

Fourth Grade^{*}

June 2005

Semester-long topic: The American Jewish Immigrant Experience and its roots in Eastern Europe:

Resources:

• Website:

Shtetl: An electronic multimedia collection of Yiddish texts, archives, bibliographies, artwork, songs and other materials. <http://sunsite.unc.edu/viddish/shteti.html>.

• Books:

1. *Letters From Rifka* by Karen Hesse; read for the immigration unit
2. *Dreams in the Golden Country. The Diary of Zipporah Feldman*, a Jewish Immigrant Girl by Kathryn Lasky (an American Diary book), read during the time when the students are doing the Ellis Island simulation
3. *Call Me Ruth* by Marilyn Sachs, read during the Union/Labor unit
4. *The Pushcart War* by Jean Merrill, read toward the end of the year.

At the beginning of the semester:

Begin the year by explaining that in the third grade the students learned about the concept of Diaspora and how Jews presently live all around the world. Explain that the majority of Jews in the United States today are Ashkenazi, meaning that they trace their roots back to Eastern Europe. Ashkenazi culture in Eastern Europe and the United States between 1800 and 1930 will be the focus of the fourth grade. Explain that since Yiddish was the language spoken by Ashkenazim in Europe and in the United States, Yiddish words and songs (all of the songs included in the curriculum are on the *Zingen Far Sholem* cassette owned by Machar) will be taught throughout the year. A family tree/ genealogy project will carry through the year, with everyone having a completed family history album by June.

Learn and sing *A Gut Yor Aykh/ A Good Year to You* and *Leshono Toyve/ Good Year* during the first or second class (songs recorded on the Sholem Singers cassette).

Book readings done periodically during semester (see above)

- Students should be given at least two months to read each book, remember to tell them that the books may also be found on tape. Students should be encouraged to borrow books from their school or public library.
- Book reading should not take more than half the class time.
- For books 2, 3, 4 you can combine starting the new book and discussing previous book. Call it book club day and make a big deal out of it.

^{*} This curriculum was developed through grants from the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington DC Initiative in Congregational Education.

Supplies needed, other than books: Post-it notes, markers, chart paper and pens.

Procedure:

- On the day the book is assigned:
 - Talk about and chart what you want to learn from this book.
 - Have the students look at the book, read a few pages, read the back, look at the cover, or even read the end. Ask the students to predict what they think they will find in it.
 - On chart paper write: “What we want to learn from this book”. Ask students what they want to learn. Mark it down with their name. Ex. Renna wants to know why Rifka needs to write these letters. Students may have more than one thing they would like to learn.
 - When list is completed, ask the students how we can remember what we are learning when we are reading. Ex. Highlighting (like in college – if they own the book), take notes in our binders, or post-it notes.
 - Show the students how to use post-it notes in a book: read a section aloud; talk it over out loud in the group. Make a note on the post-it and put in book. Then each student should do this on their own. Ask students to also identify new words and state their definitions with post-it notes. (Most will be in Yiddish.)
 - Have students copy the list from the chart into their notebooks.
 - Remind the students that when the book is finished you will spend time discussing the notes in their notebook and on their post-its.
 - Assign due date. Have it be fun looking forward to event - a book club.
- On book club days:
 - Ask the students to bring both the book they just finished and the one that they are being asked to read next.
 - Hang up the chart the students made two months earlier.
 - Start the conversation using the chart. Ex. Renna, did you ever find out why Rifka needed to write these letters?
 - Encourage other students to jump in with their thoughts and ideas. You may need to remind people that opinions maybe different but never wrong.
 - Make sure people are using their post-it notes when adding in information.
 - At the end of the discussion, ask the students if they liked the books.
 - Have students take out their new book.
 - Pull out your chart paper and repeat the lesson from the first time your book club met.

Year-long Project: Genealogy/ Family Trees

Resources:

- Generations: A Course in Jewish Family History by Arthur Kurzweil, Behrman House, 1983.
- How To Trace Your Jewish Roots video (with Arthur Kurzweil), 35 mins, available from the BJE.
- Web-site: [www Jewishgen.org](http://www.Jewishgen.org)

Objectives:

- Understand where forbearers come from.
- Gain an appreciation for the value of collecting family information.
- Place their own family stories within the context of Jewish history.

