



Ohio Studies Weekly

The Melting Pot

Natalia and Steven are eating lunch, swapping their apples, when Claire sits down next to them. Her thermos is full of a warm soup, topped with wontons.

Steven is nearly drooling. “Hey Claire, care to share a wonton, or seven?”

Claire laughs. “This is my grandmother’s top secret wonton recipe, so I’ll only share a wonton in exchange for something truly unique from your lunchbox.”

Steven pulls out his soggy ham sandwich, holding it up. “Will this do?”

The three friends laugh. Natalia asks Claire, “Does your grandmother make your lunch every day?”

“Not always, but she lives with us, so occasionally she makes a lunch for me.”

“How long has your grandmother been living with your family?” Natalia asks.

Claire scrunches her brow, tipping her head to one side. “Well, my grandmother, my Wai Po, immigrated here a few decades ago. My mom grew up in Ohio, and my grandmother has always lived with our family. I can’t remember a time without my grandmother, frankly!”

“Where in China is your grandmother originally from?” Steven asks.

“She grew up in the Guangdong Province. It’s kind of near Hong Kong, actually.”

“Wow—isn’t it amazing how far away our families have come to be in America?” Natalia says. “I mean, my dad emigrated from Mexico when he was just a kid.”

“Yeah, and my great-great-great-great-great grandmother came from Africa.” Steven pauses for a moment. “Though, of course, she was forced to come here.”

“How was she forced here?” Claire asks.

“Well, she was enslaved and brought to the U.S. I’m pretty sure she didn’t want to leave her home.”

Natalia and Claire both nod their heads sadly, thinking of how difficult and unfair it would be for someone to be taken from their home.

“I wonder why my grandmother decided to immigrate here,” Claire says. “Do you think she needed to leave home, too?”

“I’ve talked to my dad a little bit about his immigration to America, but we’ve never really discussed why his family came here in the first place,” Natalia says.

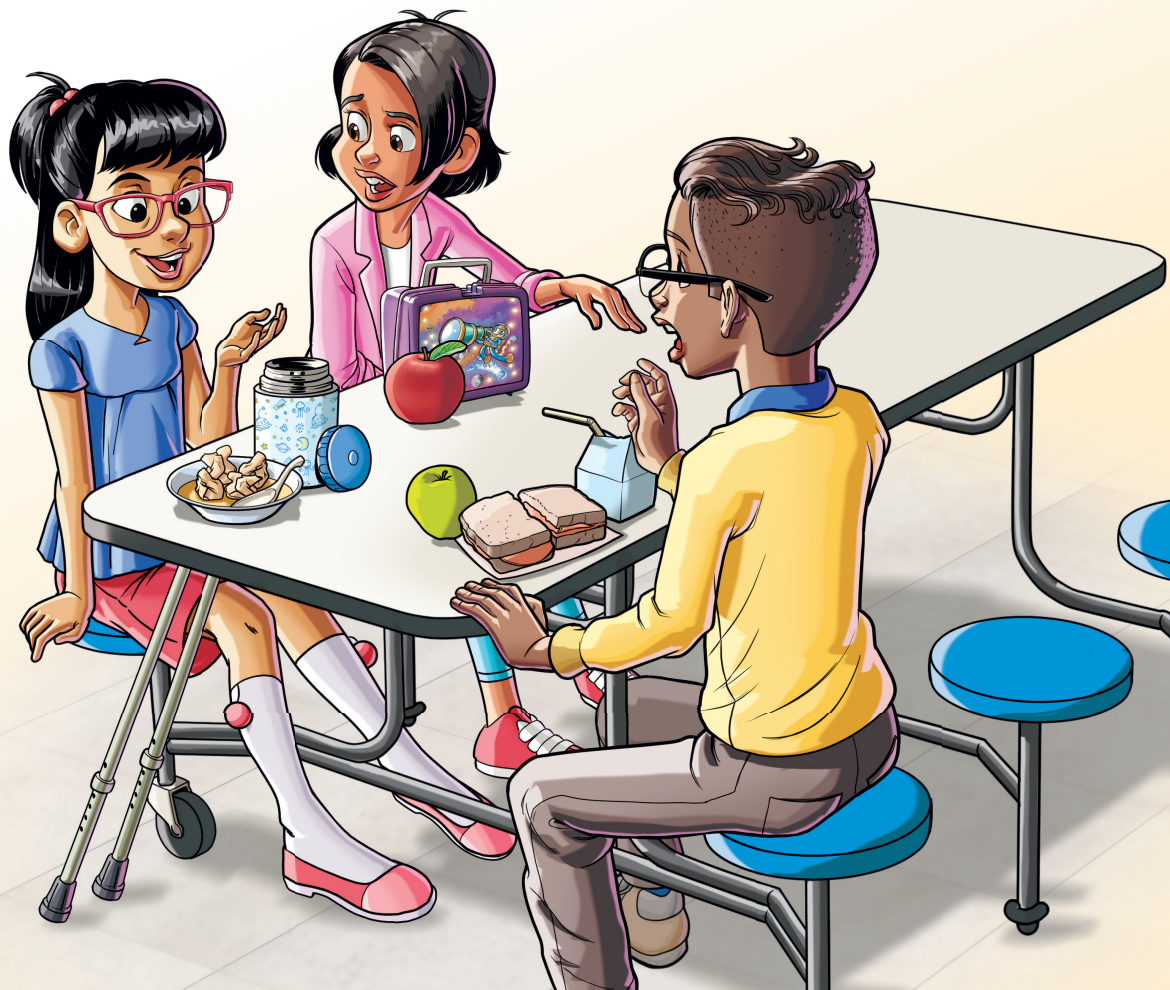
“I mean, I bet there are so many different reasons why people left their home countries to come to the United States, right?” Steven replies.

