

**Lessons from a unit focusing on a study of immigrants  
in the 1900s West End of Boston  
for  
“Primarily Teaching: Using Historical Documents to Teach Immigration”  
requirements**

- - - - -

**Lesson Title:** 1900s Boston at the Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: What was life like for the people living in the West End of Boston?

**Duration:** 50 minutes

**Sitting 1:** Familiarity with life in the West End of Boston in 1900 through photograph, maps, and charts reflecting life in the West End of Boston in 1900 comparing it to what we know of life on the north slope of Beacon Hill in 1818 and during the 1850s during fugitive slave times.

**Logistics:** Teacher-directed large group oral discussion based on targets contents on a bulletin board.

**Materials:**

- Environmental Print - - Bulletin board display and materials around the classroom containing:
  - 1951 map of Boston’s West End; 1983 map of Boston’s West End (prior to and after urban renewal in the West End of Boston)
  - 11x17 copy of 1900 U.S. Census MA Suffolk Boston Ward 8 ED 1257 Families 51-100
  - Photographic content related to the theme of these lessons: - West End Meat Market; a merchant pushcart peddling his wares; view of a North End street with businesses and children; a family doing piecework at home, a tenement building; book covers (“Paperboy” and “The Junkman’s Daughter”)
  - Boston Daily Globe articles: April 28, 1907 – “Record is Broken for Immigrants”; “Boston’s Record Week for Arriving Immigrants”; Article about arriving nationalities.
  - Chart – “Foreign-born Population in the United States: 1870-1920”

**Overall Understanding:** What would you like to know more about life in 1900s Boston?

- How are the streets of the West End neighborhood of Boston different before and after urban renewal?
- What was life like in a tenement?
- What can we learn about the reasons for children working through children’s books?
- Graph of Immigrants Arriving in Boston during one week in the early 1900s
- Using Foreign-born population in the United States 1870-1920, what do we know about 1900?

**Performance Understanding:** Creation of an artifact packet about a selected theme accomplished by gathering content information in Learning Center activities and while doing independent research. Application of content in varied writing activities highlighting skills in descriptive, persuasive, and informational writing.

- - - - -

**Lesson Title:** Reading the 1900 U.S. Census: What information was the U.S. Government looking for?

**Duration:** 50 minutes

**Sitting 1:** Familiarity with the content of the 1900 U.S. Census to determine its purpose to the U. S. government.

**Logistics:** Large group oral discussion; Small group analysis of assigned family data; Debriefing each group to the whole group. Debriefing of additional vocabulary or things about which one is not sure and would like to know more about.

**Materials:**

1900 U.S. Census Massachusetts Suffolk Boston Ward 8 Precinct 1 ED1257, sheet 4B, Families 69-78, NARA, Northeast Region, Publication T623 Roll 678

**Overall understanding:** How might knowing this information help the legislators better govern the American people?

**Performance Understanding:**

A written narrative comprised of what we know about these families. A metacognitive reflection of the classroom activity.

### *Part 1*

Large group activity:

Overall information the U.S. Government was looking for.

1. What types of information does one learn about the individual from the “Personal Description” category?
2. What would you learn about an individual from the “Nativity” category of data?
3. List the 3 categories of data for “Citizenship.”
4. List any 1900 occupations that are not popular occupations in 2009.
5. What could one learn about the “Education” of those enumerated?
6. What types of information do we know about the individuals from analyzing the last three columns to the right of the “Education” data?

Street specific information that might help the legislators better govern the American people.

1. How many families are living at 22 Lowell Street?
2. How many families are living at 20 Lowell Street?
3. How many families are living at 18 Lowell Street?
4. How many families are living at 24 Lowell Street?

### *Part 2*

Groups of 2 Activity: What do we know about these families?

Family specific information that might help the legislators better govern the American people.

- Family 70 – The Abraham Shindler Family
- Family 71 – The Simon Burnam Family
- Family 72 – The Matthew Carr Family
- Family 73 – The Barnet Robert Family
- Family 74 – The Solomon Rubin Family
- Family 75 – The Lena Navitz Family
- Family 76 – The William Grossman Family
- Family 77 – The Ella Michelson Family
- Family 78 – The Nathan Alshantzky Family

Sample Activity: Groups of 2: What do we know about these families?

