

## Summary: Immigration in the 1900s

### Limiting Immigration

In the 1920s, Congress passed laws to limit immigration. The government used quotas. The quotas limited the numbers of people that could immigrate. The total number of immigrants dropped to 240,000 a year. The government gave each country a quota. Some countries, such as England and Germany, had higher quotas. Other countries, such as Italy and Spain, had low quotas. Few Asians or Africans were allowed to enter.

The quotas of the 1920s did not affect Latin American or Canadian immigrants. Mexican workers had become very important to the U.S. economy. In the late 1800s, many Mexicans moved to the western United States to work on farms, mines, and railroads. In the 1950s, about 200,000 braceros came every year because there was a shortage of farm workers. Many more Mexican workers crossed the border without permission. They earned more money in the United States than in Mexico. They worked hard and they accepted lower pay than American workers. Many people in the United States felt they were taking jobs from United States citizens.

### A New Era of Immigration

In the 1950s and 1960s, many people felt the old immigration laws were not fair. Businesses also needed more workers. In 1965, the government passed the Immigration and Nationality Act. The new law changed quotas and allowed more people to immigrate. Relatives of people who were already in the United States could join their families. People with valuable skills could also come. Immigration from Asia, Latin America, and southern Europe doubled.

In the late 1900s, many refugees left their countries to escape war, persecution, or hunger. President Jimmy Carter said it was a simple human duty to help them. Many immigrants came to the United States because they saw it as a land of freedom. They often built communities with other refugees from their home country. Their lives were hard. Still, they added to the economy and culture of the United States.



### Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

**quota** *noun*, the maximum number of people allowed to enter a country

**bracero** *noun*, a Spanish word for laborer

**refugee** *noun*, a person who has left his or her home country to escape danger



### After You Read

**REVIEW** What effect did quotas have on immigration? Circle the sentence that tells the answer.

**REVIEW** What are two ways in which immigration changed after 1965?

Highlight the sentences that tell about two new groups that came after the government changed immigration laws.