Activities to augment the project:

- Ask the students if they know where their Jewish ancestors are from (find out in advance who in the class is adopted and be sensitive to their needs during the exercise).
- Explain that genealogy is the history of people's families.
- Order copies of *My Generations* for everyone in the class and work through the activities as the year progresses. This will primarily involve assigning homework, and allowing time for the students to work on their albums at the end and/or beginning of class periods.
- Visit an older Jewish cemetery (do grave reliefs with pencils, if this feels appropriate). (5) Ask the students to bring in family heirloom/ ritual objects to share with each other. This can be done at the beginning of the year or throughout.
- Read and discuss *The Keeping Quilt* by Patricia Pollaco. The story of a special quilt that is passed down in a Jewish family from generation to generation.

Project:

Objective:

To have the students use oral history to find out a relative who has immigrated.

Activities:

Ask the students to interview (with a tape-recorder or video-recorder) their grandparents and/or older relatives. Brainstorm interview questions together and practice interviewing skills in class.

And/or: ask the students to have their families tell them stories about a relative who

immigrated to the US. Ask them to try to find out as much as they can about that relative. Tell them that if they have old family pictures, to make copies of them and put them in a notebook. Also include letters, passports, etc.

Have the children find the answers to at least these questions:

- How is the relative that immigrated related to you?
- Where did the relative immigrate from?
- Why did they leave?
- Were they scared when they left?
- What year did they leave?
- How old were they when they left?
- How did they travel?
- How long did it take for them to travel?
- Who did they travel with?
- What did they take with them?
- Did they go through Ellis Island?
- Did their name get changed?
- Where did they go?
- Was language a problem?
- Did they go to school in the new country?
- Did they work in the new country?
- What were the biggest differences between their old country and the new one?

With their parents, have the children write out a family tree so we know where this relative fits in.

After winter break, have the children this information with each other and help each other complete the information.

Based on their interviews, compile and distribute a newspaper called "Bobe Meises" with highlights of different family stories.

Topic: Yiddish Language

• **Yiddish**-- a unique fusion of German, Hebrew-Aramaic and Slavic components-- emerged over one thousand years ago among Jews living in **Ashkenaz**, Loter, a region now recognized as part of Germany. Responding to anti-Semitism and economic necessity, many began as early as the 11th century to migrate east-- to Poland and eventually to Russia. They took Yiddish with them, incorporating along the way elements of the Slavic languages of their new surroundings. Though in the past intellectuals and linguists argued about what Yiddish should be called -- *loshn-ashkenazl* language of Ashkenaz, *yidishtaytshl* Judeo-German, *taytsh*/German, *zhargonl* jargon -- ordinary Jews have for centuries called it *yidish* and *mame-Lohn* or *muter-shprakh*- mother tongue. Throughout Eastern Europe Yiddish was a spoken language-- a language of ordinary life, home, business and social relations- and became linked with the "secular," with feeling and women. Hebrew, on the other hand, was the written language -- *loyshn-koydesh*, the language of holiness, of *tanakh*, religious observance and *holokhe*/ Jewish law-- and was equated with moral and intellectual discourse and with men, the only ones allowed to study Hebrew texts.

From Irena Klepfisz's introduction to *Found Treasures: Stories by Yiddish Women Writers*, edited by Frieda Forman, Ethel Raicus, Sarah Silberstein and Margie Wolfe.

Note: Prior to this class, ask the students to research what languages have been spoken by people in their families-- who last knew the language, when they learnt it, etc. Explain that when asking older relatives about this, they may hear Yiddish referred to as "Jewish." Eastern European Jewish culture is often referred to as "Yiddishkeit."

Objectives:

- Appreciate the vibrancy and richness of Yiddish language, literature and culture.
- Experience speaking and singing in Yiddish.

Activities:

- Learn and sing *Tsu Dayn Geburtstog/ For Your Birthday & Sholem Aleykhem/ Greetings*.
- Watch and discuss *Yiddish: The Mame Loshn*.
- Make Yiddish "letter people" decorations for the K/1 classroom. Introduce the Yiddish alphabet and ask the students to trace (with tracing paper) letters of their choice, and decorate them-- they may want to use the themes represented by the words given with the letters-- i.e. the letter *Beys* may be colored in with pictures of *bubbes* (grandmothers).
- Explore Yiddish names-- Explain that many names come from Yiddish, referencing Jewish professions, cities with large Jewish populations, objects and colors. Ask the students if they recognize the names of people that they know.
- Play Yiddish proverb charades using *Yiddish Wisdom/ Yiddishe Chochma*, illustrated by Kristina Swarner (a collection of Yiddish "wisdom" phrases that

provides a useful starting points for discussion, as well as an overall appreciation for the Yiddish language, Ashkenazi humor and ideas). Distribute individual proverbs copied from the book (or use the following list) to small groups of students and have them.

