Ellis Island
Education Department

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Ellis Island Immigration Museum
Statue of Liberty National Monument
New York, NY 10004

Immigrant File

Name	Abraham Cohen
Age/Gender	17/Male
Place of Birth	Plonsk, Russia
Nationality/Ethnicity	Hebrew
Date of Arrival	June 13, 1910
Marital Status	Single
Occupation	Cabinet Maker
English Fluency	Poor
Category	Permanent Residency
Steamship/Port	Lapland/Antwerp
Manifest Line Number	Steerage/2/0012
Summary	Mr. Abraham Cohen was part of a failed uprising against the Russian government and its pogroms in 1907. Mr. Cohen is a cabinet maker who wants to be granted permanent entry in the United States. He plans to stay with his second cousin, Charlie, on Ludlow Street in the Lower East Side in New York City. Having no acquaintances and understanding little English, Mr. Cohen hopes to avoid the political persecution he faced in Eastern Europe and make a successful living in the United States. He was detained for answering "yes" to being an anarchist for trying to overthrow the pogrom-supporting government in Russia. Documents Supplied: Passport ___ Birth Certificate ___ Visa ___ Marriage Certificate ___ Other _____

Being Processed Grades 8-12 On-Site Activity

Follow Abraham Cohen's route through Ellis Island:

Baggage Room (1st Floor)

As you entered the building, you immediately encounter a person in uniform yelling at the top of his lungs in English, a language that you do not quite understand. Weeks earlier, a uniformed officer pillaged your house and took your most valuable possessions, so you are understandably nervous. The uniformed gentleman points in two directions—a place where you drop your luggage and an area where people proceed up the stairs. Hiding behind a family of four, you bring your luggage and follow the horde of people up the stairs.

How would you feel if you entered a country where you did not speak the dominant language? In what ways, would you try to communicate with others?

Please use this space for your answer.

Peak Immigration Years (2nd Floor)

Proceed through the exhibit. Read the descriptions for the gallery titled "Pogroms" (behind the column on the red wall.) Pay close attention to the photos. What are pogroms? Why might pogroms make you want to leave your home?

Please use this space for your answer.

Head to the gallery titled "The Fabric of Life" and explore the different signs and photos of the gallery. As a newly-arrived immigrant, what are some of the ethnic and cultural traditions you want to retain? How might community help you preserve these traditions?

Please use this space for your answer.

Being Processed Grades 8-12 On-Site Activity

Great Hall (2nd Floor)

Once you have identified the reasons for leaving your home (remember, you are playing the part of Abraham), proceed to the Great Hall for your medical examination (stand next to the staircase banister). Six medical personnel once perched atop the stairs to inspect newly-arrived passengers for physical disease and mental illness. The inspectors claimed that they could find someone with an abnormality in six-seconds. This happens to be your first medical exam ever.

How would you feel about receiving your first medical exam (doctor appointment here at Ellis Island)?

⇨ Please use this space for your answer.

Continue to the benches in the Great Hall. By the time that you've reached this point, you have been in line for a ridiculous six-hour wait in sweltering heat. Remembering your responses to the questions asked weeks earlier by a shipping company clerk in Europe will be critical in passing the Legal Inspection. Examine an actual manifest record on the inspection tables.

The inspector looks concerned with your answer "yes" to question #22 "Are you an anarchist?" You try to explain that you revolted against the government-sponsored pogroms that terrorized the village including your family, but the Ellis Island official remains unconvinced. The inspector has pulled you aside and directed you to proceed down the middle staircase.

Why did the United States government worry about anarchists entering the country?

⇨ Please use this space for your answer.

Being Processed Grades 8-12 On-Site Activity

Board of Special Inquiry (2nd Floor)

Proceed to the *Through America's Gate* exhibit, starting at the southwest entrance. Look through the galleries and read about how immigrants were processed at Ellis Island. Stop once you get to the *Board of Special Inquiry Hearing Room*.

With your classmate(s), take turns playing the role of the inspector and asking questions and playing the role of Abraham and answering the questions on the following page. How do the questions reflect on some of the concerns society had at that time?

Use the supporting evidence from your character file to help you answer several of these questions. Convince the panel (your classmates) that you are a trustworthy person who can contribute to this country.

Please use this space for your answer.

Proceed to the predetermined, designated class space once completed.

BOARD OF SPECIAL INQUIRY
June 13, 1910

Suggested Questions for the Immigrant:

1. What is your name?
2. What is your age?
3. In what country were you born?
4. Where did you last live before coming to America?
5. Are you married?
   (How many husbands or wives do you have?)
6. Do you have any children?
   (How many?)
7. Can you read and write?
   (In what languages?)
8. What kind of work do you do?
   (Did you have a job back home?)
9. Who paid for your ticket to America?
10. Where will you be going in the United States?
    (Do you have a ticket to that location?)
11. Will you be meeting a relative or friend in the United States?
    (If so, who?)
12. How much money do you have with you?
13. Do you already have a job in the United States?
    (If so, what is it?)
    (If not, how do you plan to support yourself?)
14. Have you ever been convicted of a crime?
    (What crime did you commit?)
15. Have you ever been in prison, in a mental hospital, or supported by charity?

Members of the Board may ask more questions if they see fit.