

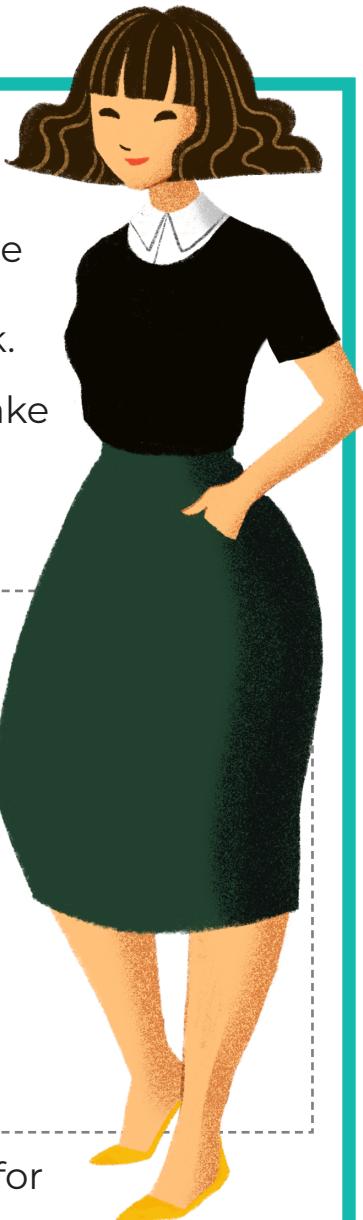
# Meet Esther!

Shalom, friends! My name is **Esther**, and I was born in 1854 in **Baden**, in southwestern **Germany**.

It is **1868**, and life is pretty hard for Jews here in Europe. There are laws that prevent my family and friends from having the same rights as everyone else, and it is hard for my parents to find work.

My dad recently moved to **Texas**, where he's working hard to make enough money to bring the rest of my family to America. The journey will be long, and it will be very hard to leave my home behind, but I am excited to travel somewhere new.

*What do you think is the hardest part of moving to a new country? What is the most exciting part?*



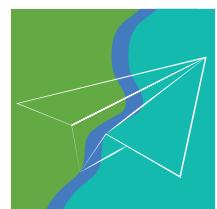
The first thing I need to do is decide **what to pack** for the journey across the ocean.

*What would you bring with you if you moved to a new country?*



## Southern Jewish Immigration

Learn more about the ISJL Virtual Vacation at [www.isjl.org/virtual-vacation](http://www.isjl.org/virtual-vacation).



# Journey to America

My father let us know that it is **finally time for us to join him in Texas**. We bought our tickets, and we are ready to leave Baden. *Time to make some guesses!*

*What do you think the journey to America will be like for Esther and her family?*

*How long do you think the journey will take?*

*What kind of vehicle do you think Esther will take to get to America?*

Now that you have made your guesses, **keep watching the video** to see if you were right about my trip to America!

*How long did it take for most European immigrants to get to America?*

*What kind of vehicle did Esther take to get to America?*

*What surprised you about Esther's journey to America?*



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# A Peddler's Travels

Before the rest of my family arrived, my dad worked as a **peddler** in southeastern Texas.

*What is a peddler?*

*What types of items do you think peddlers sold? What would you need if you lived in the past and lived far from a store?*

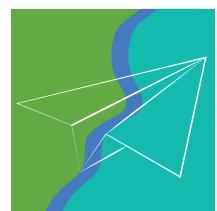


My dad made enough money as a peddler that he could afford to send for my family to come live in Houston. Now he works at a **clothing store** owned by another Jewish family.

*If you owned a store in Esther's time, what would you sell? If you owned a store now, what would you sell?*

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# Immigrant Poetry

Immigrants just like me have written about their experiences. Their poems can tell us something about what it means to be American. *Follow along with the poems and think about how they make you feel.*

## “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus

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  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.  
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she  
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-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”



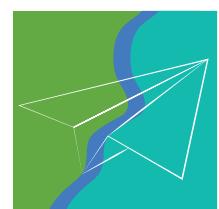
*What do you think Esther and her family had in common with immigrants traveling through Ellis Island?*

*What is the “golden door” next to the Statue of Liberty?*

*What is your favorite part of the poem?*

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## "Amphibians" by Joseph O. Legaspi

Amphibians live in both.

Immigrants leave their land,  
hardening in the sea.

Out of water.

In Greek, *amphibian* means  
"on both sides of life."

*Terra* and *aqua*. Shoreline.  
In fresh water:

amphibians lay  
shell-less eggs;  
immigrants give birth  
to Americans.

