

TEACHER'S GUIDE

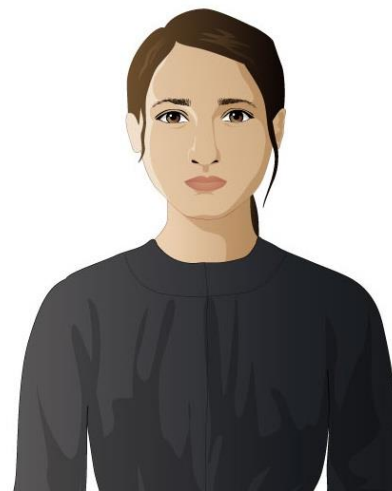
About The Mission

MISSION 4: "City of Immigrants"

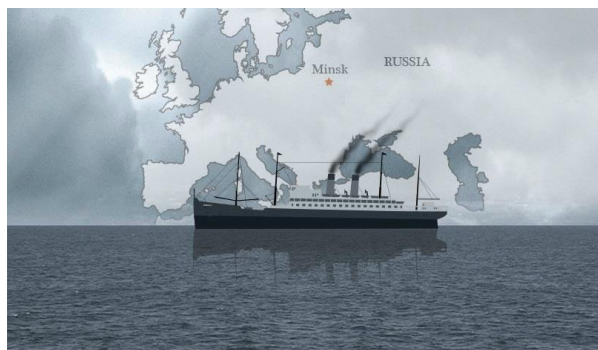
The mission immerses young people in the dynamic, modern, and sometimes dangerous world of New York City in the early twentieth century. The game is divided into five parts, with a prologue offering background information and an epilogue that extends the story of the main characters.

Students playing the game assume the role of Lena Brodsky, a fourteen year-old Jewish immigrant from Minsk, Russia who arrives in the United States in 1907. As the game begins, Lena is in the midst of a life-changing transatlantic journey on a ship bound for New York City. She joins her brother and his wife in their tenement apartment on the Lower East Side, and finds work in the burgeoning garment industry. Lena's meager wages makes an essential contribution to her family's economy. Life in the garment industry is difficult and dull, and Lena seeks out other opportunities and adventures. Players can improve Lena's prospects by attending classes at the local settlement house, or finding fun and possible romance.

Eventually, Lena finds work at the Triangle Shirtwaist factory, where her earnings increase. However, working conditions remain dismal, and some of the young women begin organizing. When a general strike breaks out, Lena must decide whether or not to join the picket lines with her fellow workers. The strike represents one of the many turning points that shape Lena's life and reveal, in turn, how the story of America was shaped by immigrants.



When students are reading a traditional text, such as the chapter of a book or a magazine article, they are all presented with the same information. However, as students play "City of Immigrants," their experiences may differ slightly based on the choices they make and their behavior as Lena. As students make their way through the mission, they receive badges signifying the characteristics, values, and skills of their particular version of "Lena Brodsky."



As the Prologue begins, Lena is aboard the SS *Amerika* in the spring of 1907. As the ship makes its way across the Atlantic, Lena recounts the events which have led to her immigration. Anti-Jewish sentiment in Minsk has greatly threatened her family's lives and livelihood. After her aunt and uncle were killed in a *pogrom*, Lena's brother Isaac journeyed to New York. He has been sending money back to Russia in an effort to reunite his family. When Lena's brother Jacob was drafted into the tsar's army, Lena took his

steamer ticket and set sail for America, leaving her parents behind. Lena worries about whether or not

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she will make it past the customs officials in New York, and hopes that her entire family will be together again someday.

In Part 1, "Finding Home," Lena arrives in New York City after seven awful days in steerage. When the ship docks, Lena is placed on a ferry that takes her to Ellis Island. She is inspected by immigration and customs officials who assess her health and question her. She makes it through all of the inspections, but is sent to a detention room to wait until Isaac can come get her. Hungry and tired from the long journey, she faints on the way to the detention room. She wakes in the Ellis Island infirmary, where Isaac is standing by her side.



Isaac is confused and upset when he learns of Jacob's fate. Lena reassures him that she will not be a burden, and insists she has valuable skills. Isaac and Lena make their way to the Battery, and hurry to get to Isaac's apartment so as not to be late for the Jewish Sabbath. They are separated in the crowds of people, and Lena has to find her own way through the teeming streets of the City of Immigrants to her new home.



Part 2, "Family First," begins in August, three months after Lena's arrival. Lena is living with Isaac, his wife Sonya, their infant son, and two boarders in a three-room tenement apartment on Orchard Street. Lena has no privacy and very little time to herself. Isaac has found Lena a job sewing men's suits in a sweatshop located in one of the apartments in the building. The work is tedious and exhausting, but Lena's wages contribute to the family's survival, and are also being put into savings for steamship tickets for her parents.

