

By the Kansas State Historical Society

Immigration: What Does It Mean?

Immigration is when you move from one country to another. If you immigrate to another country you move there to start a new life. Immigrant groups are groups of people from one country that immigrate to another.



How has immigration changed Kansas?

Between 1860 and 1890 the Kansas population grew by more than one million. Most new Kansans were Americans moving from eastern states. Kansas also attracted immigrants from other countries. The largest immigrant groups were Germans, English, and Swedes. Later Mexicans and Vietnamese came to Kansas.

The Kansas population continues to change. Today immigrants from all over the world make Kansas their home.

Why do people immigrate?

People immigrate because there are reasons they no longer want to live in their homeland. There are also things that attract them to another country. This is called a *push* and *pull*.

There are many reasons why people may feel *pushed* out of their homeland. There may have been political changes in their country. There may be a lack of good jobs. It may be too crowded.

There are always reasons that *pull* immigrants to a new country. There may be better jobs and other economic opportunities. They may want more freedoms. They may be following other family members that immigrated earlier.

Is there a cost to immigration?

For those that immigrate, there is always a cost. There are economic and social costs. The move to another country costs money. You have to pay for both yourself and your things to be moved to another place. This is an economic cost.

There are also social costs. You have to leave behind your friends and family. You also must leave behind everything that is familiar. You often must learn a new language and new ways of doing things.

For the new country that accepts the new immigrant, there is also a cost. When immigrants arrive in large numbers there are economic and social costs. The new country must provide services for new immigrants.

Is there a benefit to immigration?

When you immigrate to a new country, you expect to find benefits. You hope for a better life in your new home. A better life means different things to different people. It may mean more freedoms or more money.

Most Americans are part of the immigrant experience. Our ancestors immigrated here from another country. This makes the United States a special place. Immigrants bring with them their special talents. They also bring their traditions. This makes America a unique country. The United States has benefited from immigration.

