

Process Paper (Word Count: 471)

Quotas and Quibbles: A Series of Restrictive Immigration Acts of the Early 20th century

We wanted to choose a topic that would have clear relevancy and lines of connections to our country today, which is why we chose a topic from the 20th century. Intense immigration debates have once again sparked in our country, and we were intrigued by the history of immigration policy in America that has led up to the current day situation. As we began to research past immigration laws, we encountered many, but ultimately decided on the restrictive ones, finding them to be most divergent and pivotal at the time. Initially, our topic was just the Immigration Act of 1924, but we later expanded the topic to include the Immigration Act of 1921 as well, because our research indicated that the two went hand-in-hand and had a common theme.

Our research spanned across various types of sources including online websites, online databases, print books, and multimedia. Primary sources, such as a number of political cartoons, newspaper sources, and congressional documents, were critical to our understanding of the topic because they provided authentic information from multiple levels of the issue. We used databases such as SIRS Decades, ProQuest, Gale Student Resources in Context, and more while maintaining record of our sources in a shared excel document. We chose to split up research responsibilities in order to maximize our efforts and cover more ground and we shared our findings weekly.

We chose to create a website because our topic lends itself to many historical documents such as political cartoons, letters, and congressional bills as well visual elements such as maps,

charts, graphs that would be best displayed on a website where viewers can take the time to thoroughly explore them up close. We also decided that a website would be the best medium to organize our information into sections because our content is plentiful and sometimes wordy. In addition to the Weebly website maker features, one of our members used her skills with Photoshop to create images and visual elements such as the interactive buttons, the 'Explore the Views' interactive element, and the line on the 'Compromise' page.

The immigration debate of the early 20th century embodies the complex conflict, with both sides, pro-immigration and anti-immigration, consisting of social, economic, political, and cultural arguments and provoking stakeholders of all parts of society. The American people overwhelmingly supported restrictive immigration policies, however Congress struggled to compromise on the right middle ground policy. The 1921 Emergency Quota Act attempted to create a compromise, however it failed to put the conflict to rest completely. The ensuing 1924 Immigration Act revised the provisions to be stricter than its predecessor, resolving the immigration debate until 1965. It severely curtailed the influx of American immigrants, heavily favoring anti-immigrants, and thus resulted in an unbalanced compromise. Our project uniquely addresses how an unbalanced compromise was not necessarily a bad result.