How Much of the U.S. Population Is Foreign-Born?

Use the graph to interpret the data and answer the questions.

![Bar graph showing foreign-born population of the United States from 1850 to 1997.]

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, P23-195, Figure 1-1.

1. In what year(s) was the largest percent of the U.S. population foreign-born?

2. In what year(s) was the smallest percent of the U.S. population foreign-born?

3. From what you know about immigration rates for the years 1850-1997, what could account for the lower immigration rates in some years and higher immigration rates in others? Be sure to label your comments with appropriate years. (For example: In the 1850s, immigrants were leaving Europe to travel to America because of opportunities for land and jobs.)
4. In 1970 what region of the world had the largest foreign-born population in the U.S.?

5. What percent of the U.S. population was from Asia in 1980? In 1997?

6. How much did the percentage of population from Latin America increase from 1970 to 1997?

7. How does the increase of Asia’s population from 1970 to 1997 differ from Latin America’s population?

8. From this graph, what conclusion(s) can you draw about the change in foreign-born populations?
**Answer Key**

1. **In what year(s) was the largest percent of the U.S. population foreign-born?**
   - 1890 and 1910

2. **In what year(s) was the smallest percent of the U.S. population foreign-born?**
   - 1970

3. **From what you know about immigration rates for the years 1850-1997, what could account for the lower immigration rates in some years and higher immigration rates in others?** Be sure to label your comments with appropriate years. (For example: In the 1850s, immigrants were leaving Europe to travel to America because of opportunities for land and jobs.)
   - **Answer will vary but should include:** Increased immigration in years where strife (war, persecution, famine, political rulers, etc..) was present in homeland and America seemed to be economically attractive (availability of land and jobs) or for personal reasons (family, health, education, etc..). Times when immigration decreased could be due to changes in immigration law, war, economic downturns, etc.,).

4. **In 1970 what region had the largest foreign-born population in the U.S.?**
   - Europe

5. **What percent of the U.S. population was from Asia in 1980? In 1997?**
   - 19% (1980), 26% (1997)

6. **How much did the percentage of population from Latin America increase from 1970 to 1997?**
   - **It increased by 32% from 19% to 51%**.

7. **How does the increase of Asia’s population from 1970 to 1997 differ from Latin America’s population?**
   - **It increased from 9% to 27%, which is three times as much.**

8. **From this graph, what conclusion(s) can you draw about the change in foreign-born populations?**
   - **There is a shift from large numbers of immigrants from Europe to large numbers of immigrants from Latin America and Asia. This is due to standards of living of the homeland (e.g., European high level of GDP v. the average GDP of Latin American and some Asian nations, European stability v. Asian and Latin American instability of governments and/or economies).**