

Minnesota Storytime
Reading Guide

Title: *Ellis Island: Doorway to Freedom*

Author: Steven Kroll

Illustrator: Karen Ritz

**Publisher and
Copyright Date:** Holiday House, 1995

**Connection to
Minnesota:** Minnesota illustrator

Summary: This is a nonfiction account describing how the immigration station on Ellis Island served as a gateway into the United States for more than sixteen million immigrants between 1892 and 1954.

Suggested ages: 7-10

Tips for Reading:

- Before reading the book aloud to the children, read aloud the “Illustrator’s Note” (found opposite of page 3) to give some background on the Minnesota illustrator (Karen Ritz) and the styles she used in creating the artwork for this book.
- In addition to reading the text, also read the captions for the illustrations and explain the illustrations if needed.

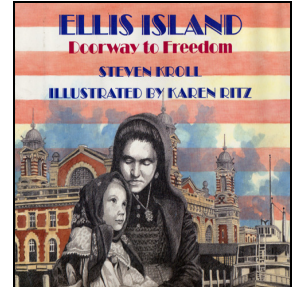
Questions before reading:

- Were you born in this country? Were your parents? Were your grandparents?
- Do you know of any family members who were born in another country and came to the United States?
- Can you imagine what it would be like for you and your family to move to another country where the language, customs, and so many other things would be different?

To introduce this story say: We’re going to read a true story about a place called Ellis Island. Between 1892 and 1954, over sixteen million immigrants passed through Ellis Island hoping to become Americans. It’s very possible that some of your relatives (perhaps great-grandparents) stopped at Ellis Island on their way into the United States.

Questions After Reading:

- How do you think the immigrants felt when they arrived at Ellis Island?
- Why were the immigrants given health exams by doctors at Ellis Island?
- How do immigrants today enter the USA?



RELATED ACTIVITIES

- Culture:**
- Use a globe or a world map to show and discuss the countries where many immigrants came from who entered the USA through Ellis Island.
- Language:**
- Review the glossary at the back of the book to discuss some words that might need further explanation.
 - Talk to some of your older family members to learn about any family members who passed through Ellis Island.
- Science:**
- Discuss the diseases (such as smallpox, tuberculosis and typhus) that could cause some immigrants at Ellis Island to not be allowed to enter the USA.
- Other:**
- Search immigration records to look for potential family members who may have passed through Ellis Island by visiting the web site of www.ellisland.org.
 - Research Angel Island off the coast of California where many Asian immigrants were processed.
- Suggestions for English Language Learners:**
- Ask if any children who came to the USA from other countries would like to share their stories.
 - Review the glossary at the back of the book.
- Related Books:**
- ***Coming to America: The Story of Immigration*** by Betsy C. Maestro, illustrated by Susannah Ryan (Scholastic, 1996)
 - ***Life at Ellis Island*** by Sally Senzell Isaacs (Heinemann Library, 2002)
 - ***My Diary from Here to There/Mi diario de aqui hasta alla*** by Amada Irma Perez, illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez (Children's Book Press, 2002)
 - ***Dia's Story Cloth – The Hmong People's Journey of Freedom*** by Dia Cha, stitched by Chue and Nhia Thao Cha (Minnesota Humanities Commission, 2002)
 - ***When Jessie Came Across the Sea*** by Amy Hest, illustrated by P. J. Lynch (Candlewick, 1997)
 - ***Dreaming of America: an Ellis Island Story*** by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Ben Stahl (Bridge Water, 1999)
 - ***An Ellis Island Christmas*** by Maxine Rhea Leighton, illustrated by Dennis Nolan (Viking, 1992)
 - ***Angel Island*** by Larry Dane Brimmer (Scholastic, 2001)
 - ***I Was Dreaming to Come to America: Memories from the Ellis Island Oral History Project*** by Veronica Lawlor (Viking, 1995)