Sample: What do we know about these families?

*Ida, Sophie, and Rosy belong to Family 69 living at 24 Lowell Street. We cannot distinguish their last name unless we have access to the sheet prior to this sheet. They are three sisters ages 4, 3, and 1 who were born in Boston, Massachusetts between 1895 and 1899. Their parents were born in Russia. Ida and Rosy have winter birthdays. Sophie was born in the spring. From this information we cannot tell if their parents are both alive and living with them. We cannot tell if the family rents or owns their home. We cannot tell if it is a farm or a house.*

### Part 3

Oral presentation of each family group to the entire group.

#### *Following the Activity*

#### **Homework Assignment: Self-assessment and Creating 1900 family data**

Self-Assessment: How to read and analyze a census form.

1. Give examples of two new concepts, ideas, or skills that you "know you know" since participating in this census analyzing activity?

Explain how you "know you know" it.

2. You have discovered an additional sheet from the census! Your challenge is to create its content using patterns of immigration that you observed from our group census reading activity. (Attach the completed 1900 U.S. Census to this sheet.)

On the blank 1900 U.S. Census Form, using factually accurate evidence from this time period, create the actual listing including information for what could be two realistic, but imaginary families living on Lowell Street in 1900. Mirror the way the information was recorded on our "real" census sheet.

You may include you and your family as one of the families.

4. Justify why you would expect the family types that you included as living on Lowell Street.

5. Prior to engaging in this activity, most of you had never analyzed a census record!

If you were to analyze another document, you would bring your prior learning experience to your new task.

From your perspective, what prior knowledge would be valuable for a novice to interpret information from a census list?

**Lesson Title:** Role playing readings from Immigrant Experiences

**Duration:** 40 minutes

**Sitting 1:**

**Logistics:** Students are handed a slip of paper with a description of a person and a real-life immigration problem from the early 1900s. How would the government know about these cases from information supplied on the census?

**Materials:** Adapted from the readings in Immigration, Select Documents and Case Records by Edith Abbott (Marciana Ripalis, Non-enforcement of Compulsory Education Law; The Immigrant Lodger (Domestic Immigrant Problem); Adult Education for Immigrants (Public School advertisement)

**Overall understanding:** Local, state, and national government are responsible for creating laws to protect the citizens.

Performance understanding:

**Lesson Title:** 1900s Boston at the Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A look at the occupations of children, ages 4-17 in Enumeration District 1257

**Duration:** 50 minutes

**Sitting 1:** Gaining knowledge about the life of children through the census data of 1900 and representing that data in a bar graph.

**Logistics:**

- For older learners – Part 1 of Sitting 2 is to sort and tally the data; Part 2 of Sitting 2 is to create a bar graph representing the Occupations of Children
- *For younger learners* – Sitting 2 has one part – Analysis of occupations
  - Small group “*Occupations of children ages 4-17*” Analysis Chart Activity - 1900 U.S. Census MA Suffolk Boston – Ward 8 Precinct – Enumeration District 1257”

**Materials:**

- 1900 U.S. Census Massachusetts Suffolk Boston Ward 8 Precinct 1 ED1257, *pages 1-42*, NARA, Northeast Region, Publication T623 Roll 678
- 1900 U.S. Census Massachusetts Suffolk Boston Ward 8 Precinct 1 ED1257, *sheet 4B*, Families 69-78, NARA, Northeast Region, Publication T623 Roll 678
- **For younger learners:** A pre-sorted and tallied teacher-created grid with columns - Age (children ages 4-17), Occupation: at school; Occupation: not listed; Occupation: varies
  - For older learners: Blank grid ready-to-fill-in with data for tallying activity before analysis can be done.
- Analysis of Chart Activity

**Overall understanding:** In 1900 some children worked instead of going to school.

Performance Understanding:

