

Ellis Island

Education Department

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Ellis Island Immigration Museum
Statue of Liberty National Monument
New York/New Jersey



Teacher Tool Kit:

Chalk Marks

Historical Overview:

Chalk marks were used by Ellis Island officials during the Medical Inspection to indicate which immigrants might have had an injury or illness and needed to be detained (like detention) at the Ellis Island Hospital for further medical evaluation and treatment. If the Public Health Service doctors noticed any unusual symptoms, chalk would be used to write a letter or two on the immigrant's shirt or coat. Approximately 10% of the immigrants through Ellis Island were marked with chalk and detained at the Ellis Island Hospital.

The following is what each of the letters stood for:

B = Back

C = Conjunctivitis

CT = Trachoma

E = Eyes

F = Face

Ft = Feet

G = Goiter

H = Heart

K = Hernia

L = Lameness

N = Neck

P = Physical and Lungs

Pg = Pregnancy

Sc = Scalp (Favus)

S = Senility

X = Suspected mental defect

(X) = Definite signs of mental disease observed

Directions:

Print and copy as needed and then cut out the black boxes below and laminate them for durability.

Depending on how you you'd like to use them in the classroom, feel free to write what each of the letter(s) mean on the backside before laminating.

Several blank squares have also been provided; copy as needed. Remember, 90% of the Ellis Island immigrants passed the medical inspection and were never marked with chalk.

Have fun, and let us know how you are using these in your classroom at
STLI_Education_Department@nps.gov.

B

C

CT

E

F

Ft

G

H

K

L

N

P

Pg

S

Sc

X

X



