

## Ellis Island Coming to America



My family is from Russia. We are moving to America. We go by boat.

We are poor. We travel in steerage. It is the cheapest. It is the lowest level on the ship. It is gross. It smells bad. It is dark. It doesn't have windows. Many get seasick.

Our trip takes three weeks. We stay in steerage. We cannot leave. Many people get sick. A few die.

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## Ellis Island

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The ship slows down. We go to the deck. We see America! We see Lady Liberty! Some laugh. Some cry. Some hug. Some cheer.

We get off the ship. A small boat takes us to Ellis Island. We are scared. What if they

don't let us in? What if they turn us away? We do not want to go back.

We get to Ellis Island. We go into the Great Hall. It is 52 feet tall. It is full of people. We get in line. We wait in line for hours.

We each get a number. They pin mine to my shirt. Then we see doctors. They check us.

Papa once hurt his leg. Now he limps. We cannot go. We must stay for the night. We are scared. Will they send us back?

They give us food. The food is odd. There is a fruit. It is long and yellow. What is this fruit? We do not know!

The next day a doctor sees Papa. He says that Papa is OK. We can move on.



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## Ellis Island

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Next we answer questions. What is your name?  
Where are you going? Do you have money?  
What will you do for work? Do you have family in  
America? Is anyone waiting for you?

I tell the man my name. It is Joseph Markovitch.  
He writes my name. He writes Joe Markov. I am  
too afraid to say anything. What if he gets mad?  
Will he send me home?

We are free to go! We get on a small boat. It  
takes us to New York. I am now Joe Markov. I  
am now American!



## Ellis Island Coming to America



My family is from Russia. We are moving to America. We want a fresh start. We want freedom.

We are poor. We travel in steerage, which is the cheapest. Steerage is on the lowest level of the ship. It is gross. It smells very bad. It is dark. It doesn't have windows. The ship rocks. Many get seasick. I get seasick.

Our trip takes three weeks. We stay in steerage for the whole time. We cannot leave. Many people get sick and a few even die.

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## Ellis Island

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Finally, the ship slows down. We go outside to the main deck. We see the shores of America! We see the Statue of Liberty! It is a wonderful moment! It is what we've been waiting for! People begin to laugh, cry, hug, and cheer.

The ship stops and we board a small boat that takes us to Ellis Island. We are scared because what if they don't let us in? What if they turn us back? We do not want to go back.

When we get to Ellis Island, we get in line. We go into the Great Hall. It is 52 feet tall and very large. It is full of people. We must wait in line for hours.

Everyone gets a number. They pin the numbers to our shirts. Then we wait on line to see different doctors. They check our eyes. They check our hearts. They check our legs. They check our arms. The doctor writes letters on people's shirts using chalk. They write an L on Papa's shirt because he has an old leg injury that makes him limp.

This means we can't leave Ellis Island today. We stay there overnight. The whole night we worry that they will send us back to Russia.

They give us food while we are there. But the food is odd. They give us a fruit that is long and yellow. We have never seen such a thing before. We have no idea what it is!



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## Ellis Island

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The next day Papa sees a new doctor. The doctor says Papa is OK and that we can move on.

Next, a man asks us many questions. What is your name? Where are you going? Do you have money? What will you do for work? Do you have family in America? Is anyone waiting for you?

I tell the man my name. It is Joseph Markovitch. He writes my name. He writes Joe Markov. I am too afraid to say anything. What if he gets mad? Will he send me home?

We are free to go! We get on a small boat. It takes us to New York. I am now Joe Markov. I am now American!



## Ellis Island Coming to America



My family is from Russia. We are moving to America because we want freedom. We want a fresh start and the chance for better jobs.

We travel by ship to America. We travel in steerage with the other poor passengers. Steerage is on the lowest level of the ship. It is gross, dirty, and smells horrible. There are no windows, so it is dark. The rocking of the ship makes many people seasick.

Our voyage lasts for three weeks. We stay in steerage for the whole time because we are not allowed to leave. Many people get sick and a few even die.

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## Ellis Island

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Finally, our ship slows down. We are allowed go outside to the main deck. We see the shores of America for the first time! We see the Statue of Liberty! It is a wonderful moment. It is what we've been waiting for! People begin to laugh, cry, hug, and cheer.

When the ship drops anchor, we board a small boat that takes us to Ellis Island. We are scared because what if they don't let us in? What if they turn us back? We have nothing left in Russia. We sold our home and everything just to pay for this trip!

When we get to Ellis Island we go into the Great Hall. It is 52 feet tall, very large, and crowded. We get in line and wait in line for hours.

Everyone gets a number that they pin to our shirts. Then we wait in line to see different doctors who check our hearts, eyes, lungs, arms, and legs. If you're sick, the doctors write a letter on your shirt using chalk. They write an L on Papa's shirt because he has an old leg injury that makes him limp.

Papa's injury means that we can't leave Ellis Island today. We must stay here overnight. All night long, we worry that they will find a reason send us back to Russia.

They give us food while we are there. We have never seen food like this before. They give us a fruit that is long and yellow. We have no idea what it is!

The next day Papa sees a different doctor. Thankfully, the doctor says Papa is OK and that we can move on.



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## Ellis Island

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Next we go to a man who asks us lots of different questions. What is your name? Are you married? Where are you going? Do you have money? What will you do for work? Do you have family in America? Is anyone waiting for you?

I tell the man my name. It is Joseph Markovitch. He writes my name as Joe Markov. I am too afraid to correct him in case he gets mad and sends me back to Russia.

We've passed and are free to go! We get on a small boat that takes us to New York. I am now Joe Markov, an American!

