

Island of Hope, Island of Tears

Viewing Questions

Answer the following questions. Questions 1 through 6 should be answered using what the people in the film say (as opposed to generalized knowledge that you might otherwise have that isn't mentioned/shown in the film). Question 7 requires you to put two ideas together in the movie. For any multiple choice questions, please clearly circle your answer.

1. Which of the following is not a major reason that people chose to leave Europe to come to America?
 - a. political unrest
 - b. joblessness/poverty
 - c. children taken into the army
 - d. desire for freedom
 - e. persecution from police
2. Which of the following is not one major difficulty that prospective immigrants faced while on the steamships coming to America.
 - a. lack of money
 - b. not enough light/sky
 - c. not enough/spoiled food
 - d. illness/lack of bathroom facilities
 - e. waves and weather
 - f. overcrowding
3. What image first greeted the immigrants upon coming to America?
4. What did many/most of the immigrants say that they brought with them to America (in terms of possessions)?
5. Why would people be rejected for citizenship in the United States?
6. Which of the following was not a difficulty that immigrants faced in their process to become Americans?
 - a. didn't speak English
 - b. helping sick family members
 - c. not enough money
 - d. strange numbers
 - e. hard to pronounce names of cities
7. Upon arriving at Ellis Island, one person said that no one was happy. Why does the end of the film show smiling people? (Why is that not a contradiction?)

Island of Hope, Island of Tears Analysis Questions

The following questions are analytical in nature and will require that you adequately explain your reasoning for your answers.

1. Explain how the title fits the film well.
2. The entire film is told in strict chronology, using all black and white photographs or video. However, the movie begins with shots of the abandoned Ellis Island building(s) in color. In doing this, it's obvious the filmmakers made these very specific decisions very consciously. With that in mind, examine the following questions:
 - a. Why would the film break chronology and begin with this when it could have ended with it?
 - b. And why choose color instead of black and white?
 - c. And why choose abandoned rather than an older photograph or video of it as the immigrants saw it back then?
3. The National Park Service now runs/operates Ellis Island as a national monument and museum that you could visit. This film, "Island of Hope, Island of Tears" is shown there to visitors. Why would this film be an especially worthwhile film to show visitors there? In other words, what does it do or show so effectively that makes it worth being the official film of the museum?
4. The film is comprised of both narration and short, spoken anecdotes from actual immigrants. What does the film gain by including the verbal anecdotes instead of simply being all narration (the way that so many historic videos do)?