

Migration

Many of the people who owned and lived in Historic New England's 36 properties could trace their family histories to other parts of the country and other parts of the world. Looking at migration routes with students helps them to better understand their individual family histories and the diversity of their classrooms and communities.

We use the term migration here, rather than immigration, because migration is a more inclusive concept. While one student in a classroom may have grandparents from Italy and another student was born in China, others may come from families that have lost their connection to their immigrant past, and for some families, especially Native-American and African-American families, immigration is simply not part of their family stories. Most families, on the other hand, have experienced migration on some level—whether that be moving from one part of the world to another, from one region of this county to another, or from one neighborhood to another in their home town.

Have students talk to their family members about different places they have lived, making a list in chronological order, working back from the present. Make sure students understand that if they can only find out one or two places before where they live now, that's alright. In the classroom, put a large map up on a corkboard or a piece of foam core. Put a pin in your home town and have students stick pins in the map indicating at least one of the places where their families lived in the past. Connect the students' pins to the pin in your home town with string.

As a class, discuss the many different places where their families have lived. Whose family traveled the farthest? When did the families move and what kind of transportation did they use? Why did they decide to move?



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Write down your current address. Then list the places that your family has lived working backwards through time. Ask family members for help.

1. Current Address: _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

