

**Antonina’s World: Eastern European Immigration
For Grade 2
Introduction**

This mini unit is about a real Polish young woman named Antonina Osmola. She moved from Poland to Turners Falls, Massachusetts in 1905. The unit has 4 sessions: a pre-lesson where students explore why people chose to leave Eastern Europe, a session about Antonina’s life in Poland and her trip to America, a session about her life in Turners Falls, Massachusetts, and a final activity where students write pretend postcards to pretend relatives still living in Poland to tell them about life in America.

Images appear in a slideshow and in the lesson outlines so that they can be printed and shared in whatever way works best for the teacher and students.

It would be helpful if students have studied Ellis Island before doing this mini-unit.

Note to teachers: many men left Eastern Europe to avoid being drafted into the army. The Massachusetts History and Social Science Frameworks don’t mention this in their clarification statement but it is important to know.

Further Information

[How the Polish Immigrants Came to New England](#)

Massachusetts History and Social Studies Frameworks

Topic 3. History: migrations and cultures [2.T3]

Supporting Question: What are the different reasons people choose to settle in a community?

1. Investigate reasons why people migrate (move) to different places around the world, recognizing that some migration is voluntary, some forced (e.g., refugees, people driven from their homelands, enslaved people).

Clarification statement: Students might explore newspaper articles, stories, or informational texts in which people migrate or move in order to solve a problem, such as moving to be closer to relatives and friends, to be safe, to find a less expensive, healthier, or better place to live, to find work or education, to be free to practice a religion. Identifying the types of problems people face that might be addressed by migration supports the understanding of problem-solving skills. As they study history in the later elementary grades, students will learn about many instances of voluntary and forced migrations.

2. Give examples of why the United States is called “a nation of immigrants”.

Clarification Statement: This topic continues the theme of diversity from grade 1. It lends itself to many connections with language arts and an exploration of books about diversity and

immigration. Students will learn more about the diversity of the United States in grades 3 through 5, 8, and high school.

3. Conduct interviews with family members, neighbors, friends, or school staff to discover where their families came from, how and why they moved to where they now live, and when and why their families came to Massachusetts.

Clarification Statement: Students should be able to explain why people move to a new location or stay in a particular location. They learn about what, in some cases, attracts people to a certain location (i.e., “pull factors”) and what, in other cases, forces people to move to a new location (i.e., “push factors”).

4. Identify what individuals and families bring with them (e.g., memories, cultural traits, goods, ideas, and languages or ways of speaking) when they move to a different place and identify the significant impacts of migration; identify elements that define the culture of a society (e.g., language, literature, arts, religion, traditions, customs); explain how the community is enriched by contributions from all the people who form it today.

Clarification Statement: Students should be able to give examples of traditions or customs from other countries practiced in the United States today, with a focus on the cultures represented in the class and what those cultures have contributed to U.S. society; describe traditional foods, customs, games, and music of the place they, their family, or their ancestors came.