Tadpoles, polliwogs  
metamorphose: gills  
in early stages. On land,

amphibians develop lungs.  
Immigrants develop lungs.

Through damp skin  
amphibians oxygenate.

Immigrants toil  
and sleep breathlessly.

Skin forms glands.  
Eyes form eyelids.

Amphibians seek land; immigrants, other lands.

Their colors brighten, camouflage.

They've been known to fall  
out of the sky.

Fully at home in the rain.

*What is an amphibian?*

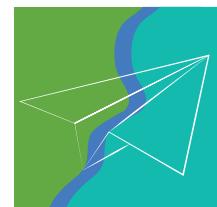
*What does it mean for an  
immigrant to be "fully at home in  
the rain?"*

*How might immigrating to a new  
country cause you to grow and  
change?*

*What is your favorite part of the  
poem?*

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# Immigrant Poetry

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## “Learning to love America” by Shirley Geok-Lin Lim

because it has no pure products

because the Pacific Ocean sweeps along the coastline  
because the water of the ocean is cold  
and because land is better than ocean

because I say we rather than they

because I live in California  
I have eaten fresh artichokes  
and jacaranda bloom in April and May

because my senses have caught up with my body  
my breath with the air it swallows  
my hunger with my mouth

because I walk barefoot in my house

because I have nursed my son at my breast  
because he is a strong American boy  
because I have seen his eyes redden when he is asked  
who he is  
because he answers I don't know

because to have a son is to have a country  
because my son will bury me here  
because countries are in our blood and we bleed them  
because it is late and too late to change my mind  
because it is time.

*Why is the poet torn about loving America?*

*Why is her son sad?*

*Why is it too late to change her mind about loving America?*

*What is your favorite part of the poem?*

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# I Am From...

I am from Baden, Germany, and Houston, Texas. But **the places we live aren't the only things that make us who we are.** *Using the prompts below, write down some sensory images and memories from your life, including the people and places that are important to you.*

Favorite color

Favorite story or book

Favorite tradition

Favorite food

Something you love about your neighborhood

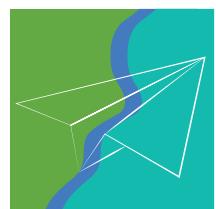
Something you like to do with your friends

Family memory

Hobby or sport you enjoy

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# I Am From...

Continue writing images and memories here!

*Favorite time of year or season*

*Something you like to do outside*

*Something funny*

*Something serious*

*Something you like about yourself*

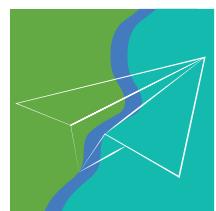
*A place you've traveled*

*Where you were born*

*Other images and memories*

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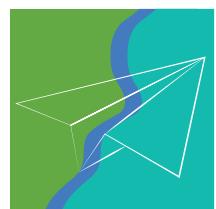
# I Am From...

Using the list of images and memories you created on pages 7 and 8, fill in the blanks on this page and the next page to make your very own “I Am From...” poem. Feel free to add more images and memories to the poem as you write.

I am from...

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# I Am From...

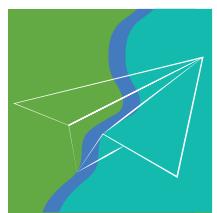
Continue writing your poem here!

I am from...



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# Immigration Today

Today, immigrants face many of the same **challenges** that my family and I faced when we moved from Germany to Texas.

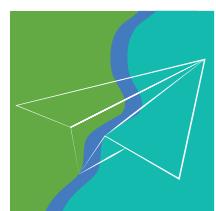
*Have you ever gone to a place you have never been to before? Was that easy or hard for you? Why?*

*What challenges do you think Esther and her family faced that immigrants are also facing today?*



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# Immigration Today

As Americans, we can learn about and remember stories of immigrants, and **we can work to make sure that we welcome all immigrants from around the world with open arms.**

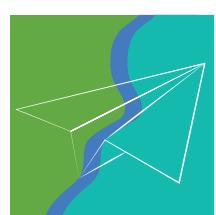
*Do you have any friends or family members who have immigrated to the United States? What have you done to make them feel welcome?*

*If you have never met a person who immigrated to America, what could you do to make them feel like they belong here?*



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# Goodbye, Friends!

Thank you so much for traveling with me as I immigrated to America! I loved introducing you to my family, telling you about the difficult journey on the Atlantic Ocean, learning about Jewish peddlers, and reading and writing poetry together.

*What was your favorite part of our time together?*

*What is one thing that surprised you?*

*What questions do you have for Esther?*



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