

Author states,  
Narrator states,  
Joe says,

Intro, "mmm" (#), MLA Citation

First L (#) p3

**Background** The United States has always been a land of immigrants. During the 1600s and 1700s, fewer than one million people immigrated to the new country. Today, almost one million people immigrate to the United States each year, and those immigrants tend to be younger than the general population. They generally settle in areas where there are people with similar backgrounds. (This has always been true of immigrants to the United States.) Most immigrants today settle in one of seven states: California, New York, Florida, Texas, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Illinois.

# What to Bring



Essay by Naisha Jackson

CLOSE READ  
Notes  
▼

- 1. READ** ▶ As you read lines 1–24, begin to cite text evidence.
  - Circle the first subhead.
  - Underline the reasons people immigrate to the United States.
  - In the margin, list the items that immigrants have brought with them.

## Traveling Light

A hundred years ago, most immigrants to the United States arrived by ship and were allowed only one suitcase for the long voyage. They left almost all of their belongings behind. Recent immigrants have a much faster journey, but many of them still bring very few items with them.

Some modern immigrants move to the United States to find a better future, owning very little in their countries of origin. One immigrant from Central Africa arrived at Kennedy Airport in 2002 with twenty cents—he worked in a car wash as he earned his college degree in finance. A man who emigrated from Honduras brought a ceramic Zorro pencil sharpener, which is now a treasured family possession.

Other immigrants are refugees, escaping **oppression** in their homelands. Many refugees are likely to have very few possessions, and are often unable to leave their countries with those belongings they do

oppression:

have. A man who was imprisoned for nine years in a Soviet political labor camp immigrated to the United States with the help of the International Organization for Migration. He arrived with only a small flight bag. One of the few items he had with him was a  
20 toothbrush he had kept in the labor camp, carved down so it could be hidden in his pocket from the guards. The thousands of children who left Cuba in 1960 were allowed to leave with only five dollars and a small suitcase. One child's suitcase held his bilingual edition of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

### Precious Possessions

principles:

Are there any **principles** that guide what belongings an immigrant brings? There are requirements—legal documents such as passports and birth certificates—and there are items of choice. Some items you might expect, while others might come as a surprise to you.

Perhaps the two most common kinds of immigrants'  
30 belongings are religious items and photographs. Immigrants may have photographs of friends and relatives they are leaving and places they used to live. New arrivals have arrived with the following religious items in their luggage:

2. ◀ **REREAD** Reread lines 1–24. How does the subhead hint at the information in this section? Support your answer with explicit textual evidence. *MLA cite*

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3. ▶ **READ** ▶ As you read lines 25–56, continue to cite textual evidence.
- Underline the items that immigrants have brought with them.
  - In the margin, note the categories the items fall into.

- a prayer book
- a Bible
- a Koran<sup>1</sup>
- a statue of Buddha<sup>2</sup>
- religious medals
- candlesticks for Sabbath candles

40 Immigrants often also bring things that will remind them of their homelands. A Chinese family brought ashes from the wood-burning stove they used to cook their last meal at home; a Greek woman brought a night-blooming jasmine plant. Gifts from friends also occupy space in their bags: a refugee family from violence in Ghana brought beaded necklaces they had been given. Along with a few documents, some photographs, and an x-ray proving that the father had been screened for tuberculosis, these were their only possessions.

Some people bring useful objects. A man who had worked casting metal escaped past armed Iron Curtain guards in Hungary with  
50 a small tool of his trade in his pocket. He started his own foundry in the United States, and still uses the tool—and he won't let anyone else use it! The husband of the woman with the night-blooming jasmine brought his barber's scissors with him, and started his shop at the local railway station. Many immigrant families bring cooking utensils—woks, rolling pins, stainless-steel bowls—and favorite knives.

<sup>1</sup> **Koran:** the sacred book of Islam that contains the revelations of God to Mohammad.

<sup>2</sup> **Buddha:** (563? – 483? B.C.), the founder of the religion of Buddhism.

4. ◀ **REREAD** Reread lines 29–39. Why might immigrants bring religious items and photographs with them? What does the bulleted list of items reveal about the variety of religious items brought? Support your answer with explicit textual evidence.

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5. ▶ **READ** ▶ As you read lines 57–71, continue to cite textual evidence.

- Underline the items that immigrants have brought with them.
- In the margin, note the types of items mentioned in each paragraph.



Immigrants do not always know a lot about United States life; a Ukrainian family of refugees had four large duffel bags with them, packed tightly with bedding, which they had heard was expensive and inferior in America.

