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# History of Immigration In Kansas

Product designers create new products for people to use. Computers, phones, chairs, luggage, dog food, and silverware are all examples of products. Product designers decide what words, pictures, and colors will be shown on the product.



Some product designers create products that are sold in museums and bookstores. Today, you will create a puzzle that will be sold in bookstores and museums in Kansas. The puzzle will teach people about different immigrant groups who have moved to Kansas since the 1800s. Follow the steps below.

## Step 1: Learn about Immigration to Kansas

Immigration refers to the movement of people from their homelands to another country. A homeland is a country where a person was born. People who immigrate from a homeland to another place are called immigrants. Immigration is a very important part of Kansas' history. Starting in the mid 1800s, large groups of people immigrated to Kansas from all over the world. Read about different groups of people that immigrated to Kansas. As you read, think about why people decided to leave their homelands. Then, answer the questions.

### Russian-German Immigrants

During the 1700s, many Germans immigrated to Russia. They stayed in Russia for almost 100 years. Then, the Russian government wanted German men to join the Russian military. Many Germans did not want to do that. As a result, they immigrated to Kansas. The state of Kansas offered these immigrants free land and seeds to start farms. Russian-German immigrants took this opportunity to establish successful farming communities around Kansas. The photo to the right shows German-Russians who immigrated to Kansas.



Credit: Kansas Historical Society

### French Immigrants

In the 1860s, people immigrated from France to Kansas. French immigrants moved to Kansas to escape political problems. For example, there were wars between France and other countries. As a result, French immigrants moved. Some established a town called Silkville in Kansas. In Silkville, they produced silk. Silk is a fabric used to make clothing.

### British Immigrants

Beginning in 1872, people from England, Scotland, and Wales came to Kansas. England, Scotland, and Wales are countries that are a part of Great Britain. People left Great Britain because there were terrible droughts. A drought occurs when there is almost no rain for a long period of time. When droughts occur, crops, like wheat, corn, or potatoes, cannot grow. Because crops didn't grow, people didn't have enough to eat. People also left Great Britain because the cities were very dirty and crowded. People in Great Britain learned about Kansas through stories in the British newspapers. The papers described the cheap land that people could buy in Kansas. Immigrants moved to Kansas to start new businesses or to buy land for farming.

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## Czech Immigrants

In 1874, Czech immigrants moved to Kansas from a region in Eastern Europe called Bohemia. Today, this region is known as the Czech Republic. The Czech immigrants moved to Kansas in order to create better lives for themselves. For example, some immigrants wanted to leave the crowded cities in Bohemia and own their own land. One of the first places that Czech immigrants moved to was Wilson, Kansas. After moving to Kansas, many Czech immigrants became farmers. Others opened their own businesses.

## Swedish Immigrants

In the 1870s, people from Sweden moved to Kansas. Swedish immigrants moved to Kansas because they could buy cheap land for farming. American companies traveled to Sweden to sell affordable land and encourage people to move to the United States. People also left Sweden so that they could practice any religion. At the time, certain religions were not allowed in Sweden. The photo to the right shows Swedish immigrants with a horse-drawn wagon between 1880-1910.



Credit: Kansas Historical Society

## Italian Immigrants

Beginning in 1878, people from Italy moved to Kansas. These immigrants often came from poor villages and towns in Italy. There were few opportunities to own land or to find a job in these towns. Many people did not know how to read or write. Italian immigrants came to America because they believed they would have better opportunities. Many Italian immigrants worked in coal mines after moving to Kansas. Others worked on farms or opened their own businesses, like grocery stores.

## Croatian Immigrants

In the 1880s, people also moved to Kansas from Croatia. People left Croatia was because there wasn't enough land for people to farm. The farmland that did exist started dying due to disease. This led to a lack of food for people to eat. People also left Croatia because another country, Hungary, controlled Croatia. Many Croatians did not approve of Hungary's control of their country. When Croatians first arrived in Kansas, they found work in the meatpacking plants in Kansas City. Meatpacking plants are businesses where meat is prepared before it can be sold to grocery stores.

## Lebanese Immigrants

In 1895, Lebanese immigrants moved to Kansas from a country called Lebanon. Lebanon is a country in the Middle East. People immigrated because of religious conflicts in Lebanon. At this time, Lebanon was part of a large empire called the Ottoman Empire. The official religion in the Ottoman Empire was Islam. People were not allowed to practice Christianity. As a result, people moved to the United States to have religious freedom. After moving to Kansas, many Lebanese immigrants opened stores in Kansas. Some also became peddlers. A peddler is someone travels from place to place and sells items to earn money. When families decided to leave Lebanon, they typically sent a few family members at a time. These family members would find work and send money back to their families in Lebanon. The rest of the family would use this money to move to Kansas.

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## Mexican Immigrants

During the early 1900s, people living in Mexico experienced many struggles. There were not many jobs, and there was a lot of fighting about who should control the government. Because of these struggles, many Mexican men left the country and moved to Kansas and other parts of the United States to find work. Some found jobs in the meatpacking plants and in the sugar beet factories. Others worked for the railroads. At first, men only stayed a few months and then traveled back to Mexico to be with their families. Over time, some men earned enough money to bring their families with them to permanently settle in Kansas. The photo to the right is of Mexican immigrants working on Kansas railroads.



Credit: Kansas Historical Society

## Vietnamese Immigrants

Beginning in 1975, immigrants from Vietnam began arriving in Kansas. Vietnam is a country in southeastern Asia. For many years, the country was in a terrible civil war. A civil war is when different groups of people within the same country are fighting. In Vietnam, the northern and southern parts of the country were fighting. North Vietnam won the war. This forced many people in South Vietnam to leave and come to the United States. Many Vietnamese immigrants moved to Garden City, Kansas. They found jobs working at two of the world's largest beef packing plants. Others started their own businesses. Today, Garden City still has a large Vietnamese population.

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Answer the questions below using complete sentences.

1. What are two reasons that British immigrants moved to Kansas?

2. What reason for moving to Kansas did the Italian immigrants and Mexican immigrants have in common?

3. The word “culture” refers to traditions, food, religion, clothes, and ways of living that are specific to a group of people. When a place is multicultural, it means that there are many cultures in one place. Do you think Kansas was multicultural during the late 1800s and 1900s? Why or why not?

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Answer the questions below using complete sentences.

4. Did immigrants from around the world move to Kansas for the same reasons? How do you know? Use information about at least three groups of immigrants in your answer.

5. Why do you think many immigrant families only sent one or two family members to Kansas at a time instead of traveling as an entire family?

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## Step 2: Design a Puzzle

Follow the steps below to design a puzzle in the shape of Kansas that honors different groups of people that moved to Kansas. The puzzle will be sold in museums, book stores, and tourist attractions across Kansas! Use the puzzle outline on the next page to create your puzzle. Your puzzle must be designed in a serious and respectful way. Your puzzle must include the following:

- A phrase or slogan across the puzzle that honors the different groups of people who moved to Kansas. For example, you might say, “Kansas celebrates different cultures!”
- A puzzle piece dedicated to each group of immigrants you read about in the passage. Each puzzle piece should include the name of the country and other images and words that represent reasons why this group of immigrants from that country to Kansas.
- Other words and images that celebrate how many different people have moved to Kansas over time.

## Extra Time?

- Cut your puzzle apart and trade with a partner to see if you can solve their puzzle.
- Create a flyer with a name for your puzzle, price, places it will be sold, and reasons people should buy it.

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Puzzle Outline

