Name: Date: Score: / 6

# Ellis Island: Reading Comprehension

Nonfiction: History · about 240 words

Read the passage. Then answer each question. Circle the best answer or write your answer on the lines.

## Ellis Island

Between 1892 and 1954, more than 12 million immigrants passed through Ellis Island, a small island in New York Harbor. For many, it was their first stop in America. Today, it is estimated that about 40 percent of Americans have at least one ancestor who arrived through Ellis Island.

Most immigrants came by steamship from Europe. They traveled for one to two weeks, often crowded below deck in what was called steerage, the cheapest section of the ship. When they finally sailed into the harbor and saw the Statue of Liberty, many cheered or cried with relief.

On Ellis Island, immigrants climbed a steep staircase to the Great Hall. Doctors quietly watched them climb, looking for anyone who seemed sick or out of breath. Then the newcomers waited in long lines for medical exams and questions from inspectors. Inspectors asked their names, where they were going, and whether they had work or family waiting.

For most people, the process took only a few hours. About 98 percent were allowed to enter the country. Those with contagious diseases or other problems might be held for treatment or sent back, which is why some called Ellis Island the "Island of Tears."

Immigrants who passed through went on to build railroads, work in factories, start businesses, and raise families across the nation. Today, Ellis Island is a museum where visitors can search records to find the names of their own relatives.

1. **Main idea:** What is this passage mostly about?

   A. Ellis Island and the immigrants who passed through it  B. the Statue of Liberty's design  C. how doctors work  D. how steamships were built

2. **Detail:** About how many immigrants passed through Ellis Island?

   A. more than 12 million  B. 1 billion  C. about 1,000  D. about 100,000

3. **Vocabulary:** Steerage was...

   A. the captain's room  B. the top deck  C. a kind of food  D. the cheapest section of a ship

4. **Inference:** Why did doctors watch immigrants climb the staircase?

   A. to spot anyone who seemed sick or out of breath  B. to help carry bags  C. to take their pictures  D. to count them

5. **Detail:** About what percent of immigrants were allowed to enter?

   A. about 98 percent  B. about 50 percent  C. about 10 percent  D. about 75 percent

6. **Detail:** Why did some people call Ellis Island the "Island of Tears"?

ANSWER KEY

# Ellis Island: Reading Comprehension (answers)

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6. **Detail:** Why did some people call Ellis Island the "Island of Tears"?
   **Some people were held or sent back because of disease or other problems.**