“It’s pretty cool though that the three of us are sitting here. We’re all friends, and yet our families have come from across the globe.”

The three friends sit in silence for a bit. Then Natalia says, “Why don’t we find out why our families came here from across the globe? I bet there are some good stories there.”

“But where would we begin?” Steven asks.

“Back in history, of course!” Claire says, wrapping her arms around Steven and Natalia.



Connections / *Push and Pull*

Immigrants are people who have chosen or are forced to leave their home country. Immigrants move somewhere new. Both push and pull factors affect their departure and destination.

Push factors relate to immigrants leaving their home country. Can you think of some reasons why some people leave their homes? It can be because there’s not enough food or water in their home country. Or, they might struggle to find a job. Some immigrants are forced to leave. This might be due to dangerous political

conditions or war. In the past, some were taken from their home countries, like Africans, and sold into the slave trade.

Pull factors determine an immigrant’s destination. When choosing a new home, what do you think people are looking for? For many, the U.S. represented opportunity. The American Dream was the idea that there were equal opportunities for everyone on U.S. soil. It didn’t matter where you came from, there were new possibilities for you. This hope brought people from all around the globe to America.



Immigrants arriving at Ellis Island.



Ohio's Diversity

Natalia, Steven and Claire are close friends. Their families came to the United States from across the globe! They're not the only ones. Over 11.5 million people call Ohio home. There are several major groups of people that live in Ohio. People come to the United States for many reasons. There are many unique push factors and pull factors.

Ohio is home to many Hispanic families. Around 3.8% of Ohioans are Hispanic. For example, Natalia's father came from Mexico. He came to America with his grandparents when he was a young boy. His story is quite common. Many people have moved to the U.S. from Mexico. Hispanics began coming to the U.S. in the 1800s. This is partly because some of their families were separated when some Mexican territories were taken over by the United States. Natalia's grandparents wanted a better life for their son. So, they chose to move to the United States. Many Hispanics move in search of a new life.

Claire is an Asian American student. Her family moved from China. Around 2.3% of Ohioans are Asian or Asian American. Most people migrating to the United States today come from Asia. Some people come from Korea and Japan. Others come from India, Vietnam and other countries. In the past, Asians came to the U.S. to find jobs.

Young Chinese men were among the first Asians to come to America. They came here for work.

They worked as miners, farmers and more. They came to the U.S. to earn money.

However, the number of Asian immigrants then began to decrease. Laws were

passed that stopped Asians from coming to America. It wasn't until 1965 that Asian immigrants began coming to the U.S. again. Many still come to the U.S. in search of a better life.

In the 1970s, many Asian immigrants came to the United States. They were from Southeast Asia. They came from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. This group of people were known as refugees. This means they were escaping war in their countries. They had no other choice but to leave their homes. Since then, around 1 million refugees have come from Southeast Asia. Refugees are in search of safety.