### Sentimental Journeys

Remembrances of old lives take up immigrant suitcase space, too. Things that have been in the family for a long time help new arrivals feel more at home, or at least less alone. Parents' or grandparents' wedding rings are seldom neglected. Other items may not seem so valuable. A man who was a doctor in Myanmar brought his diploma, even though he cannot practice medicine in the United States. A girl from China brought her bright yellow metronome, simply because it was special—none of her friends had one—and she now finds that, unlike when she was in China, she enjoys practicing the piano.

And of course, young children (and some not so young) can be counted on to bring a favorite teddy bear.

6. ◀ **REREAD AND DISCUSS** Reread lines 1–71. With a small group, discuss the structure of the article. How might a circle graph or a bar graph add to the information given in the article?

## SHORT RESPONSE

**Cite Text Evidence** What conclusions can you draw about the items immigrants chose to bring with them to the United States? **Cite text evidence** from the article in your response.

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**Background** A member of the Standing Rock Sioux, Susan Power was born in 1961 and grew up in Chicago. She spent her childhood listening to her mother tell stories about their American Indian heritage. These stories later served as inspiration for Power's writing. As a young girl, Power made frequent visits with her mother to local museums—trips that inspired her memoir "Museum Indians."

# Museum Indians

Memoir by Susan Power



CLOSE READ  
Notes

- 1. READ** ▶ As you read lines 1–16, begin to cite text evidence.
  - Underline a metaphor in the first paragraph that describes the mother's braid.
  - Underline a metaphor in the second paragraph that describes the mother's braid differently.
  - In the margin, note the adjectives the narrator uses to describe the braid.

A snake coils in my mother's dresser drawer; it is thick and black, glossy as sequins. My mother cut her hair several years ago, before I was born, but she kept one heavy braid. It is the three-foot snake I lift from its nest and handle as if it were alive.

"Mom, why did you cut your hair?" I ask. I am a little girl lifting a sleek black river into the light that streams through the kitchen window. Mom turns to me.

"It gave me headaches. Now put that away and wash your hands for lunch."

10 "You won't cut *my* hair, will you?" I'm sure this is a whine.

"No, just a little trim now and then to even the ends."

I return the dark snake to its nest among my mother's slippers, arranging it so that its thin tail hides beneath the wide mouth sheared

by scissors. My mother keeps her promise and lets my hair grow long, but I am only half of her; my thin brown braids will reach the middle of my back, and in maturity will look like tiny garden snakes.

My mother tells me stories every day: while she cleans, while she cooks, on our way to the library, standing in the checkout line at the supermarket. I like to share her stories with other people, and chatter  
20 like a monkey when I am able to command adult attention.

“She left the reservation when she was sixteen years old,” I tell my audience. Sixteen sounds very old to me, but I always state the number because it seems integral to my recitation. “She had never been on a train before, or used a telephone. She left Standing Rock to take a job in Chicago so she could help out the family during the war. She was petrified of all the strange people and new surroundings; she stayed in her seat all the way from McLaughlin, South Dakota, to Chicago, Illinois, and didn’t move once.”

I usually laugh after saying this, because I cannot imagine my  
30 mother being afraid of anything. She is so tall, a true Dakota woman; she rises against the sun like a skyscraper, and when I draw her picture in my notebook, she takes up the entire page. She talks politics and attends sit-ins,<sup>1</sup> wrestles with the Chicago police and says what’s on her mind.

<sup>1</sup> **sit-ins:** organized protest demonstrations in which participants seat themselves in appropriate places and refuse to move; the act of occupying the seats or an area of a segregated establishment to protest racial discrimination.

2. **◀ REREAD** Reread lines 12–16. Explain what the narrator means when she says “I am only half of her.” Support your answer with explicit textual evidence.

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3. **▶ READ** As you read lines 17–34, continue to cite textual evidence.
- Underline a simile about the narrator, and in the margin, explain how it helps reveal the narrator’s personality.
  - Underline a simile about the mother, and in the margin, describe what it reveals about the narrator’s view of her mother.



“ She is so tall, a true Dakota woman; she rises against the sun like a skyscraper. . . . ”

I am her small shadow and witness. I am the timid daughter who can rage only on paper.

We don't have much money, but Mom takes me from one end of the city to the other on foot, on buses. I will grow up believing that Chicago belongs to me, because it was given to me by my mother.

- 40 Nearly every week we tour the Historical Society, and Mom makes a point of complaining about the statue that depicts an Indian man about to kill a white woman and her children: “This is the only monument to the history of Indians in this area that you have on exhibit. It's a shame because it is completely one-sided. Children who see this will think this is what Indians are all about.”