1. Decide what they think the proverb means.
 2. Create a skit to illustrate the proverb's meaning.
 3. Perform the skit, while the rest of the class guesses the meaning of skit.
 4. Reveal the proverb and practice saying it, as a class, in Yiddish. Discuss whether the proverb reminds the students of proverbs in English.
- The smoothest way is sometimes full of stones. *Der gleichster veg iz ful mit shtainer.*
 - Easy to promise, hard to fulfill. *Gring tsu zogen, shver tsu trogen.*
 - A wise man hears one word and understands two. *A kluger farshtait fun ain vort tsvai.*
 - As the wallet grows, so do the needs. *Ven es vakst der teister, vaksen di baderfenishen.*
 - That place seems good where we are not. *Dorten iz gut vu mir semen nito.*
 - You can't sit on two horses with one behind. *Mit ein hintn zitst men nit oif tsvai fend.*
 - What will become of the sheep if the wolf is the judge? *Vos ken vern fun di shof az der volf iz der richter?*
 - If you dig a pit for someone else, you fall in it yourself. *Az me grubt a grub far yenem, falt men alain arein.*

HANDOUT

Yiddish Quiz

Match the words to the correct definitions:

A snack	SCHNORRER
A hard doughnut shaped roll, boiled in water before baking	MENSCH
A gossipy woman	TRAYF
Plump	SCHLOCK
Shoddy	YENTE
Someone to admire, a decent person	BUBBE
Food that is not kosher	CHUTZPAH
Someone who is clumsy and bumps into things a lot	BAGEL
Grandmother	KLUTZ
Beet soup	SHUL
A pancake, usually made of potatoes	NEBBISH
Having a lot of nerve	LATKE
A weak, helpless, sad sack	ZAFTIG
Crazy	NOSH
A beggar	BORSHT
Proud pleasure	MESHUGGE
A synagogue	NACHUS

HANDOUT

YIDDISH THE SECRET CODE

Yiddish was the secret code, therefore I don't farshait,
A bisseleh maybe here and there, the rest has gone to waste.

Sadly when I hear it now, I only get the gist,
My Bubbeh spoke it beautifully; but me, I am tsemisht.

So och un vai as I should say, or even oy vai iz mir
Though my pisk is lacking Yiddish, it's familiar to my ear.

And I'm no Chaim Yonkel, in fact I was shtick naches,
But, when it comes to Yiddish though, I'm talking out my tuchas.

Es iz a shandeh far di kinder that I don't know it better
(Though it's really nishtkefelecht when one needs to write a letter)

But, when it comes to characters, there's really no contention,
No other linguist can compete with honorable mentshen:

They have nebbishes and nebechels and others without mazel,
Then, too, schmendriks and schlemiels, and let's not forget schlemazel.

These words are so precise and descriptive to the listener,
So much better than "a pill " is to call someone 'farbissener'.

Or - that a brazen woman would be better called chaleria,
And you'll agree farklemp says more than does hysteria.

I'm not haken dir a tsheinik and I hope I'm not a kvetch,
But isn't mieskeit kinder, than to call someone a wretch?

Mitten derinnen, I hear Bubbeh say, "It's nechtiker tog, don't fear,
To me you're still a maven, zol zein shah, don't fill my ear

A leben ahf dein keppele, I don't mean to interrupt,
But you are speaking narishkeit....And Ah gezunt auf dein kup!"

Glossary

Farshtaist = (Do You?) Understand

Bisseleh = A little

Tsemisht = Confused or mixed up

Och un vai = Alas and alack

Oi vai iz mir = Woe is me

Pisk = mouth

Naches = Joy, Gratification

Shandeh far di kinder = A pity/shame for the children

Nishtkefelecht = Not so terrible

Nebbishes = A nobody or simpleton

Nebechels = A pitiful person or playing the role of being one

Schlemiel = Clumsy bungler, an inept person, butter-fingered

Schmendrik = Nincompoop; an inept or indifferent person

Schlemazel = Luckless person. Unlucky person; one with perpetual bad luck (it is said that the shlemiel spills the soup on the Shlimazel!)