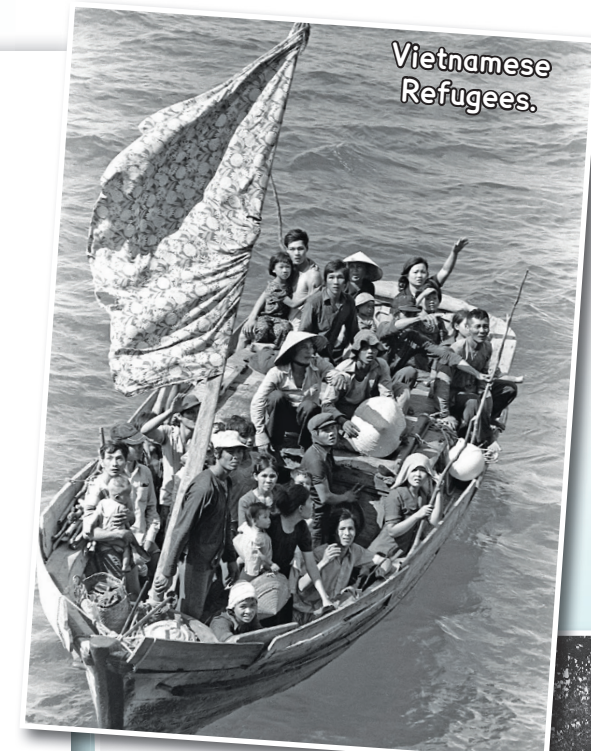
Steven is half Caucasian. He is also half African American. His great-great-great-great-great grandmother was enslaved. Sadly, many African Americans have a family history of slavery. Enslaved Africans were taken from their homes. This started in 1500. Twelve million Africans were forced to leave their homes. Some went to South America. Others went to the Caribbean. A small percentage was sent to the U.S. Those that came to America were forced to work on plantations. Enslaved people had very few rights. This was an example of forced migration.

Migration also happened within the United States. In the 1910s, many African Americans migrated from the South to the North. The North included Ohio. This was the Great Migration. Around 6 million African Americans moved from the South to the North. Many believed it would be easier to find work in the North. They were right. African Americans found jobs in northern cities. This included cities in Ohio.

Natalia is also part American Indian on her mother's side. American Indians called Ohio lands home for thousands of years. It's believed the first American Indians here were hunters and gatherers. They would have hunted large animals, like mammoths. Later on, they began to grow crops. Then the Europeans arrived. American Indians found their lives completely changed. At first, they traded furs with the Europeans for other goods. But soon the Europeans began moving onto American Indian lands. This led to conflict between the two groups. American Indians were forced to leave. They had to leave lands they'd lived on for thousands of years. Now, some American Indians still live in Ohio. Around 0.3 percent of Ohioans are American Indians.

Another group in Ohio is people of Jewish descent. Around 1 percent of Ohioans are Jewish. Jews have lived in Ohio since it became a state. Many Jews moved to Ohio from Europe. Some were looking for a new life. However, many were fleeing from religious persecution. This means they were unfairly treated because of their religion. Many Jews live in Cincinnati. Others live in Cleveland. In fact, there are over 100 synagogues in Ohio. A synagogue is a place of worship for Jews.

As you can see, Ohio is a diverse state! Around 80 percent of Ohioans are white. But nearly every Ohioan's family came from somewhere else at some point. We are a state of immigrants!



"All men are created equal"

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal ..." - Declaration of Independence

The above quote is the foundation of a welcoming America. It states that all men, meaning all human beings, are created equal. But what does that mean?

In America, we believe all humans are created equal. This means we should all have equal opportunities. Everyone should get a good education. Everyone should have the chance to reach their dream job. We all deserve the chance to have the life we dreamed of in America. This freedom should be available to all. The color of our skin shouldn't rule what opportunities are available to us. Neither

should our gender limit our opportunities. All of us deserve an equal chance to make a good life in America. This is an important American value.

All humans are created equal. This also means we are all of equal value. No human is better than another human. Each human has different values and goals. However, we are all equal. And, we must respect each other. If we build mutual respect, it strengthens our communities.

It's important for us to remember our country is made up of United States, which means all the states work as a team. This also means everyone who lives in America must work as a team. America is built on these values. Mutual respect helps us build a strong, democratic country.

