

Graphing Migration to Australia ¹

Background

Students use data from tables in order to graph the number of people moving from different world regions to Australia at various times. This activity provides background for a series of questions: where did people come from? When did they move from their homelands? for what reason? Where did they go in Australia? What influence did they have on regions they entered? After doing this activity, a student should be able to: 1) gather data from tables and construct a graph that shows the flow of immigrants into Australia from different parts of the world at different times in the past; 2) name the major ethnic groups that were migrating during selected time periods; 3) relate the position of various kinds of settlement frontiers with the ethnic origin of immigrants at various times; and 4) identify some of the push and pull factors that influenced the flow of migrants to Australia.

This activity can fit a geography unit on population composition (migration) or a history unit on international migration or the origins of ethnic groups in Australia. Its use of graphs and focus on ethnic diversity help the activity relate to several topics in mathematics, social studies, or government, and the use of written summaries can help support English classes.

Connection to the TEKS

Grade 6

6.3.A The student is expected to create thematic maps, graphs, charts, models, and databases depicting various aspects of world regions and countries.

6.4.B The student is expected to identify and explain the geographic factors responsible for patterns of population in places and regions

World Geography Studies

WG.7.B The student is expected to explain the political, social, economic and environmental factors that contribute to human migration...

WG.18.A The student is expected to describe the impact of general processes such as migration, war, trade, independent inventions and diffusion of ideas and motivations on cultural change.

WG.22.A The student is expected to design and draw appropriate maps and other graphics such as sketch maps, diagrams, tables, and graphs to present geographic information.

World History Studies

WH.11.A and B The student is expected to create thematic maps, graphs, charts, models, and databases representing various aspects of World History and Pose and answer questions about geographic distributions and patterns in World History shown on maps, graphs, charts, models, and databases.

Materials

- enclosed handout, data table, and Student Response Sheet
- CD unit on graphing immigration
- overhead transparencies of selected graphs for demonstration

Activities

1. Many factors cause people to migrate from one country to another.
 - ? What are some reasons why people move?
 - ? Why do people move to a new country? (looking for jobs, fleeing from war, persecution, etc)

¹ *Activities and Readings in the Geography of the World* (ArgWORLD).2002. Used with permission of Phillip Gersmehl and the Association of American Geographers.

When circumstances change, people may respond by moving toward places where they think conditions may be better. These common economic cause-and-effect patterns should not hide the fact that people may move for non-economic reasons. What determines satisfaction in a given location is called "place utility." It may consist of a combination of factors, including language, political stability, economic opportunity, religion, and/or amenities such as climate, schools, or recreation. This activity is designed to help answer questions about immigration by tracing the actual pattern of migration to Australia through history.

? Do you know anyone who has moved to your community in the last year or two?

? Where did they come from? Do you have any idea why they might have moved?

This activity is about migration between countries. We will start by looking at ways to show migration on a graph. This provides perspective for an analysis of specific issues involved in international migration.

This activity can also be started:

- by asking students to name some world regions that are sources of immigrants in recent years. For example, Miami, FL, has many people who came from Cuba, Nicaragua, and Haiti. Where are these countries? Why might people from these countries prefer Miami as a destination?
- by asking students to name which areas or states might have been most attractive to immigrants arriving in America or Australia at a specific time in history (say 1850, during the famines in Ireland, or 1880, when Industrialization was nearing its peak). What was pulling immigrants to Australia or the United States? Where was the settlement frontier during this time period?

2. Follow this checklist to proceed with the activity.

- 1) Get student attention with questions about ethnic origins and migration.
- 2) Use the CD to demonstrate how to graph information from the Data Table. Use a marker to plot a few numbers on the graph (reviewing the concept of x and y coordinates, if necessary).
- 3) Hand out the activity and have students chart immigration for Asia on the practice graph.
- 4) Have them "connect the dots" to show migration trend lines.
- 5) Explain some reasons for high and low migration years (tie this back to the opening discussion).
- 6) Have students copy their lines to the Response Sheet and answer the questions below the graph. Tell students to pay attention to the map of frontier location at different times in history.
- 7) Collect the Response Sheets and evaluate the results. The primary conclusion is that a series of immigration "waves" from different places at different times have given countries like the United States or Australia a complex mosaic of different ethnic groups in different parts of the country. Remind students that the purpose of the activity is not just to find out about the historical events that prompted international migrations. The goal of the activity is also to learn how an understanding of immigration trends can help us "see" ethnic distributions that can then help us interpret general-purpose maps on topics such as voting, religious preference, or cultural festivals.
- 8) If desired, extend by looking at other countries and/or by having students graph local migration, as inferred from county histories, church records, or cemeteries (supplementary Response Sheet.)

