

Make an Argument: “Angel Island, the Ellis Island of the West.”

Lesson Overview:

The purpose of this lesson is to help students understand the similarities and differences between the European immigrant experiences on Ellis Island and those of Asian immigrants on Angel Island. In addition to comparing and contrasting these two historical experiences, the skill objective is to get students to make a written argument with supporting evidence. The claim students will evaluate is: *Angel Island should be called the Ellis Island of the West.*

Lesson Steps:

1. In addition to the textbook and lecture, students gather information about Ellis Island from two sources. The first is a web [An Interactive Tour of Ellis Island by Scholastic](http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/immigration/tour/index.htm) and a short article summarizing the history of Ellis Island. (<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/immigration/tour/index.htm>)
2. In addition to the textbook and lecture, students gather information about Angel Island from a short video from KQED’s Pacific Link website called [Angel Island: The Stories Behind the Poems](http://www.kqed.org/w/pacificlink/history/angelisland/video/) and a short article called “Coming to America” from [Social Studies News](#), Weekly Reader Edition 4. (<http://www.kqed.org/w/pacificlink/history/angelisland/video/>)
3. Students organize information from both experiences on a three column description organizer from the [Core Six](#) book, page 20. They organize their notes on Ellis and Angel Islands by finding evidence for each of the criteria spelled out on the organizer.
4. The next step is to have students take this information and arrange it into a Top Hat Organizer, page 18 from the [Core Six](#) book. This organizer asks students to identify and write down similarities in the two experiences, and also to find important differences.
5. The final step is to have students make an argument supporting or refuting the oft repeated claim, *Angel Island, the Ellis Island of the West*. Students choose a side in the argument and write a paragraph supporting or refuting the claim with evidence they have gathered.

Modification of writing assignment for EL sheltered US History class

The EL students write a compare and contrast paragraph, using the Comparative Writing Framework from page 26 of the [Core Six](#) book.