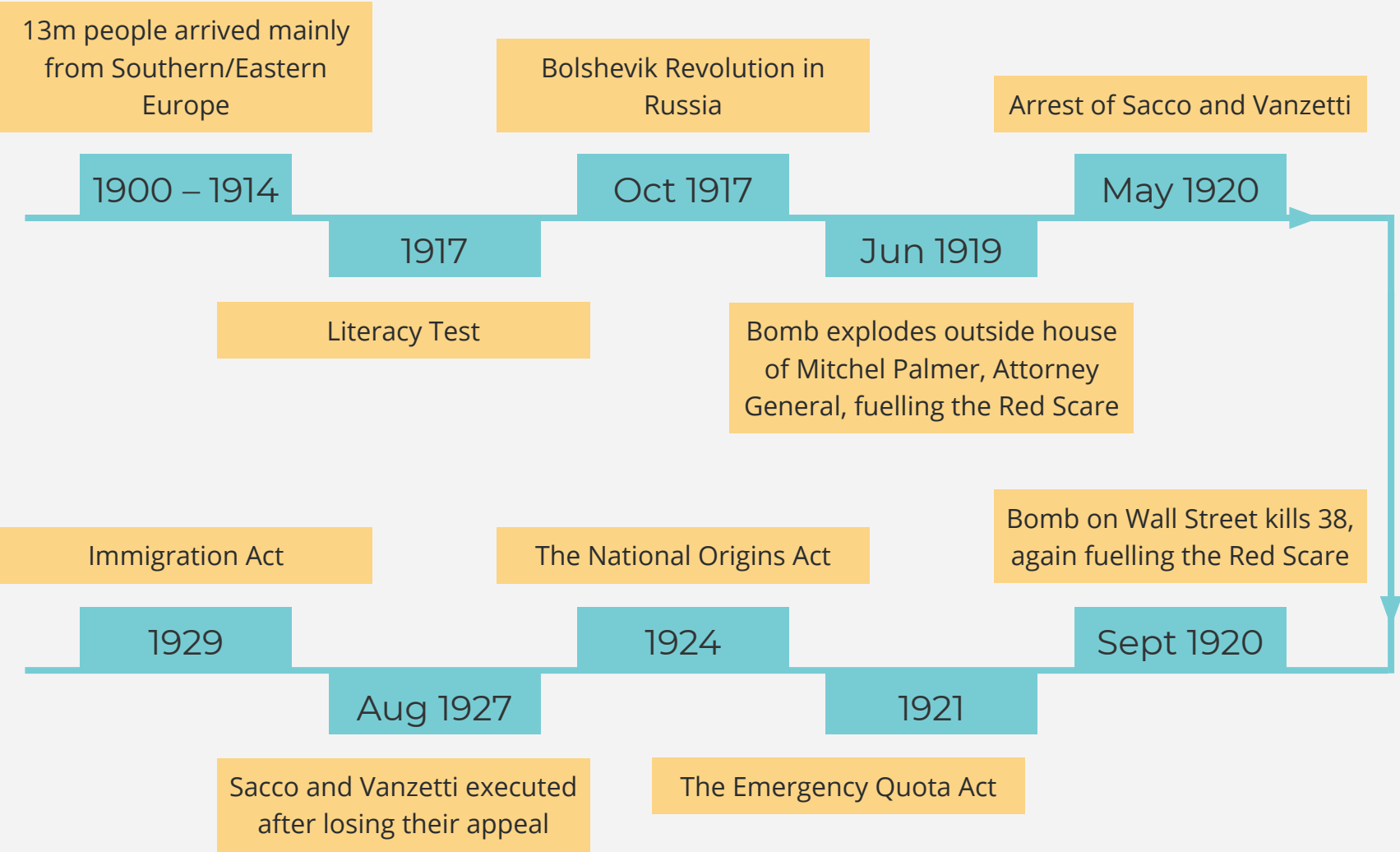


## Key Question 1 : Why did immigration become such a major issue in American society?

### Timeline of events



Key words	
Melting Pot	people from different countries 'blending' together
Open Door Policy	accepting immigrants from various countries
Push factors	reasons people want to leave their own countries
Pull factors	factors that attracted people to the USA
Ellis Island	70% of immigrants arrived at Ellis Island near New York
WASP	white Anglo-Saxon Protestant
Red Scare	concern regarding the spread of communist and socialist ideas
Xenophobia	dislike of, or prejudice against people from other countries.
Communism	system where property is owned by community
Palmer Raids	series of arrests of thousands of suspected Communists