3. The primary skill in this activity is preparing a line graph from tabular data. Most middle-school students have already mastered this skill, but it is so important that we have made it a major part of this activity. To check student mastery, you could memorize the general immigration pattern on the completed Response Sheet, so that you can see quickly whether students have the same general graph pattern when they try to reproduce the pattern on their Response Sheets. Those who have difficulty should receive some discreet assistance, either in class or after school.

4. If students have difficulties, try to redirect them to focus on the push and pull factors of migration

Student: What should I do once I've decided which peak is highest?

(Mistaken response: "You might check a history book to see what immigrant group is most important in Australia" (This tends to reinforce the notion that gross numbers are the measure of

importance. Migration is important in Australian geography because different groups came at different times, when the settlement frontier was in different places.)

Redirection: Why not try to figure out what was happening in each country at the time most people were leaving? Maybe they had a war there. What else might make people leave?

Student: A revolution? a new ruler? a famine? (try to elicit some ideas about push factors)

Teacher: How about a new invention? Say somebody invented a new way to make clothing with much less work? Would that be a good thing?

Student: I suppose.

Teacher: But it could still have some bad effects for some people, if they relied on the old ways of making a living. They might even decide they have to move. If they do, what helps persuade them to go to a particular place? (now we're looking at pull factors -- family already there, new factories or mines, other job opportunities, etc.)

5. Check student accuracy in plotting data points.

Question 1. "Peaks" in the graph of immigration are usually related to world-wide historical events. For example, immigration usually declines during wars (although refugees are an exception), but increases with the development of mills; discoveries of gold; passage of the Homestead Act, with its promise of free land; and the expansion of railroads)

Question 2. Immigration and settlement frontiers are closely related. Many elements led to perceived opportunity and resulted in mass movement of people to specific places. The result is a mosaic of ethnic groups in many parts of the United States or Australia.

6. To extend and enrich this activity, one straightforward extension is to encourage students to trace their own family history and ethnicity, perhaps by interviewing a parent, grandparent, or other person. Did they come from a foreign country? which one? when? Have them map the route of migration. How does their family history fit in with the broad patterns indicated by national statistics?

Individual students or groups can study the migration from individual countries in greater detail. A Census Bureau publication called Historical Statistics of the United States has the raw statistical information needed to make a graph of immigration year-by-year, rather than in twenty-year increments.

Individual students or groups can take one of the national maps and try to find out background information that can help explain the patterns shown on the maps.

Individuals or groups can read and report on the experience of individual migrants. County Historical Societies often have books or diaries of early immigrants to the area. Telephone books and/or cemeteries are intriguing sources of information in some places – see supplementary Response Sheet. Many immigrant groups have maintained newspapers, clubs, and other associations; in fact, some long-dormant groups have been revived as people have become more aware of their immigrant "roots." Student investigations of these topics are especially suitable for class or poster presentations. This kind of presentation is also a good vehicle for teaching students about graphic techniques and map design.

Finally, students can speculate about future migrations. One especially useful activity is to give students the latitude-longitude coordinates of a location and ask them what they would pack in a container of a specific size if they were moving to that location. This question can trigger an investigation into the physical, biological, economic, political, and/or social geography of the destination. It can also, by inversion, shed some interesting light on the immigrant experience in the past ("if you are not sure whether to take a TV, radio, or CD player to the new country, because you don't know what kind of stations or stores they have there (or even what voltage the electricity is there), how much more difficult must it have been to decide what to take in a time before there was television, newspapers, or the Web to tell us about other places?)

Additional information

United Nations, Statistical Office, Demographic Yearbook. Warning: Not all countries report their data

Telephone book for name exploration; on-line phone books for other areas for extension

