

# Read and Analyze

Ellis Island in New York Harbor was the first stop for many of America's immigrants between 1892 and 1924. Those immigrants **couldn't** enter the United States until they had passed several inspections there.

Which boldfaced word shows possession or ownership? \_\_\_\_\_

Which boldfaced word is a combination of two words? \_\_\_\_\_

To form the possessive of a singular noun, add an **apostrophe** and *s* (*girl's shoe*). For plural nouns that end in *-s*, add an apostrophe (*birds' nests*) to form the possessive. For plural nouns that do not end in *-s*, add an apostrophe and *'s* (*children's boots*). Apostrophes are also used in contractions, two words that have been shortened and combined.

See Handbook Sections 7, 28, 30

## Practice

Underline the correct word in parentheses. If the answer is a possessive, write *possessive*. If the answer is a contraction, write the two words from which the contraction was made.

1. In the early nineteenth century, Samuel Ellis was the (island's/islands') owner. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The United States government bought the island from Mr. Ellis in 1808 but (did'nt/didn't) start using it as an immigrant station until 1892. \_\_\_\_\_
3. More than 12 million people entered the United States through (Ellis Island's/Ellis Islands') elegant Main Building, which opened in 1900. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The dining room seated 1,200 people, but pleasing that many (wasn't/was'nt) easy. \_\_\_\_\_
5. The dietary preferences of various (country's/countries') emigrants differed greatly. \_\_\_\_\_
6. The (immigrant's/immigrants') journeys by ship took weeks or months. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Some passengers (weren't/were'nt) in good health when they arrived in America. \_\_\_\_\_
8. The (stations'/station's) Contagious Disease Hospital had eleven wards. \_\_\_\_\_
9. They were usually filled with immigrants who had contracted diseases in a (ships'/ship's) damp, crowded quarters. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Persons with infectious diseases (couldn't/couldnt') enter the United States. \_\_\_\_\_
11. In addition to undergoing medical exams, newcomers had to answer immigration (inspector's/inspectors') questions. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Inspectors wanted to make sure applicants (wouldn't/would'nt) be a burden to society. \_\_\_\_\_
13. The restrictions did not spoil (newcomer's/newcomers') dreams: only about two percent of all people processed at Ellis Island were refused admission to the United States. \_\_\_\_\_
14. Those who (didn't/did'nt) pass inspection were detained, often for weeks. \_\_\_\_\_
15. Detainees stayed in big dormitories; (mens'/men's) and (women's/womens') areas were separate. \_\_\_\_\_

**Apply**

Rewrite these sentences. Replace boldfaced words with possessives or contractions.

16. In 1924 the **passage of the immigrants** through Ellis Island started to decrease. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
17. In 1954 the **buildings of the station** were closed completely. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
18. Sadly, the government **did not** maintain the elegant old buildings. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
19. The historic structures **could not** withstand the damp, salty air, and they decayed. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
20. In the 1980s, the National Park Service began major repairs on the **buildings of the island**. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
21. Today Ellis Island is a museum honoring all **the immigrants of America**. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Reinforce**

Writers sometimes use apostrophes to change the spellings of certain words to reflect the way the words are actually pronounced in informal speech. This technique is used quite often in representing a *dialect*, or regional speech pattern, in writing.

With a partner, read aloud this stanza of a poem about the famous explorer Sir Francis Drake. Circle the words for which the poet created new spellings, either by changing letters or by replacing letters with apostrophes to make the words mirror the way they would have been spoken. Then, on another sheet of paper, write the words correctly. (22–44)

Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand miles away,

(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)

Slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,

An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.

Yarnder lumes the Island, yarnder lie the ships,

Wi' sailor lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,

An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide dashin',

He see et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

—Sir Henry Newbolt, from “Drake’s Drum”