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Religious Diversity

The United States is home to people from all parts of the world. This includes Ohio! There are many belief systems across the state.

Each have their own belief system. A belief system refers to what you believe in. This can include your religious beliefs. Some people follow a specific religion. This might mean their family has certain practices. For example, some people hold daily prayers. Others might go to church every Sunday. Some people avoid eating certain foods.

Ohio is home to a diverse group of people. Every group has a diverse range of views. Over 70% of Ohioans are Christian. A percentage of Ohioans have non-Christian faiths. These include the Jewish and Muslim faiths. And, about 20% are equally free to follow no religious system.

Sometimes it's hard to understand another person's belief system. It might seem very different. However, we all should practice our belief systems with tolerance for others. We must understand that we all have our own way of viewing the world. It's important that people are free to believe what they believe. If we practice respect for one another, we create an accepting state. An accepting state is a welcoming state. That is an Ohio we should aim for.

Religious freedom is important in a diverse state. This is a core value in Ohio and in the United States. It is what brought people to America 400 years ago.



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Data on Ohio's Religions

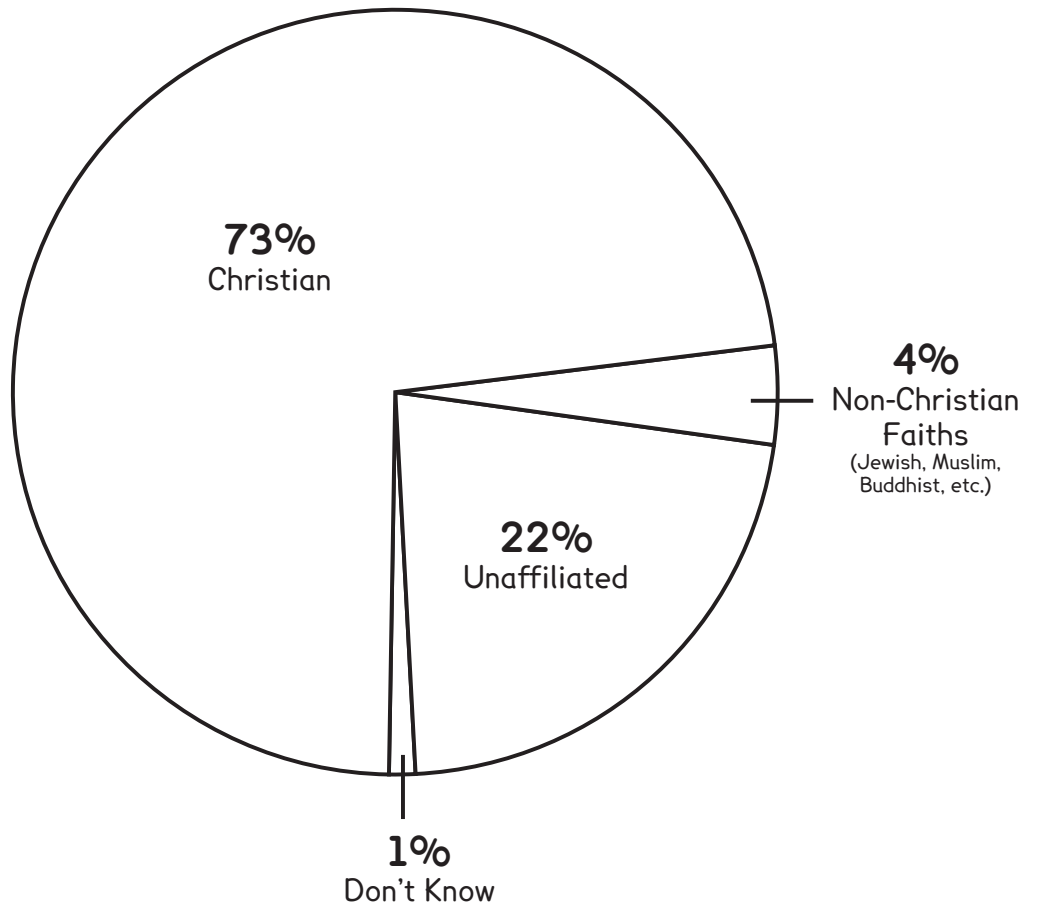
Examine the pie chart below and answer the following questions.

