

A photograph of the Benjamin Harrison Presidential Site, a large, ornate red brick house with a blue balcony and American flags. The image has a torn paper edge effect.

# Nation of Immigration

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Lesson Guide

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BENJAMIN HARRISON PRESIDENTIAL SITE

#23<sup>RD</sup>  
IN  
THE 21<sup>ST</sup>

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# Nation of Immigration

The United States has long been known as a nation of immigrants, but it is important to acknowledge that indigenous nations lived on this land long before European settlers arrived. Immigration policies have evolved over time, with early laws such as the Nationality Act of 1790 and the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 shaping naturalization and deportation rules. The Chinese Exclusion Act and the Immigration Act of 1882 were among the first federal laws to restrict specific groups from immigrating to the U.S., reflecting ongoing racial and ethnic discrimination in immigration policies. Benjamin Harrison played a significant role in organizing federal immigration by establishing the first Federal Immigration Bureau and overseeing the creation of Ellis Island as a major processing center. His efforts led to the Immigration Act of 1891, which centralized immigration oversight and contributed to the future establishment of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Ellis Island processed millions of immigrants, and the system put in place by President Harrison laid the foundation for modern immigration enforcement and naturalization services in the U.S. Today, immigration remains a central issue in American politics, with debates on how to balance national security with accessible legal pathways to citizenship. The discussion continues on how to regulate immigration while maintaining the country's legacy as a beacon of hope for people seeking safety and opportunity. President Harrison's contributions to immigration policy serve as a reminder that America's identity is deeply rooted in its immigrant history, shaping the nation across generations.



BENJAMIN HARRISON  
PRESIDENTIAL SITE



## Nation of Immigration

# Materials and Outline

### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Indiana State Standards

4.H.10 Describe the transformation of Indiana through immigration and developments in agriculture, industry, and transportation.

4.G.8 Identify immigration patterns into and out of the state, and describe the impact diverse ethnic/native/cultural groups have had and currently have on Indiana.

4.G.9 Address misconceptions and misperceptions of Native Americans, Africans, early settlers, and other immigrant groups historically and currently.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Indiana State Standards

5.C.3 Identify and explain key ideas about government as noted in the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, Northwest Ordinance, United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. (E)

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Indiana State Standards

8.H.15 Define nationalism and explain how it affected domestic policy, foreign policy, and the development of an industrial economy during this period. Examples: Monroe Doctrine, American System.

8.H.19 Give examples of how immigration affected American culture in the decades before and after the Civil War, including growth of industrial sites in the North; religious differences; tensions between middle-class and working-class people, particularly in the Northeast; and intensification of cultural differences between the North and the South.

8.H.20 Give examples of the changing role of women, minorities, and immigrants in the northern, southern, and western parts of the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, and examine possible causes for these changes. (E)

### US Government and History Indiana State Standards

USG.3.9 Analyze the election of Benjamin Harrison, his approach to the presidency, his relationship to the legislative branch, and his re-election defeat, considering the effects of party politics and public opinion.

USG.5.8 Use information from a variety of sources to describe and discuss current American political issues.

USH.2.6 Describe and assess the contribution of Indiana's only president, Benjamin Harrison, to national policies on environmental protection, business regulation, immigration, and civil rights.

USH.3.6 Describe the experiences of migrants from Europe, Asia, and the southern United States as they encountered and interacted with their new communities.