Because summer is the slow season in the garment trade, work has been uneven. To make matters worse, Sonya is pregnant again and having difficulty. A visiting nurse from the Henry Street Settlement has prescribed bed rest for her. Lena must take on more responsibilities than ever to ensure the Brodsky family's livelihood. Though she does not know it at the time, how Lena chooses to "step up" to a new set of challenges will impact her relationships and opportunities for the remainder of the game.

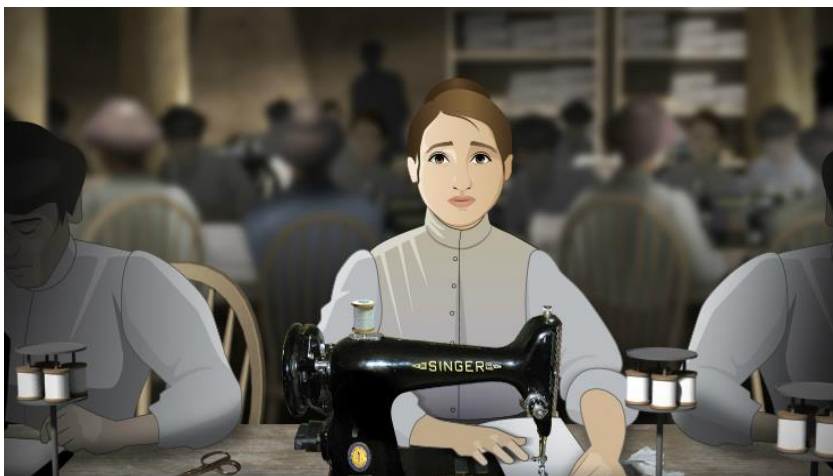
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In Part 3, "A Night to Remember," Sonya is preoccupied with paying the rent, while Lena and Isaac are each trying to improve the family's future fortunes. In the evenings, Lena goes to the Henry Street Settlement, where she can attend sewing classes (and nurture an existing talent), or join the Drama Club (and cultivate a new one). Lena has also been taking English classes at Henry Street. She becomes friends with Rosa Leone, an Italian girl. Meanwhile, Isaac, a pushcart peddler, pursues his dream of opening his own store. To finance the venture, he has borrowed money from a local gang, and, more alarming to Lena, taken the family's entire savings to buy a stock of goods for the store. Zev, a low-ranking gang member who Lena met on her first day in New York, resurfaces as the middle man between Isaac and the gang. Lena, tasked with taking Isaac's pushcart to Hester Street for the day, may wrangle money and information out of Zev, and even accept his invitation to go to the dancehall, where she will hear American popular music for the first time. But on a pivotal evening, Lena learns that not all paths can be followed, and that she must decide how, and with whom, to invest her energy and precious time.

Part 4, "Factory Girls," begins one year later, in September 1908. Lena is now reasonably fluent in English and a proficient seamstress. Her friend Rosa Leone has gotten a job uptown at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, and she offers to get Lena an interview. On her first day, Lena must prove her sewing skills to Mrs. Sherman, the forelady. How well she performs on the sewing machine determines her position and wages in the factory. Working



conditions at Triangle are difficult - the factory is noisy, rushed, and the bosses exploit the young workers in a number of ways, including charging them for electricity, needles, and soiled fabrics, fining them for being a few minutes late or talking on the job, and general harassment. Lena now also must work on the Sabbath. She meets James Poole, a muckraking journalist, and can choose to tell him about her working conditions. Despite the misery of working at Triangle, Lena now has resources from her weekly pay to indulge in little luxuries and entertainments, from trips to Coney Island to visits to the Yiddish theatre to "American" fashions. Can Lena enjoy a little amusement and still save enough money to bring her parents to New York?

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As Part 5, "The Uprising of the 20,000" begins, it is one year later, in the autumn of 1909. Lena is still working at the Triangle Factory. Shirtwaist workers across the city have called for a general strike, asking workers to walk out of all the factories. The workers are being led by Clara Lemlich, a girl not

much older than Lena. Lena and Rosa are caught up in the excitement of the possibilities of improving their work and pay, but also terrified of the prospect of losing their income, exacerbating family tensions, and facing the brutality of police and factory thugs. 20,000 workers join the strike and walk the picket lines. Police arrest and harass the young women. Lena



must choose to align herself with the more radical, socialist leaders of the movement, or the more moderate, middle-class Progressive reformers. During the strike, Lena can be arrested, jailed, sentenced to the workhouse, or attacked by scabs as she pickets.

The strike, and Lena's critical decisions in its aftermath, set the stage for the Epilogue. What will her future life in America be? Will she operate a successful family business with her brother? Move away from the Lower East Side and start a family of her own? Remain a garment worker? Become a leading lady on Broadway? The path Lena follows is determined by the player's previous choices, achievements, and behavior.

During the Mission, students play through several "days" of Lena's life the course of two and a half years. Each student playing "City of Immigrants" will have a unique gameplay experience based on individual choices, skill, and understanding of the period.