Push/Pull Factors

Why They Left
Leaving your home is a difficult decision, and even though millions of people left the land of their birth to move to the United States, many did so only because of very bad conditions in their home countries. Famine, disease, unemployment, religious persecution, and political upheaval were all “push factors” that led to immigration during the period from the middle of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century.

Why They Came
Immigrants came to the United States for a variety of reasons. Jobs, democracy, freedom, the availability of land, well-established ethnic communities—these were all strong “pull factors” drawing immigrants to the United States. The pull factor that was probably the strongest among all groups of immigrants was economic opportunity. Immigration to the United States grew rapidly as the American economy took off. The abundance of jobs and the potential to accumulate wealth was a draw to people from all over the world. It was often thought that in the United States, the poor could become financially secure or even wealthy much more easily than in other countries. Economic opportunity remains a strong draw to immigrants today.

Caption: This map shows where in the United States different immigrant groups settled. Think about the geographic, cultural, and economic differences between regions like the Midwest, the Northeast, the South, and the West and try to explain the patterns you see.
**Geography and History Activity Cont.**

**Urban America, 1865–1896**

**Understanding Concepts**

1. **What is the main difference between the settlement patterns for German and Irish immigrants? Why do you think immigrants from these two countries settled in the United States in different places?**

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2. **What are some geographic and cultural reasons why so many Chinese immigrants settled in California?**

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3. **What are some geographic and cultural reasons why so many Mexican immigrants settled in Texas?**

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