

# City of Immigrants Part 4, Part 5, & Epilogue Teacher Guide

## Decision Tracker Reflection

After completing all parts of the mission, reflect on your journey in the game by answering the following questions.

### 1. What reasons were most important as you played?

Look at your **Decision Tracker**. Circle the reason that was **most important** to you as you played—maintain traditions, succeed in America, make progressive reform, or assimilate. Discuss why this reason was important to you.

### 2. Why are Lena’s decisions (in 1907) different from yours (in 2023)?

Fill out the **Game Decisions** chart below. An example is provided.

- In Column A, write how you think **Lena** as a young immigrant woman would respond to the situation. (It can be the same decision you made during game play.)
- In Column B, write how you think **you** would respond today.
- In Column C, write how **Lena’s world** and **your world** are different in ways that explain your different decisions.

Situation	Game Decisions		
	A. What did <b>Lena</b> (in 1907) decide to do?	B. What would <b>you</b> (in 2023) decide to do?	C. What are <b>differences</b> between Lena’s world and your world that explain your different decisions?
<i><b>Example:</b> You are navigating through a new city you don’t know.</i>	<i>Ask for help from people on the street.</i>	<i>Put the location I’m looking for into the Google Maps app on my phone.</i>	<i>In Lena’s time, they didn’t have the technologies we have. She had to overcome her fear of strangers. We can often avoid this.</i>
1. Your family expects you to give them all the money you earn from working.			
2. The workers at your job form a union and ask you to join them on strike.			

### 3. Discussion: How well can we understand Lena?

Lena was a poor, Jewish immigrant from Russia living in a tenement and working in a factory at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in one of the most crowded communities in the world. Your world is very different. Using the chart above as a reference, discuss:

- What makes it *hard* to understand the experience of an immigrant like Lena—how she thought and felt, and why she made the decisions she did?
- What makes it *possible* for you to understand a turn-of-the-20<sup>th</sup>-century immigrant’s experience despite all the differences?

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Time: 25 minutes

### Instructions

In this activity, students reflect on their decisions as Lena throughout the game and practice historical empathy.

1. Tell students to look at a copy of their **Decision Tracker** and decide which of the four reasons were most important to them as they played—maintain traditions, succeed in America, make progressive reform, or assimilate.

Note: Since many students may have played with *other* motives in mind (e.g., trying the most extreme choices, trying to make other characters angry, trying to “break” the game, or just choosing randomly), you may want to ask what guided their choices. It’s good to acknowledge that games allow players freedom in how much they identify with characters.

2. Have students fill out the **Game Decisions** chart, following the directions. The chart lists three situations that Lena faced in the game and asks students to compare how their own decisions today would be different from those Lena made in 1907, and why. To help students with this exercise in historical empathy, you may want to:
  - Remind students that Lena had a range of choices, so a range of responses are possible. (The sample says Lena asked strangers for help in navigating the city, but players may have explored without asking for help.)
  - Help students fill out Column C by reminding them of the broad historical changes between Lena’s time and ours (e.g., changes in workplaces, schools, and living spaces; in families; in social norms and expectations; and in technologies).
  - Remind students that workplaces today (like some Amazon warehouses) are unionizing at an increasing rate as employees seek better working conditions and wages, sometimes through strikes.
3. Reasons students may say it’s *hard but still possible* to understand the experience of a turn-of-the-century immigrant like Lena include:
  - She had to grow up much faster than most American kids today; it’s hard to know what it was like to be in such a different world.
  - She was still a young person who wanted what most teens want—acceptance, connection to family, growing independence, fun.