Farbissener = Embittered; bitter person

Chaleria = Evil woman. Probably derived from cholera.

Farklempf = Too emotional to talk. Ready to cry.

Haken dir a tsheinik = Don't get on your nerves

Kvetch = Whine, complain; whiner, a complainer

Mieskeit = Ugly

Mitten derinnen = All of a sudden, suddenly

Nechtiker tog! = He's (it's) gone! Forget it!

Nonsense! (Lit., a night's day)

Zol zein shah! = Be quiet. Shut up!!

Leben ahf dein keppele = Words of praise like; Well said! Well done!

Narishkeit = Nonsense

Topic: Shtetl Life

- **Shtetlach** (plural of shtetl) were small towns or villages in rural Eastern Europe (as opposed to **Ghettos** which were sections of European cities that were often walled off).
- Shtetl life began in the 15th century when Jews traveled east to Slavic areas. Shtetlach thrived in the 16th and 17th centuries, with Jews praying in wooden synagogues that were part of elaborate community and educational structures. Many earned their living assisting the rich people, or nobility-including collecting taxes and rent. The peasants were treated very poorly by the nobility and by the middle of the 17th century they rebelled- but not directly against the nobility (the true source of their problems). They attacked the Jews; in Poland, the peasants who did this were called Cossacks. Most of the wooden synagogues were burnt.
- The Enlightenment in Western Europe and Haskalah in Eastern Europe followed.

Objectives:

- Recognize and use the vocabulary highlighted above, as well as additional words, such as Yid (Jew), zeide (grandfather), bubbe (grandmother), tata (father), maidl (girl), yingl (boy), chuppe (wedding canopy), shadchan (matchmaker), badchan (entertainer at a wedding), shteitl (woman's head covering), shnurer (borrower), shochet (ritual slaughterer), daven (to pray), shammes (the servant of the people in the synagogue/ the beadle), Pale of Settlement (area in Eastern Europe where Jews were forced to live), pogrom (violent attacks against Jews by Cossaks and others), yihus (pedigree/ prominent roots), vigan (community owned pasture).
- Understand the breadth of activities, rituals, individual and community roles comprising shtetl life.
- Consider the benefits and hardships of shtetl life.

Activities:

- **Construct a miniature shtetl.** *The Paper Shtetl*, by Schocken Books, is a good resource. Depending on how many students are in the class, it may make more sense to use the book as a guide for creating the class' own shtetl.
- **Read** *There Once Was a World: A 900 Year Chronicle of the Shtetl of Eishyshok*, by Yaffa Eliach, Little, Brown, 1998. Eliach explains that Jews first came to the area of Eishyshok in the eleventh century (see pages 17-19 for the early history). By some time in the sixteenth century, Eliach states that the Jews were the majority in the town. On page 49, Eliach writes about the 19th century-- "Eishyshok's Golden Age"-- which is what most of the book covers.

There are many options for using this book in the classroom, including having the students map out the communities in which they are living and compare these maps with the map of Eishyshok. Discuss similarities and differences in terms of the amount of people, schools, adult jobs, roles, who looks after whom, etc. What would be good about living in Eishyshok? What would be hard? Discuss the students' concepts of community--

what communities are they a part of? How tightly woven/ reliable are these compared to the shtetl?

- Watch and discuss *The Shtetl*, a 16 minute video available from the BJE.
- Watch and discuss *Image Before My Eyes*, by Josh Waletzky.
- Learn and sing Zol Zayn Shabbes/ Let There Be Sabbath & Bulbes/ Potatoes
- Discuss the different images in *Yiddishland*, by Gerard Silvain and Henri Minczeles, Gingko Press, 1999-- a collection of 600 pages of postcards-- primarily photographs produced by Jews about themselves (i.e. the Jewish Labor Bund made their own postcards) and by non Jews depicting shtetl life. It includes a history of the postcard (invented by Dr. Emmanuel Hermann, an Austrian Jew) and its role in preserving the history of Jewish Eastern Europe. The postcards are arranged according to images of Vilna, Lodz, The Street, Restaurants, Shops and Trades, School, Hospitals and Cemeteries, Synagogues, Religion and Festivities, Culture and Politics, anti-Semitism, Pogroms, Anti-Jewish Organizations, and "To The Four Corners of the World."

