

„Moving to the Promised Land?” – Immigration to the US

Maria Keller was only thirteen years old when she left her small village in southern Germany in 1903. Her family had struggled for many years. Her father had lost his job, and her mother often worried about how they would survive the next winter. One day, a letter arrived from Maria's uncle in Ohio. "We can help you here," he wrote. "There is work, and life is better." Maria's parents talked for many evenings. Finally, her father said, "We have no other choice. We must leave Europe and start a new life in America."

For Maria, the idea of moving across the ocean felt exciting and terrifying at the same time. "America sounds so far away," she said softly. Her mother nodded. "I know. But we must be brave." Maria wanted to believe her parents, but she felt a strong connection to her village, her friends and her school. Everything there was part of her identity.

In early April, the family began their journey. First, they travelled by train to Hamburg. Maria had never been on a train before. "It's so fast," she said, watching the fields rush by. Her father looked out of the window and answered, "This is the beginning of something new." At the harbor, Maria saw their ship for the first time. "This ship is enormous," she whispered. When they stepped on board, her stomach tightened. She knew she was leaving everything familiar behind. The journey across the Atlantic lasted twelve days. The ship was crowded, and many people spoke languages Maria didn't understand. Sometimes she felt hopeful and dreamed of a warm house and good food. But on stormy nights, she cried, "I'm scared." Her mother held her hand and said, "You are not alone."

When the ship reached New York Harbor, Maria ran to the deck. „Look!" her father said, "The Statue of Liberty!" People around them cried, laughed, and hugged each other. On Ellis Island, doctors checked their health, and officials asked many questions. "Where are you planning to settle?" one man asked. After hours of waiting, a woman smiled and said, "Welcome to the United States." Maria took a deep breath. She didn't know what the future would bring, but she felt ready to face it with hope and her family by her side.

Task 1) Reading Comprehension: Answer in full sentences!

- a. **Why did Maria's family decide to leave Germany?** Give two reasons from the text!
- b. **How does Maria feel about moving to America at the beginning of the story?** Name two feelings and explain why!
- c. **What is Maria's journey like from Germany to the United States?**
- d. **What happens when the family arrives in New York and on Ellis Island?**
- e. **How does Maria feel at the end of the story and why?**

Task 2) Grammar in Action: Reported Speech

- a) Find examples of direct speech in the text above and rewrite them in reported speech!
- b) Complete the remaining sentences below in reported speech!

Example: “It’s so fast,” she said, watching the fields rush by. = She said that it was so fast while she was watching the fields rush by.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. The officer explained: “Some families arrive with nothing but hope. We try to help them start again”.

6. One passenger hoped: “I want to find work quickly. My children need a safe future.”

7. “I didn’t sleep last night. The waves were too strong” Maria told her mother.

Task 3) Research & Mediation:

Read the email from the editorial team of the NYC school magazine. Write an article (150–200 words) in which you answer their three questions. Use one German news article about migration to find information and summarize the most important points in English. Then connect these ideas to Maria's story and explain similarities and differences between migration in 1903 and today.

Your partner school in New York City has asked you to contribute an article to their online school magazine. The editorial team of the school's magazine sent you this email:

Hi! We are working on an issue about migration to the US in the past and today. Your teacher told us you were working on Maria's story from 1903, and it made us think about how migration has always shaped people's lives.

For our next issue, we would love a short article from students in Germany. Here are our guiding questions:

- 1. Why is it important to learn about personal immigration stories like Maria's? What can such stories teach young people today?*
- 2. What does migration look like in Germany today? What are the main reasons why people move to, or leave Germany?*
- 3. How do these modern stories compare to Maria's experiences? Are there similarities or differences?*

Please use a German news article to help you explain the situation today and summarize the important information in English.

We are looking forward to reading your articles!

Best Wishes

The Editorial Team, NYC School Magazine