

Guiding Question: How do immigrants balance their commitment to family, cultural, and religious traditions with their desire to assimilate or explore the new opportunities in America?

Mission Reflection

After completing Parts 2 and 3 of *City of Immigrants* (“Family First” and “A Night to Remember”), discuss these questions:

1. What work and chores did you do as Lena? Were these paid or unpaid? Why did you do them?
2. How did you spend your time when not working? What did you do for fun?
3. Was it hard or easy to balance commitments to family and religion with assimilating (that is, exploring a new identity as an American)? Why or why not?

Time: 10–15 minutes

Instructions

Take 5 minutes to have students review their **Decision Tracker**, and use these questions to reflect on their game play, individually or in small groups.

In a 10-minute discussion, ask students to describe their experiences as Lena while trying to *assimilate* (i.e., to balance her commitments to her family with her desire to explore the new opportunities New York offers).

You may want to introduce and define the word *assimilation*—the process through which migrants from different backgrounds gradually acquire the habits, attitudes, and way of life of a new nation.

Encourage students to think about their own commitments to family and/or ethnic or religious traditions, and how these are and aren’t in tension with their choices as young people (e.g., choosing new friends). How do these feelings help them understand Lena’s experiences?

Additional optional questions about:

Working and doing chores

- Sweatshop work: How did you feel about giving your wages to your family rather than keeping some for yourself?
- Shopping: Did you prioritize buying inexpensive items? What was your goal—to save money to bring your parents over? To show your brother you were smart?

Not working

- At Henry Street Settlement: Did you choose the sewing club, drama club, or English classes? Why?
- Dancing with Zev: Did you decide to go with him or not? Why?