

Social Studies SKILLBUILDER

Reading a Line Graph

Why Learn This Skill?

Graphs are a way of showing numbers visually, making them easier to read and understand. Graphs are often used to compare changes over time or differences between places, groups of people, or related events.

Learning the Skill

On a line graph, numbers usually appear along the left side of the graph, or the vertical axis. Time is usually shown along the bottom of the graph, or the horizontal axis. A line on the graph shows whether the numbers go up or down over time. Sometimes a graph contains more than one line to record two or more related quantities.

To read a line graph, follow these steps:

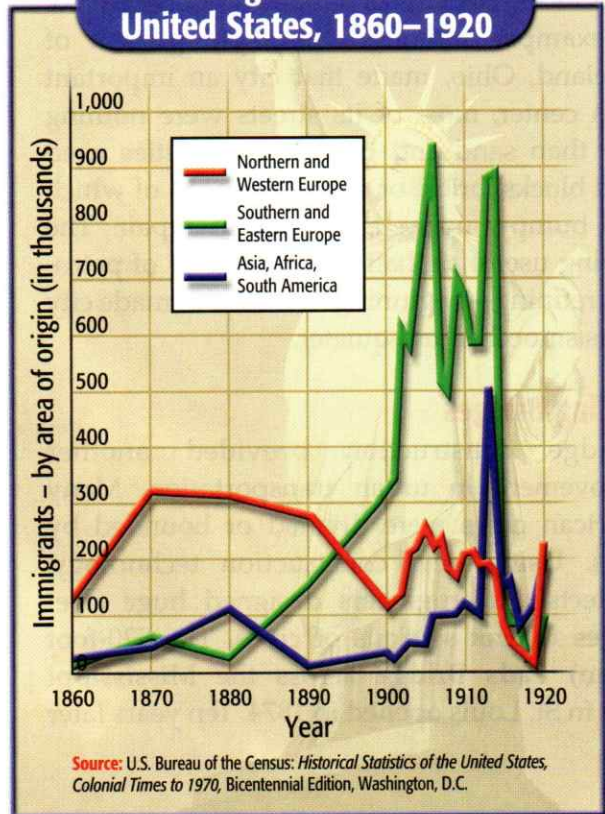
- Read the title of the graph.
- Read the information on the horizontal axis and the vertical axis.
- Study the points where the line intersects the grid on the line graph. This step tells you what amount existed at a given time.
- Study the changes over time that the line on the graph illustrates. Look for increases, decreases, and sudden shifts.
- Draw conclusions from the statistics presented. What trends or patterns appear?

Practicing the Skill

Study the line graph on this page and answer the following questions.

- 1 What is the subject of this line graph?
- 2 What information is presented on the horizontal axis? On the vertical axis?
- 3 In about what year did immigration from northern and western Europe peak?

Immigration to the United States, 1860–1920



- 4 In about what year was immigration from Asia, Africa, and South America the lowest?
- 5 During what two decades did immigration from southern and eastern Europe peak?

Applying the Skill

Making a Line Graph Keep track of the number of hours you spend on homework each day for a one-week period. Chart the information on a line graph.



Glencoe's **Skillbuilder Interactive Workbook CD-ROM, Level 1**, provides instruction and practice in key social studies skills.