

On a class trip to Ellis Island, orphan Dominic Cantori is mysteriously transported back to 1908 Italy, where he learns about his heritage and his family.
- Scholastic

THEMES To Reinforce



Immigration, Family, Foster Care, Loss

Build Background

Show the YouTube video “**Immigration Ellis Island 1911**” and discuss the purpose of immigration (poverty, political, etc.) and the ramifications it had on families (separation, loss, name change, etc.).

Create Context

Refer to the map in the back of the book so students will understand the journey that the boys will travel from Avellino (fictional city) to Calabria later in the story. Show pictures of lemon groves in Italy and discuss the differences of this terrain and the period (1908).


Lastly, students will need an understanding of what it means to be an orphan and what it would mean to be in foster care.



Discussion Starters

1. Dominic creates a “dream family” and on his field trip to Ellis Island goes from photo to photo trying on different families. What does the author mean by this phrase and what is Dominic really looking for?
2. Moving to a new country, city or even a new school is not easy. How can the E in NED help you to be different when someone new comes to your school?
3. The tour guide says Ellis Island has been called “The Island of Hope,” but also the “Island of Tears” (pg. 8). What do these phrases mean? How can the same place be given such opposing descriptions?
4. Determine the theme(s) of this book. Identify the theme or themes and give examples from the book to support each theme.

More Resources

 Accelerated Reading Quiz: 24984

 ellisland.org



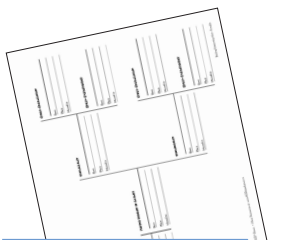
Writing Prompt

On page 121, refer to what the priest says - “*Our whole world, our life, is very much like that little patch of hillside you boys have lived on...*” and ending with “*...There are beautiful flowers, and olives, and lemons. But there are bad things too...good and bad, side by side... And it is our strength that makes us who we are.*” Do you agree? Define the word resilience, relate it to this quote and include it within your explanation. What has been a hardship for you? How did you feel when the hardship occurred and how do you feel about it now? What kind of behaviors did you see at first and how did they improve as time went on?



Activity

Follow the story of four generations of one side of your family. Interview relatives to find out their names, birth date and place and if/where they moved during their life. Create a multimedia presentation with a map, plotted color dots on important location, photos, etc. Share your findings with the class and your own family.



 PRINTABLE

My Family

Four generations of my family

Research four generations of one side of your family, identifying their name, birth date and place and if/where they moved during their life. Use a different color to represent each generation. Consider using the free search tool on ellisland.org as a resource, if applicable to your family's story.

me

Born _____

Place _____

Moved to _____

Parent (mother or father)

Born _____

Place _____

Moved to _____

grandfather

Born _____

Place _____

Moved to _____

Great-Grandfather

Born _____

Place _____

Moved to _____

Great-Grandmother

Born _____

Place _____

Moved to _____

grandmother

Born _____

Place _____

Moved to _____

Great-Grandfather

Born _____

Place _____

Moved to _____

Great-Grandmother

Born _____

Place _____

Moved to _____