Discuss whose interests the different postcards might have served. Compare the images with contemporary National Geographic photographs and discuss the difference between people documenting their own lives and outsiders looking in. Ask the students to guess which postcards were made by Jews from shtetl communities themselves and which were not.

Ask the students to sketch/ design a series of web-based postcards of contemporary Jewish life. What images would they want to include? Photographs? Drawings?

Topic: Yiddish Literature

- "More than just a spoken language, Yiddish was a way of life, a rich culture and a literature which linked several million Jews in Eastern Europe with those who immigrated to North America... There were Yiddish books, newspapers, literary journals, theater, research centers, publishers and a whole world of artists, musicians and writers... The biographical dictionaries of Yiddish literature published from 1927 to 1986 document over three hundred Yiddish women writers..." -- Preface to Found Treasures: Stories by Yiddish Women Writers, edited by Frieda Forman, Ethel Raicus, Sarah Silberstein Swartz and Margie Wolfe.

Objectives:

- Recognize the Yiddish writers such as Mendele Moiker S'forim, I.L. Peretz, Sholom Aleichem, Fradl Shtok, and Miriam Raskin.
- Appreciate Yiddish literature as a unique contribution of early 20th century Askenazi Jews.
- Understand the relationship between the themes in Yiddish literature and the social and political struggles facing Jews at the time.

Activities:

- Ask students to research the life of Yiddish writers (women and men) and write journal entries as if they were these writers.
- Host a Yiddish Writers Cafe-- ask the students to help decorate the classroom, ask parents to bring snacks, juice, hot chocolate, etc. Play klezmer music as people come into the cafe and in between readings.
- Invite members of Yiddish of Greater Washington and ask them to bring a copy of their favorite Yiddish story or poem in translation (if they don't have favorites, use some of the attached stories). At the "cafe," have the guests read their selections, as well as inviting parents and students to read other stories and poems. Discuss the writings and play silly games in between readings to keep the students' attention.
- Watch and discuss *The World of Shalom Aleichem*.
- If this lesson occurs near Chanukah, read and discuss Chanukah Money by Shalom Aleichem (as well as learning and singing Ikh Bin a Kleyner Dreydel/ I Am a Little Dreidel & Khanike Oy Khanike/ Oh Hanuka).

Topic: Ellis Island Simulation

NOTE: Parental involvement in this activity makes it a lot more fun

Objective: To simulate Ellis Island in the school

Supplies: costumes and clipboards for parents, passports for students

On the boat: students stand close together on a mat, and talk about the journey, what they think it might have been like, what they would have to do if they need to go to the bathroom or if they got seasick, etc.

Parents' jobs:

- captain of ship
- Seasick passenger

Disembarking: students walk as a group up a stairway, down a hallway, etc., etc., coming back to classroom

Parents' jobs: officers looking mean, pointing the way to go in words students do not understand. They pull some students out of the line to ask them questions, ask for bribes.

Medical exams: in classroom, which is now the "medical station".

Parents' jobs: pose as mean doctors jabbering away in a language that's foreign to students. Parents have on lab coats, stethoscope, clipboard, eye chart, etc. They do a mock check up on each immigrant - looking in eyes, doing an eye test. "Check" the throat, feel the glands in the neck look in the hair for lice. Put a check mark on one or two of the students. Stamp passport.

Waiting room: The class will sit in chairs in the hallway.

Parents' jobs: not to let the students get up (can be the "officers" from above).

Passport inspection: Students line up at classroom doorway.

Parents' jobs: One at time, students are questioned before they are allowed to leave the classroom. The "inspectors" have a "ship manifest" with questions: your name? age? country of origin? where will you live? work? etc. Questions are first asked in unintelligible language, then in broken English. At the end of inspecting each immigrant's passport, the inspector stamps the passport, sends the immigrant out to the hall, where they line up for:

Railroad train:

Parents' job: Train engineer, Train conductor. Engineer leads kids down the hall, conductor asks passengers where they want to go in unintelligible language, sells tickets and food to immigrants, greatly overcharging them. Most immigrants do not know the train only goes to New York City, and that it is supposed to be free. *(beforehand, tell the "truth" to one or two students who can then protest during the simulation.)* Train returns to classroom, which is now:

A Bank where immigrants exchange their money for American money.

