

## 2 Reading Comprehension – Answer Key

Text: “Ellis Island”, from: Peter Freese, *New York*, Viewfinder Topics (München: Langenscheidt, 2011), pp. 9-11.

### B QUESTIONS AND TASKS

**1. Ellis Island is ... (tick the two correct options)**

- a small, tropical island.
- a small island in New York Harbor.
- barely visible because of the shadow of the Statue of Liberty.
- almost nine times as large than it originally was.

**2. Before 1890, Ellis Island had a varied history. (Tick the two correct statements)**

- The sandy island was especially good for a certain kind of rose.
- It was a meeting-place for pirates.
- It was bought by the US government and integrated into a harbor defense system.
- The last 100 years before 1890 were quite exciting.

**3. Why were first and second class passengers not usually examined at Ellis Island? In what cases did they have to go there anyway?**

The passengers who could afford the prices of a first or second class ticket were thought to be wealthy enough to look after their own health and not to “become a burden to the state”. If they had problems with their health or with the law, they had to go to Ellis Island all the same.

**4. What was unpleasant for the third class passengers on the ships?**

They did not have much space for themselves, and the hygienic situation was very poor; also they did not get any fresh air because they were not allowed on deck.

**5. Decide whether the following statements about ll. 97–132 are true, false or not in the text.**

	true	false	not in text
a) If an immigrant did not have papers, he had to wait two days.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) The doctors were soon able to assess a person's health fast.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) The immigrants had to pass a written examination.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) 98 per cent of the immigrants were allowed to enter the US.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**6. How did immigration numbers change between 1900 and 1920?**

At first, immigration numbers rose (with a peak in 1907), but after the U.S. had entered World War I, immigration went down.

**7. How did the authorities try to keep the number of immigrants under control? (Do not tick more than 2 options)**

- By excluding people from certain countries.
- By keeping out people who had planned to make a work contract after they arrived.
- By testing if the immigrants could shoot with a bow and arrows.
- By testing if the immigrants could read and write.
- By excluding people of certain religions.

**8. What was the aim of the Quota Laws and the National Origins Act?**

They were supposed to keep the ethnic mixture of people the same; another reason was that immigrants from southern and eastern

Europe were somehow inferior to the “old immigrants” from northern and western Europe.

9. During World War II, Ellis Island served as ...  
(Do not tick more than 2 options)

- ... a prison.
- ... a shop for seamen.
- ... a Coast Guard training center.
- ... a store-room for suitcases and boxes.

10. Why did the US spend so much money on the restoration of Ellis Island? What do you think?

The reason is probably a nostalgic feeling of many American citizens whose ancestors entered the U.S. through Ellis Island. Because this was their door to the new world, even Americans today feel it was of great importance for the growth of the nation and its population and thus has to be preserved.

*(Peter Ringeisen)*