My mother lectures the guides and their bosses, until eventually that statue disappears.

Some days we haunt the Art Institute, and my mother pauses before a Picasso.<sup>2</sup>

- 50 “He did this during his blue period,” she tells me.

I squint at the blue man holding a blue guitar. “Was he very sad?” I ask.

“Yes, I think he was.” My mother takes my hand and looks away from the painting. I can see a story developing behind her eyes, and I tug on her arm to release the words. She will tell me why Picasso was blue, what his thoughts were as he painted this canvas. She relates anecdotes I will never find in books, never see footnoted in a

<sup>2</sup> **Picasso:** Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), Spanish artist whose work is some of the most influential in modern art.

4. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 35–59, continue to cite textual evidence.

- Underline the text that reveals the mother's personality.
- Circle the text that reveals how the narrator sees herself.
- Make a note in the margin to explain the difference between the narrator and her mother.

intrigue:

biography of the master artist. I don't even bother to check these references because I like my mother's version best.

60 When Mom is down, we go to see the mummies at the Field Museum of Natural History. The Egyptian dead sleep in the basement, most of them still shrouded in their wrappings.

"These were people like us," my mother whispers. She pulls me into her waist. "They had dreams and **intrigues** and problems with their teeth. They thought their one particular life was of the utmost significance. And now, just *look* at them." My mother never fails to brighten. "So what's the use of worrying too hard or too long? Might as well be cheerful."

70 Before we leave this place, we always visit my great-grandmother's buckskin<sup>3</sup> dress. We mount the stairs and walk through the museum's main hall—past the dinosaur bones all strung together, and the stuffed elephants lifting their trunks in a mute trumpet.

disconcerting:

The clothed figures are **disconcerting** because they have no heads. I think of them as dead Indians. We reach the traditional outfits of the Sioux in the Plains Indian section, and there is the dress, as magnificent as I remembered. The yoke<sup>4</sup> is completely beaded—I know the garment must be heavy to wear. My great-grandmother

<sup>3</sup> **buckskin**: leather made from deerskin.

<sup>4</sup> **yoke**: a piece that supports the gathered parts of a garment.

5. ◀ **REREAD** Reread lines 51–59. What does the narrator mean when she says "I can see a story developing behind her eyes" (line 54)? Support your answer with explicit textual evidence.

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6. ▶ **READ** Read lines 60–79, and underline text that reveals the mother's outlook on life.



used blue beads as a background for the geometrical design, and I point to the azure expanse.

80 “Was this her blue period?” I ask my mother. She hushes me unexpectedly, she will not play the game. I come to understand that this is a solemn call, and we stand before the glass case as we would before a grave.

“I don’t know how this got out of the family,” Mom murmurs. I feel helpless beside her, wishing I could reach through the glass to disrobe the headless mannequin. My mother belongs in a grand buckskin dress such as this, even though her hair is now too short to braid and has been trained to curl at the edges in a saucy flip.

90 We leave our fingerprints on the glass, two sets of hands at different heights pressing against the barrier. Mom is sad to leave.

“I hope she knows we visit her dress,” my mother says.

There is a little buffalo across the hall, stuffed and staring. Mom doesn’t always have the heart to greet him. Some days we slip out of the museum without finding his stall.

“You don’t belong here,” Mom tells him on those rare occasions when she feels she must pay her respects. “We honor you,” she continues, “because you are a creature of great endurance and great generosity. You provided us with so many things that helped us to survive. It makes me angry to see you like this.”

100 Few things can make my mother cry; the buffalo is one of them.

“I am just like you,” she whispers. “I don’t belong here either. We should be in the Dakotas, somewhere a little bit east of the Missouri River. This crazy city is not a fit home for buffalo or Dakotas.”

7. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 80–110, continue to cite textual evidence.
- Underline what the mother says to the buffalo, and explain what she means in the margin.
  - Circle text that reveals the narrator’s feelings about the city.

I take my mother's hand to hold her in place. I am a city child, nervous around livestock and lonely on the plains. I am afraid of a sky without light pollution—I never knew there could be so many stars. I lead my mother from the museum so she will forget the sense of loss. From the marble steps we can see Lake Shore Drive spill ahead of us, and I sweep my arm to the side as if I were responsible for this view. I introduce my mother to the city she gave me. I call her home.

8. ◀ **REREAD AND DISCUSS** Why does seeing the little buffalo make the mother cry? Discuss your thoughts with a partner.

## SHORT RESPONSE

**Cite Text Evidence** Compare and contrast the personalities of the narrator and her mother. Review your reading notes, and be sure to **cite text evidence** in your response.

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