Parents' jobs: bankers who try to cheat immigrants. (*beforehand, give one or two students the real exchange rates – see below. They can then protest during the simulation.*)

References:

- Ellis Island doorway to freedom by Steven Kroll J325.73K
- If your name was changed at Ellis Island by Ellen Levin J325
- Coming to America: The story of immigration by Betsy Maestro J304.873M
- Life on Ellis Island By Renee C Rebmen

Video:

- The Ellis Island Experience (Machar Labrary)

Handout:
FOREIGN CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE
1910

Germany:	1 Mark = 23 Cents
Russia:	1 Ruble = 51 Cents
Italy:	1 Lire = 18 Cents
France:	1 Franc = 19 Cents
Great Britain:	1 Pound = \$4.86
Austria:	1 Krone = 20 Cents

Topic: New York City -- 1910

Objective: To familiarize students with life in New York City in 1910: the cost of food, movies, etc. ... what the housing was like for the average Jewish family.

Supplies: Tape, tape measure

References:

- Sear and Roebuck catalogs
- *Visual Time Line of the 20th Century* by Simom Adams
- *The Century* By Peter Jennings and Todd Brewster (for young people)
- *Life In Our Century In Pictures* (for young people)
- *Lower East Side Tour Book* by Oscar Isrelowitz

Activities:

- Students who have been to New York City say something about it.
- Read and discuss *Lower East Side Tour Book* by Oscar Isrelowitz's.
- Students look at catalogs from that time period and collection of photographs from the early 1900.
- Tenements:
 - Talk about the housing in tenement apartments, using the information from the tenement museum as reference.
 - Measure out the dimensions of an apartment, tape it out on the floor and see how many people we can fit inside it.
 - Together, the class makes a list of how it may have felt to live in an area of that size.
 - Students measure their own living rooms, to compare to the size of tenement rooms
 - Create a drawing or model of a tenement apartment, an apartment building, a pushcart, or some other aspect of life (pushcart).

***A Bintel Brif* (To follow New York City in 1910)**

Objective: To familiarize students with the every day problems immigrants had.

Supplies: Chart paper markers, copies of *A Bintel Brif, Sixty Years of letters from the Lower East Side to the Jewish Daily Forward*, edited by Isaac Metzker

Activities:

- Talk about how important the Yiddish newspaper was for immigrants.
 - List how many ways students' families use the news paper at home.
 - What other media do students' families use for the same purpose?
- Have students pick, and read aloud to each other, letters out of *A Bintel Brif*.
- Brainstorm with the class what problems they think they may have had if they had come to this country in 1910.
 - Write down the problems on chart paper and credit each student with their idea.
 - Using the list of problems have student write a letter to *The Jewish Daily Forward*.
 - Have students stand and read letters aloud, and together as a class come up with a response to the student's problem.

Sweatshop Simulation

Objective: To have the students experience what an unpleasant work environment is like.

Supplies: Something for a mindless activity; example: a pair of socks to ball and un-ball; money (nickels or quarters), chart paper, markers

Activity:

- As the class comes in have them all sit in a circle on the ground.
- Set the stage. Explain to the students that:
 - You work in the sweatshop.
 - The lighting is bad.
 - The building is cold.
 - You need to make \$1.00 to pay your rent and food.
 - You get paid \$.05 for every pair of socks you ball.
 - Give instructions for balling up the sock
 - Explain:
 - No talking.
 - No going to the bathroom.
- Have students work with out talking. Tell them they must work faster. Remind them that they need food for they families.
- When students start to complain, keep them working, when they complain again start writing what the complaints are on chart paper. Ask for more. Make a list.
- When all complaints are written down, ask the students what they can do about it.
- Make a list of demands.
- Talk about how unions may have been formed.
- Form a union, name it.
- Have them pick a spokesperson to come talk to Management (the teacher).
- Talk about what else the students know about unions, strikes, lockouts.
- Talk about the Triangle Shirtwaist Company Fire and unionizing.
- Sing songs about unions
- Ask the students to find out if any of their family members are part of a union, and to discuss unions with their family.

