

Reading Comprehension

7th Grade Worksheet

Read the paragraph to answer the following questions:

A Man Without a Language

A pretty good story was told by an immigration official during the course of a lecture at the Rifles Armory last Friday evening. The lecturer was exhibiting types of arrivals at the Ellis Island immigrant station in New York, with the stereopticon views. Said he: "There came a fellow on a ship one day, whose face and make-up was such the inspection officers could not for the life of 'em determine the particular country whence he came. An Italian interpreter was called to ask him the usual questions. He looked blank. A German interpreter gave the alien a greeting. Then he was accosted in turn by linguists in Slavak, Scandinavian, Greek and Finnish, but nary a sign from the immigrant that he understood a syllable.

Not less than twenty-two different tongues and dialects were tried in an effort to discover the nationality of the darned new arrival, who looked as though he might have hailed from any one of the countries where all of these languages were spoken, but he didn't say a word, just stood and stared at the officers who were interrogating him. Finally he turned to them and exclaimed: "For the love of God, is there anybody around here who can speak English?"

Click on the link to view the actual article in The Times Washington, Sunday March 23, 1902,
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87062245/1902-03-23/ed-1/seq-32/>

1) What is the main idea in the paragraph?

2) What is the setting?

THE PORTAL TO TEXAS HISTORY

Embark on a Voyage of Discovery

<http://texashistory.unt.edu>

3) What was the problem? How was it solved?

4) List the different languages the immigrant in the story was greeted in.

5) In your own words, describe why it was important to speak the same language?

6) Use the permalinks and buttons on slide 5 to learn more about immigrants learning basic skills in America. In your own words, describe how they did this.

7) Why do you think this was important? Give two reasons to support your view.