### The Red Scare

- Many Americans were frightened by the Communist Revolution that had happened in Russia in October 1917.
  - Many Americans feared that communist and anarchist ideas would spread. They viewed immigrants with increasing suspicion and became increasingly xenophobic.
  - There were over 3,000 cases of industrial strikes in 1919, including the Boston Police force.
  - Feelings of anger and animosity arose towards communists and many Americans believed that some of the events of 1919 and 1920 were linked to communism.
  - In September 1920, a bomb exploded on Wall Street killing 38 people, and another bomb destroyed the front of the Attorney General, A. Mitchell Palmer’s house.
  - These events gave rise to the Red Scare and fear that communism was a real danger that threatened the American way of life.
- The Palmer Raids
- United States Attorney General, A. Mitchell Palmer organised attacks against left wing organisations. Palmer spread rumours about the **Red Scare** saying that there were around 150,000 communists living in the country (0.1 per cent of the population).
  - As many as 6,000 were arrested and held in a prison without a hearing and hundreds were deported. The Palmer Raids were a response to imaginary threats. Eventually they were released and the Red Scare receded.

## Key Question 1 : Why did immigration become such a major issue in American society?

### Melting Pot

- The **Open Door policy** hoped America would be a **melting pot** and the immigrants would be workers that would make the country richer. By 1919, more than 40 million people had arrived.
- The aim of the Open Door policy was to make immigration as easy as possible. There was a mixture of people living in America during this period such as the early immigrants, Native Americans, Black Americans, Eastern and southern Europeans, Hispanics and Asian people.
- A combination of **push and pull** factors made people immigrate to the USA. The push factors made people want to leave their own countries, and the pull factors attracted them to the USA. For example; escaping from poverty in their own country, escaping from political and economic persecution, a promise of religious tolerance and a chance to practice their faith safely, a plentiful supply of land and the hope of owning property, creating a better life, a spirit of adventure, going to a country of opportunity and equal opportunity.
- Most of the immigrants travelled by sea, and more than 70 per cent arrived on Ellis Island near New York. During the busiest periods, as many as 5,000 people a day arrived there. Most were young - in 1900 the average age was 24. The first view the immigrants saw as they arrived in America on their way to Ellis Island was the Statue of Liberty.

### Important concept

The notion of the 'melting pot' and the 'open door' had served its purpose once the American economy was the strongest in the world. After that, a combination of the Red Scare and immigrants arriving from poorer parts of the world meant that the open door began to close.

### Restricting Entry

- With the number of immigrants increasing, some Americans began to question the government's Open Door policy.
- Immigrants had tended to come from northern and western Europe and were White Anglo Saxon Protestants (WASPs). Between 1900 and 1914, 13 million arrived, mainly from southern and eastern Europe – Italy, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Western Poland and Greece.
- People started feeling angry towards these 'new' immigrants because they were often poor, illiterate and many were Roman Catholics or Jews, therefore from a different cultural and religious background.
- The fear of communism spread following the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 which led to the Red Scare.
- As a result, the US Congress passed laws to restrict immigration and each law in turn was more severe than the previous one.
- **Literacy Test, 1917** – a series of reading and writing tests. Many of the poorer immigrants had received no education and therefore failed the tests and were refused entry.
- **The Emergency Quota Act, 1921** - restricted the number of immigrants to 357,000 per year, and also set down a quota - only 3 per cent of the total population of any overseas group already in the USA in 1910 could come in after 1921.
- **The National Origins Act, 1924** – This law cut the quota of immigrants to 2 per cent of its population in the USA in 1890.
- **Immigration Act, 1929** – This made the quotas of the 1924 act permanent and restricted immigration to 150,000 per year.

### Sacco and Vanzetti

- In May 1920, two Italian immigrants, Sacco and Vanzetti, were arrested for armed robbery of a shoe factory, during which two people were killed.
- They had radical anti-government pamphlets in the car when they were arrested and both owned guns. They could not indisputably prove where they had been on the day of the murders.
- From the beginning, public opinion was against them because of their political ideas and because they were immigrants.
- Although 61 witnesses said they had seen them, the defence had 107 witnesses alleging that they had seen them somewhere else when the crime was committed.
- During the court case in May 1921, Judge Webster Thayer was rather openly prejudiced against the two men. They were found guilty.
- Although a man named Celestino Madeiros later admitted that he had committed the crime, Sacco and Vanzetti lost their appeal.
- In August 1927, they were both executed by electrocution in Charlestown prison.
- This case highlighted the attitudes and discrimination immigrants experienced.