Unionizing (follow up to sweatshop)

Objective: To have students create signs that clearly state what their needs are.

Supplies:

- Poster board
- Markers
- Books with poster art from 1900
- List of demands from Sweatshop Simulation
- Teacher bring in examples of posters

Activity:

With class, discuss different methods of communication. Make a list:

- Today we have TV, Internet, Radio, Newspapers, Magazines, Billboards, and posters.
- In the year 1900, there was radio, newspapers, signs

Elicit that posters are the most economical way to communicate.

Show pictures of, or have on the chalkboard examples of union posters.

Review your list of demands from the sweatshop simulation, for example:

- Safe working conditions
- Shorter workday
- Equal pay for equal work

Have students each pick a demand, to be made into a poster. Explain that simpler is better.

Let the students work at their own rate.

If you want to, attach a stick to the sign. Have students form a picket line. Sing some Union songs.

Play Reading

Parts:

- Prologue: Shayne
- Retrospect
- Wisecrackers
- Bragger: Mikey
- Clowns
- Smart Servant Ian
- Master of Ceremony: Jamie

Shayne: Welcome, welcome come on in. We are so glad you can join us. We are going to do a play reading for you today. A Yiddish style play, with lines from the head, and from the heart

Jamie: We will have some traditional characters, like myself, I am your Master of Ceremony and have welcomed you to the theatre, and Shayne she will do are prologue and Noah will help keep you informed as our play reading goes on.

Shayne: Mikey is our Bragger, like the character Gustove in Beauty and the Beast. Ian is our wise cracking servant like that character Benson. And we have our clown type characters too.

Noah: I have an idea, when you hear a line from the head, touch your head and when you hear a line from the heart touch your heart.

Shayne: We have studied many different topics this year: (Shayne puts he hands on her head and looks at the people in the room.)life on a shtetl, Jewish Laws on the shtetl, immigration, life on the lower east side of NYC, factories, and Unions.

Noah: As part of our study we constructed models of the homes on the shtetl.(hands on head)

Ezra: We made houses from stuff we found outsides.

Areianna: Stuff you found? I didn't like that idea.(hand on heart)

Mikey: It was so difficult but I did it perfectly! (hand on heart everyone but Mikey hand on head)

Ian: Difficult for some but not for others. (hand on heart)

Adam: I like it better, making something than just reading about it (touches his heart)

Shayne: It was difficult but when I succeeded it felt good. (hand on heart)

Arianna: I liked showing them of to everyone.

Ezra: We put together a display of our shtetl and our replicas of ourselves.

Noah: We got to show off when we welcomed Ben to Machar. I like showing off.

Ian: And you are soooo good at it.

Mikey: ..good at it, good at anything that is me.

Shayne: We made replicas of ourselves in scale to our shtetl houses.

Adam: Those stick people were good, but too scrawny (skinny)

Ezra: It was pretty easy to make them, but taking the picture was hard because we kept taking different picture.

Adam: I couldn't make an outfit to match!

Noah: we talked about Jewish laws on the shtetl

Ian: You couldn't steal

Ezra: There wasn't anything valuable to steal!

Jamie: If you needed food, you could just ask.

Arenna: It felt good to help each other. (points to her heart)

Noah: You could not work on the Sabbath

Mikey: I did my work so well during the week I didn't need to work on the Sabbath

Arianna: You don't have any work!

Adam: I feel happy I don't have to work!

Ezra: How could we not work on the Sabbath? Wouldn't we starve to death?

Noah: You had to eat kosher food

Ian: What do ya mean!? No lobster, no pork spare ribs!

Arianna: No pepperoni pizza!

Ezra: You had to have two different sets of dishes

Arianna: Two sets of dishes! On the shtetl they were lucky to have just one set of dishes.

Ian: Bacon!? I like bacon.

Ezra: I only need one set of dishes because I'm vegetarian!

Shayne: After we studied life on the shtetl, we studied immigration.

Arianna: Since we studied about immigration it helped me in school because now we're learning about immigration there!

Mikey: Well so...did...I!

Ezra: We pretended we were immigrants.

Mikey: The Ellis Island simulation

Ian: That was so cool!

Mikey: Everyone kept stealing my bag. But they didn't do it very well. I could find it each time.