1. Which religion is most common among Ohioans?

2. What non-Christian faiths are referred to in this pie chart?

3. What percentage of people say they're "unaffiliated" with a religion?

4. What do you think "unaffiliated" means in this pie chart?



Data on Ohio's Racial Diversity

Activity

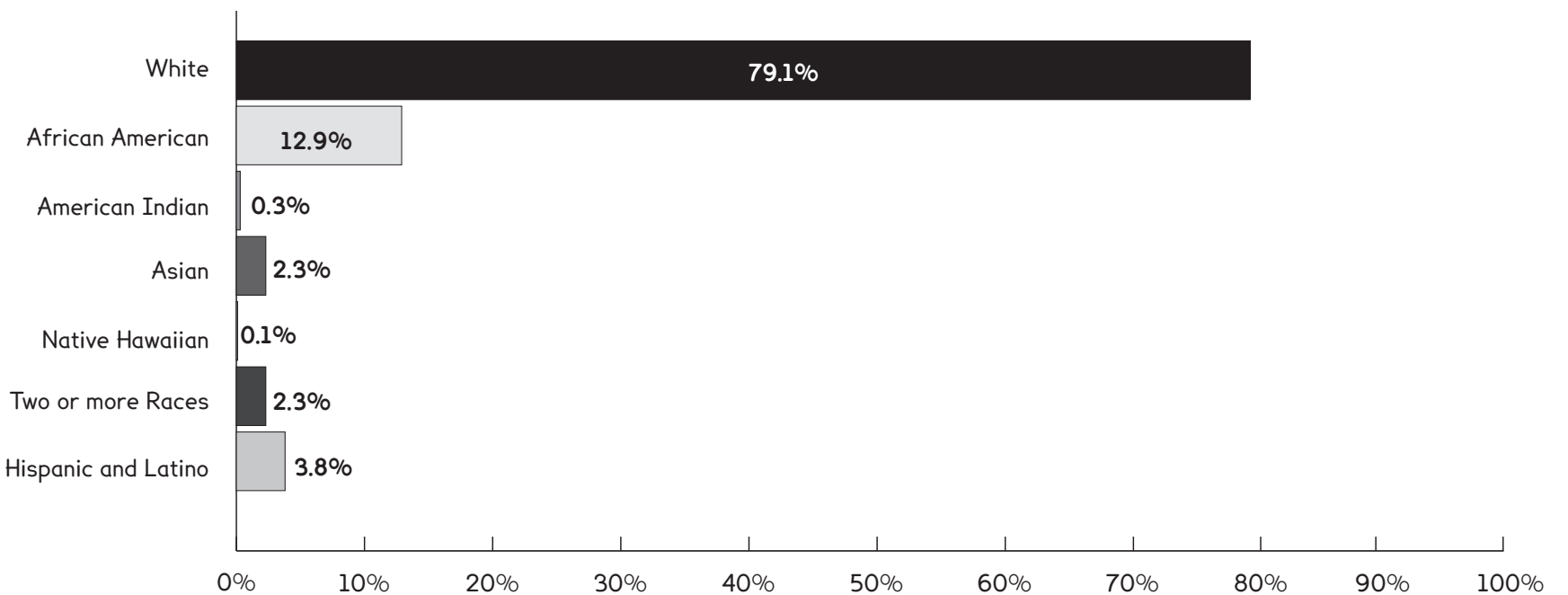
Examine the bar chart and answer the following questions.

1. What percentage of Ohioans are Asian or Asian American?

2. What is the second-largest ethnic group in Ohio?

3. What is the largest racial group in Ohio?

4. What percentage of Ohioans are American Indian or Native Hawaiian?



1. What do you think it is about America that has attracted so many immigrants throughout the centuries?
2. Long ago, only American Indians lived in Ohio. How much of the population is American Indian now, and why is it so low?
3. The United States was founded by immigrants. How do you think this inspires other immigrants to start a new life here?

Think & Review

4. Explain in your own words why it is important to always remember the phrase "all men are created equal."
5. How do we make sure that people of different religions can live happily alongside one another in Ohio and in the United States?

Let's Write

Pretend that you are getting ready to immigrate to a new country. A country that you have never been to before. Write a journal entry discussing your feelings. Where are you going and why do you have to leave the United States? Please be sure to respond to all questions asked of you in your journal entry.