## SITTING 3

1. Lesson Activity: Create a bar graph representing the Occupations of Children Ages 4-17 in Ward 8 Precinct 1 ED1257

**Lesson Title:** Reading the 1900 U.S. Census: What information was the U.S. Government looking for?

**Duration:** 50 minutes

Logistics:

Materials:

**Overall understanding:** How might knowing this information help the legislators better govern the American people?

Performance Understanding:

Option 2 Form – Tallied Data

1900 U.S. Census Massachusetts Suffolk Boston Ward 8 Precinct 1 – <i>Enumeration District 1257</i>			
Age	Occupation: At School	Occupation: Not Listed	Occupation: Varies
4	6		
5	10	27	
6	36	4	
7	37	3	
8	40	1	
9	27		
10	42		
11	34		
12	23		
13	22	1	
14	28	1	<b>8 -</b> At home – 1; Clerk – 2; Printing helper – 1; Messenger boy – 1; Plumber – 1; Millinery store – 1; Coat operator - 1
15	16	1	<b>12 -</b> Tailor, old clothing – 1; Jeweler – 1; Clerk, hotel – 1; Ladies tailor – 1; Chocolate dipper – 2; Clerk, paperstore – 1; Helper in store – 1; Helper in pants store – 1; College – 1; Office boy – 1; Cork maker - 1
16	11	4	<b>47 -</b> White goods – 1; Furniture dealer – 1; Cigar store – 1; Gas lamp store – 1; Finisher on coats – 3; Finishing clothing – 1; Selling newspapers – 1; At home – 3; Pants factory – 1; Pants maker – 1; Bookkeeper – 1; Dress making – 11; Vest finisher – 2; Clerk – 1; Housework – 2; Housekeeper – 2; Office boy – 3; Plasterer – 2; Day laborer – 1; Chocolate dipper – 2; Sales, Dry Goods – 2; Millinery Store – 1; Shoemaker – 1; Freight hauler – 1; Teamster - 1
17		2	<b>29 -</b> Seamstress – 1; Carpenter – 1; Peddler – 1; Finisher, coats – 4; Pants finisher – 1; Saleslady clerk – 1; Housekeeper – 1; Selling flowers – 1; Millinery – 1; Shirt waist maker – 1; Cook in Restaurant – 1; Housework – 2; Lineman – 1; Marble work – 1; At home – 2; Day laborer – 1; Mattress maker – 1; Messenger boy – 2; Pedler – 1; Bell boy – 1; Salesman, rag goods – 1; Teamster – 1; Cork maker - 1

*Option 1 Form - Data to Tally*

1900 U. S. Census Massachusetts Suffolk Boston Ward 8 Precinct 1 –  
*Enumeration District 1257 – pages 1-42*

<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation: At School</b>	<b>Occupation: Not Listed</b>	<b>Occupation: Varies</b>
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			

## *“Occupations of children ages 4-17”* Analysis Chart Activity

1900 U.S. Census MA Suffolk Boston – Ward 8 Precinct – Enumeration District 1257

In groups of 2, according to the data on this grid:

How many children Ages 4-17 are listed “At School” under the “Occupation” column? (In narrative, explain how you determined this total.)	#
How many children Ages 4-17 are listed “Not Listed” under the “Occupation” column? (In narrative, explain how you determined this total.)	#
How many children Ages 4-17 are “Varies” under the “Occupation” column? (In narrative, explain how you determined this total.)	#
What is the total number of children Ages 4-17 enumerated in District 1257 in the 1900 U. S. Census” (In narrative, explain how you determined this total.)	#
List evidence of 4 occupations related to the garment industry, making new clothing.	
List evidence 2 occupations related to being in the trades.	
List evidence of 4 jobs related to working in a store.	
List evidence of 2 jobs related to working in an office.	
List evidence of 4 jobs related to working outside.	
From what you have learned so far about the work of children at the turn of the century, predict why and what the individuals listed as “at home” and “housework” might be doing in the house as a work.	
Without knowing the legal ages to be able to attend and disengage from school in Boston in 1900, what predictions might you make about the required school ages for children in 1900 from this data?	