Ezra: It was good but a little too short. But I like the candy

Mikey: It was icky candy!

Ezra: You just didn't get the right kind.

Ian: I liked the time the doctor tried to make me give him a bribe.

Arianna: We didn't have to be checked by the doctor because we're girls

Jamie: your lucky I was just starting to understand what he was talking about and then I could understand any more.

Noah: I begin to understand how hard it must have been to immigrate.

Arianna: I got ripped off by the banker and I went back and told him.

Mikey: Did he give your money back?

Arianna: No.

Ian: My mom was an immigration officer, and she made me give her money. I'm never giving her money again!

Ezra: My dad was the bag checker - security - and he kept stealing.

Shayne: Thank you moms and dads. It if wasn't for you we couldn't have done the simulation.

Ezra: Is it time now for the Hanukkah play?

Noah: This would have been a great time for the Hanukkah play if it hadn't come so early this year.

Shayne: We studied life on the lower East side.

Noah: We measured our living rooms to see if they were bigger than the living rooms in the tenement homes.

Ian: I liked making the pushcarts.

Mikey: I made the best pushcart. You could really sell newspapers from it if you were really small.

Jamie: A lot of people worked in factories.

Arianna: The factories were not the best place to work

Ian: The tenements were crowded - four people cramped on one couch.

Ezra: Whenever someone wanted to do something they had to go outside to be able to see - and it smelled bad.

Noah: People have to make decisions they didn't have to make before.

Arianna: People could start using their hearts and not just their heads when making a decision.

Shayne: We talked in class about having to work on the Sabbath?

Ezra: People did what they had to do to survive.

Arianna: Life was all about living.

Ian: Money you can live with it, you can't live without it.

Jamie: My relatives had 12 people living in one room.

Ezra: My relative cut material into shapes for the shirts

Arianna: My mom's relatives went to New York from Mexico and started their own business

Ian: My great grandfather was a peddler.

Noah: Then we read the *Push Cart Wars*

Shayne: We read letters that were in the newspaper. One we read was a person ashamed to read the Yiddish paper on the train.

Jamie: What! You're not allowed to read the Yiddish Newspaper!?

Noah: I read the newspaper every day. I can't imagine not reading the paper.

Mikey: I read the paper on line.

Arianna: In one of the letters there is someone who earned a lot of money working and her husband wanted to buy a plantation of orange trees in Israel, but the mom didn't know what to do...she had three children to support, and he knew nothing about oranges!

Jamie: The funniest letter was about the guy who was embarrassed about being a redhead.

Adam: A lot of people wanted red hair!

Jamie: I wish there was someone to write to so solve our problems.

Mikey: That's what the internet is for - to solve all your problems!

Ian: Solve our problems or make new ones.

Noah: We couldn't study the lower east side without talking about formation of the unions.

Arianna: Our teacher made us deal with socks.

Ian: They weren't smelly!

Adam: One had candy stuck to it!

Jamie: There was a dime....

Noah: We were forced to sit quietly, knee to knee, follow certain rules, and we had to find matching socks to wrap into balls

Ian: But we got money for it.

Shayne: I really liked getting paid at the end of the day.

Mikey: I like forming the Union. Shayne gave us Girl Scout cookies.

Arianna & Shayne: I like making the signs

Ian: I liked negotiations - I got management to pay us a whole bunch of money.

Arianna: We tried to get less than normal work hours but Mikey kept saying normal - we had to agree on what we wanted to negotiate.

Shayne: We learned about some fun things people did on the lower eastside, going to the theatre.

Arianna: I liked to draw "Pickled Herring."

Ian: Me too - I drew a pickle and some herring in his mouth.

Mikey: I would have been a theatre start if I really lived back then.

Ian: You think so

Noah: The project we have worked off and on , on is our family trees.

Adam: I'm related to my brothers, cousins, sisters, fathers, second cousins, dad's sisters, brothers, cousins, mother's second brother.

Mikey: My grandfather never saw a banana before - he ate it, skin and all!

Arianna: My Polish relative brought machinery to Mexico, and started a business.

Mikey: I can trace to the 1800's. (bragging)

Ian: I can trace my dad's family back to the 1700's.(bragging more)

Shayne: Please take an opportunity to look at each other's family trees and to eat a snack.