

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Brainstorming, Quickwrite, Marking the Text, Graphic Organizer

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What is the promise of America to the “millions”?

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Against what perspective does the speaker juxtapose the dreams of immigrants?

Learning Targets

- Analyze the use of diction in two texts in order to explain the impact of a poet’s choices on a reader.
- Analyze how conflicting images point to thematic points.
- Synthesize connections among multiple texts to support a thematic interpretation.

Before Reading

1. The American Dream is often associated with people who are new to our country. Brainstorm about the dreams, hopes, and backgrounds of early immigrant Americans. Share your thoughts in a small group.

During Reading

2. Read the poem “Ellis Island” silently; then read the poem by Phillis Wheatley.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Part Native American, Joseph Bruchac (b. 1942) began telling Native American stories for his own children and published his first book of stories in 1975. An award-winning writer and professional storyteller, Bruchac has since written dozens of books for children and adults that seek to promote and preserve Native stories and culture.

Poetry

Ellis Island

by Joseph Bruchac

Beyond the red brick of Ellis Island
 where the two Slovak children
 who became my grandparents
 waited the long days of quarantine,
 5 after leaving the sickness,
 the old Empires of Europe,
 a Circle Line ship slips easily
 on its way to the island
 of the tall woman, green
 10 as dreams of forests and meadows
 waiting for those who’d worked
 a thousand years
 yet never owned their own.

Coming for the American Dream

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Highlight images of the two contrasting perspectives in this poem and explain the complexity of these two points of view.

During Reading

- As you read the poem “Europe and America,” highlight images that contrast the two generations presented in the poem.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Ignatow was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1914 to Russian immigrants. His poetry, which is written in straightforward language, often portrays urban life and the lives of the working poor. Ignatow won many prestigious awards for his poetry before he died in 1997.

Poetry

Europe and America

by David Ignatow

My father brought the emigrant bundle
of desperation and worn threads,
that in anxiety as he stumbles
tumble out distractedly;

- while I am bedded upon soft green money
that grows like grass.

Thus, between my father
who lives on a bed of anguish for his daily bread,
and I who tear money at leisure by the roots,

- where I lie in sun or shade,
a vast continent of breezes, storms to him,
shadows, darkness to him, small lakes, rough channels
to him, and hills, mountains to him, lie between us.

My father comes of a small hell

- where bread and man have been kneaded and baked
together.

You have heard the scream as the knife fell;
while I have slept
as guns pounded offshore.

Denotation and Connotation in “Europe and America”

- Images often have a powerful connotative effect. Identify the denotation and connotation of key images from the poem “Europe and America.” Discuss the effect that those particular words have on the reader. Choose some words or phrases of your own to analyze. Write them in your Reader/Writer Notebook or on a separate piece of paper.

