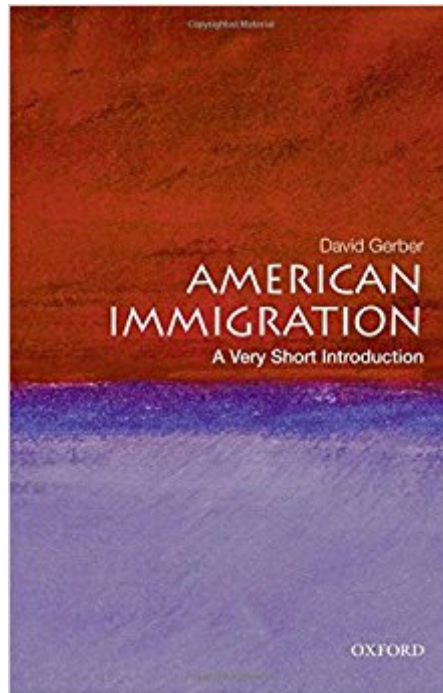




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# American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction



## Synopsis

Americans have come from every corner of the globe, and they have been brought together by a variety of historical processes--conquest, colonialism, the slave trade, territorial acquisition, and voluntary immigration. A thoughtful look at immigration, anti-immigration sentiments, and the motivations and experiences of the migrants themselves, this book offers a compact but wide-ranging look at one of America's persistent hot-button issues. Historian David Gerber begins by examining the many legal efforts to curb immigration and to define who is and is not an American, ranging from the Naturalization Law of 1795 (which applied only to "free-born white persons") to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Emergency Quota Act of 1921, and the reform-minded Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which opened the door to millions of newcomers, the vast majority from Asia and Latin America. The book also looks at immigration from the perspective of the migrant--farmers and industrial workers, mechanics and domestics, highly trained professionals and small-business owners--who willingly pulled up stakes for the promise of a better life. Throughout, the book sheds light on the relationships between race and ethnicity in the life of these groups and in the formation of American society, and it stresses the marked continuities across waves of immigration and across different racial and ethnic groups. A fascinating and even-handed historical account, this book puts into perspective the longer history of calls for stronger immigration laws and the on-going debates over the place of immigrants in American society. About the Series: Combining authority with wit, accessibility, and style, Very Short Introductions offer an introduction to some of life's most interesting topics. Written by experts for the newcomer, they demonstrate the finest contemporary thinking about the central problems and issues in hundreds of key topics, from philosophy to Freud, quantum theory to Islam.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"David Gerber has achieved a remarkable feat in synthesizing and interpreting a vast literature on American immigration over the centuries in this short introduction. Sensitive to historical detail but also attuned to broader perspectives, this well-written and engaging book is full of insights about the causes, consequences, and legal context of immigration and reminds us that current immigration debates have a long history." --Nancy Foner, author of *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration* "In this insightful, brief volume, Gerber makes effective use of recent historical scholarship in a cogent and highly accessible analysis of contemporary immigration issues." --Barbara M. Posadas, Northern Illinois University

David A. Gerber is Distinguished Professor of History at the University at Buffalo. He is the author of *The Making of an American Pluralism* and *Authors of Their Lives*.

This exceptional primer on American Immigration provides a nuanced, balanced, and insightful chronicle of how immigrants have entered, adapted to, and often contributed to American society. Written by a British expert in immigration and labor policies, this 146-page overview focuses on illuminating statistics, revealing stories, and a wide range of expert opinions. Avoiding dogma and prejudice, the book documents the many positive aspects of immigration while acknowledging the negative aspects of illegal immigration for many working class American citizens. Unfortunately, the rational ethos behind this book has been sadly absent from too many current political debates over immigration debates in 2016 where extreme voices have dominated. Hint: technology, history, geography, and globalization make immigration reform a crucial issue. We must find compromises that balance humanistic values, economic aspirations, and national needs. If I could cajole our political leaders to read one book on the history and significance of American immigration, I would choose this thin masterpiece of clarity, focus, and perspective. It's an exceptional title in the often outstanding OUP Very Short Introduction series. Read it!

perfect

This is a great, short intro to the basic facts of immigration in America. Most people have already taken sides on how they feel policy should be decided, but this only gives you historical background and context. It's a good primer for people who are looking for a broad, objective overview.

I got this book for school. A very nice book. Everyone should read this book. Quite perfect.

Exactly what I needed for school. Thanks! Great Seller!

An excellent and insightful short history of American immigration law, policy, and experience "on the ground." Well done! Clearly written and sophisticated!

If you wish to have an excellent perspective from which to view the current immigration debate, this is the book for you. Well balanced, informative and to the point.

Gerber provides an very articulate and colorful account of American Immigration. He covers trends, social policies, and contemporary issues related to the topic.

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