

INTERPRETING POLITICAL CARTOONS



Activity 7

THE GATES TO IMMIGRATION CLOSE

During World War I, there was a rise in antiforeign feelings among Americans. All over the country, for example, German street names were replaced with non-German names. After the war, a new flood of immigrants entered the country, and antiforeign feelings rose to a fever pitch. Workers worried that immigrants would compete for jobs and, because they would work for lower wages, drive down wages. Many feared that a wave of communism would spread over the land. As a result, many Americans grew suspicious of people who were "different." During the 1920s, the United States government passed a series of laws restricting immigration. These new laws established a quota system, which limited the number of immigrants entering the United States.

Directions: The cartoon on this page represents the feelings of millions of Americans as the decade of the 1920s got underway. Study the cartoon, and then answer the questions that follow.



ANALYZING THE CARTOON (*continued*)

1. Who is the main character in the cartoon? What is he doing?

2. Who are the people on shore? Why are they happy?

3. How does the cartoonist use stereotyping and caricature to show his opposition to immigration?

CRITICAL THINKING

4. **Drawing Conclusions** What factors mentioned in the introduction to this activity have led to anti-immigrant feelings in the United States in recent years? What factors behind opposition to immigration today are not mentioned in the introduction?

5. **Making Predictions** What kind of impact do you think such a cartoon would have today?

6. **Making Generalizations** Do you think there was an outcry when this cartoon appeared in a newspaper in the 1920s? Why was it acceptable then and would not be acceptable today?
