Reasons to Leave

Tracing motives for nineteenth-century migration

6-12.US1.46 "Analyze the religious, political, and economic motives of 19th-century immigrants who came to North America."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline conditions that pushed people to leave, circle what they hoped to find in North America, and write R, P, or E beside details that show religious, political, or economic motives.

Three Journeys Across the Atlantic

1. In the 1840s, a family in Ireland might find that the potato crop, its main food source, had rotted in the field. During the Great Famine, about a million people died, and many others left. Some tenants still owed rent to landlords even as they struggled to eat. For many who crossed the Atlantic, leaving was an economic choice made under desperate pressure: they hoped to earn wages and buy food in North American cities. Irish Catholics also faced a long history of unequal treatment under British rule, though the immediate push for many famine migrants was hunger and poverty.

2. In 1848, uprisings spread across German states. Protesters called for elected governments and more civil rights, but rulers defeated many of the revolts. Some people who had backed the uprisings fled because they feared arrest or punishment. A former protester might choose the United States to speak and organize more freely. Other Germans left because farmland was scarce or jobs were hard to find, and a single family could care about both politics and income. Their reasons were not identical: one person might flee a ruler, while a neighbor might mainly seek a steady living.

3. In the 1880s, many Jewish families left the Russian Empire, which included lands in eastern Europe. The government restricted where most Jews could live and limited their opportunities to work or study. Violent attacks called pogroms made some families fear for their safety. For these migrants, religious persecution and economic limits could work together: a family might seek both a safer place to practice Judaism and a chance to earn a living. Some settled in North American cities, where relatives or neighbors from home could help them find housing and jobs. A new address did not erase the hardships they had faced.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why would calling Irish migration only a search for wages leave out part of the story? Use two details from the passage.

2. How could two neighbors in the German states leave for different reasons after 1848? Name each motive and its cause.

3. Why might a Jewish family's decision to leave the Russian Empire fit more than one motive category? Give one passage detail for each category.

4. Compare the role of safety in German protesters' and Jewish families' decisions to leave. What different dangers did they face?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence letter from an imagined migrant in one setting from the passage. Explain two different motives for leaving, connect each to a condition at home, and describe what you hope to find in North America without copying a sentence from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Reasons to Leave

GRADES 6-12 · 6-12.US1.46

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline conditions that pushed people to leave, circle what they hoped to find in North America, and write R, P, or E beside details that show religious, political, or economic motives. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why would calling Irish migration only a search for wages leave out part of the story? Use two details from the passage.	**The potato crop failed, causing hunger, and some tenants still owed rent while struggling to eat. Wages mattered because families needed food.**
2	How could two neighbors in the German states leave for different reasons after 1848? Name each motive and its cause.	**One might leave for political reasons after supporting a defeated uprising and fearing punishment. Another might leave for economic reasons because farmland or jobs were scarce.**
3	Why might a Jewish family's decision to leave the Russian Empire fit more than one motive category? Give one passage detail for each category.	**Religious persecution, including violent pogroms, threatened Jewish families. Limits on work also gave them an economic reason to leave.**
4	Compare the role of safety in German protesters' and Jewish families' decisions to leave. What different dangers did they face?	**Both groups could leave to seek safety. German protesters feared arrest or punishment for political activity, while Jewish families faced violent attacks linked to religious persecution.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear Cousin, I supported the protests for an elected government, and now I fear that the rulers will punish me. The little farmland available also makes it hard for me to support our family. I plan to travel to the United States for greater freedom to speak and a chance to earn steady wages. I hope you will join me once I find work.

Accept other passage-supported interpretations that connect a condition at home to a religious, political, or economic motive. For the letter, check for four sentences, two distinct motives in one setting, and a hope for life in North America.