1. You came to the USA through New York in 1665, after 6 decades of African slavery in the area although the USA technically was not a country at that time. You were taken from your native land of Africa and your native tribe by slave traders and sold off the coast of West Africa. On the voyage over many slaves died and you were afraid because you had never seen so much water before. You were sold in New York to a white southern family in Georgia and lived on the plantation picking cotton for your owners. You miss your family and although you are comforted by the other slaves, you dream of freedom and escape. Possibly through the ‘underground railroad.’

2. You immigrated to the USA in 1845 when the Potato Famine started in Ireland. For five years after you came to the country thousands of your countrymen followed you to escape the hunger that grew in Ireland as the result of the lack of food. You came on a very crowded boat to New York where you worked as a boxer for money; you knew how to fight because you grew up in a rough neighbourhood back home in Dublin. Eventually, you heard that they were giving away land in the western part of the country to anyone brave enough to work on it because it was so remote. You bought a wagon, packed all your belongings onto it and moved on out to the ‘wild west.’

3. You have always lived here on this land. Your people are connected to this earth for longer than anyone can remember. Your people are called the Inuit and you live on the tundra in the freezing Arctic. Your tribe are the Tlingit and you are very proud of them. You live on the coast, very near the ocean. You hunt bear, walrus, whale and seal for meat and use every bit to make your life easier, including the blubber (fat) of the whale for food and the skins for clothing and warmth. You value strength, courage and bravery; you have to when you live in a climate so harsh and unforgiving. There used to be many more of your people before the white men came. Now many are dead or dying. The white men say the year is 1550.

4. Your people, the Cheyenne, have lived in the land they call ‘the USA’ for longer than either your tribe or the white men can remember. Then the white men came and many people died of European diseases, including something called ‘Smallpox.’ Then wars were fought over the land you lived on and your people were forced onto smaller and smaller areas of land. Now these land pieces are called ‘reserves.’ This is where you live with your mother and three baby siblings. The land is poor and many people have forgotten your tribal ways. There are only 300 people in your town and many social problems including alcoholism and abuse. You hope to go to university one day and make something for your people.

5. You are immigrating to the USA in 1939 to escape from Europe. A man named Hitler has taken over Germany with his political group, the third Reich. You and your family have heard that he is capable of doing awful things to people of your faith. Even though you are from Poland, you are scared that these words and actions may spread to your country and you will be in danger. You father said that if you stay you may be punished for being Jewish. You arrived in New York city and now live Philadelphia. It is just south of New York but there are many other Polish people there and you feel as if it is not so bad here. There seems to be many cars and money and people are happy. You are thankful you left when you did.

6. You emigrated from Mexico to the USA in 1999 with your family; people call you ‘hispanic.’ You decided to come over the border across the scrubland at so the border patrols wouldn’t find you. Life in Mexico was very bad for your family. The drug cartels were running your small town and you were afraid of getting shot or worse being made to work for the druglords. Then your father lost his job. Because you had family in Los Angeles you decided going there was better than staying put. There are better schools, better opportunities for jobs, and better healthcare in the States. Since you graduated high school you can get work - maybe on a farm as some of your relatives work there, though they don’t make much money.

7. You arrive in California’s ‘Silicon Valley’ in 2012 with your mom and dad because your mom got a job as a programmer with Google. She was a professor back in Tokyo but was headhunted by a company to come and work in the technology capital of the world. You are a little nervous about changing schools and meeting a bunch of new kids with a lot of money in the new place. The kids of the employees all go to school together in the complex and you hope that you will like them. Although you took English in your school back home you never spoke it every day and this is a new experience. This country is beautiful but you miss the hustle and bustle of the big city and hope you can find things to do to entertain yourself here.

8. You arrive in New York in 2009 with your mom and dad to escape the poverty of Sudan and the discrimination. You grew up in an area of the world called Darfur in Sudan and experienced much violence there. You are refugees. You are a little nervous about changing schools and meeting a bunch of new kids with a lot of money in the new place. Although you took English in your school back home you never spoke it every day and this is a new experience. This country is beautiful but you miss the quiet of Darfur before the violence. You are happy you are with your family at least.