loneliness. I was yet liable to be taken back, and subjected to all the tortures of slavery. This in itself was enough to damp the **ardor** of my enthusiasm. But the loneliness overcame me. There I was in the midst of
30 thousands, and yet a perfect stranger; without home and without friends, in the midst of thousands of my own brethren—children of a common Father, and yet I dared not unfold to any one of them my sad condition. I was afraid to speak to any one for fear of speaking to the wrong one, and thereby falling into the hands of money-loving kidnappers, whose business it was to lie in wait for the panting fugitive, as the ferocious



35 beasts of the forest lie in wait for their prey. The motto which I adopted when I started from slavery was this—"Trust no man!" I saw in every white man an enemy, and in almost every colored man cause for distrust. It was a most painful situation; and, to understand it, one must needs experience it, or imagine himself in similar circumstances. Let him be a fugitive slave in a strange land—a land given up to be the hunting-ground for

40 slaveholders—whose inhabitants are legalized kidnappers—where he is every moment subjected to the terrible **liability** of being seized upon by his fellowmen, as the hideous crocodile seizes upon his prey!—I say, let him place himself in my situation—without home or friends—without money or credit—wanting shelter, and no one to give it—wanting bread, and no money to buy it,—and at the same time let him feel that he is

45 pursued by merciless men-hunters, and in total darkness as to what to do, where to go, or where to stay,—perfectly helpless both as to the means of defense and means of escape,—in the midst of plenty, yet suffering the terrible **gnawings** of hunger,—in the midst of houses, yet having no home,—among fellow-men, yet feeling as if in the midst of wild beasts, whose greediness to swallow up the trembling and half-famished fugitive is only

50 equaled by that with which the monsters of the deep swallow up the helpless fish upon which they subsist,—I say, let him be placed in this most trying situation,—the situation in which I was placed,—then, and not till then, will he fully appreciate the hardships of, and know how to sympathize with, the toil-worn and whip-scarred fugitive slave.



EXTENDED READING

The New Colossus

Emma Lazarus

1883

<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/16111>

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
5 Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame,
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
10 With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"



EXTENDED READING

America
Claude McKay
Harcourt, Brace and company, 1922

<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/20221>

Although she feeds me bread of bitterness,
And sinks into my throat her tiger's tooth,
Stealing my breath of life, I will confess
I love this cultured hell that tests my youth!
5 Her vigor flows like tides into my blood,
Giving me strength erect against her hate.
Her bigness sweeps my being like a flood.
Yet as a rebel fronts a king in state,
I stand within her walls with not a shred
10 Of terror, malice, not a word of jeer.
Darkly I gaze into the days ahead,
And see her might and granite wonders there,
Beneath the touch of Time's unerring hand,
Like priceless treasures sinking in the sand.
