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ACTING HISTORY



Bring History to Life with Original Plays

Gilded Age to **World War II**

Acting History. Bring History to Life with Original Plays



About the author

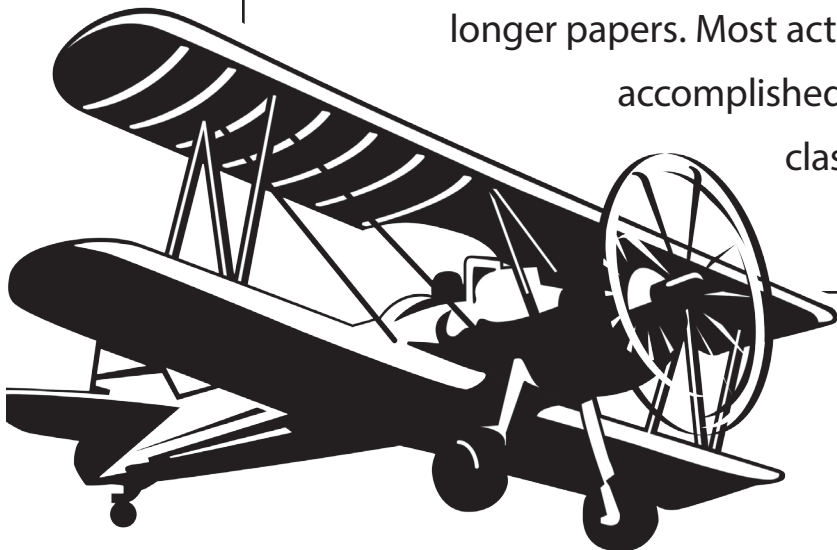
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Welcome to *Gilded Age to World War II!*

Students experience history by performing dramas covering the middle period of U.S. history (1870–1945). The plays focus on the travails of Chinese immigrants, the tragedy that occurred at Wounded Knee Creek, American intervention in World War I, Amelia Earhart's rise to fame, our country's struggles to escape the effects of the Great Depression, and World War II through the lens of Joe DiMaggio's career. Teacher guides include full scripts, character assignments, vocabulary activities, short-answer questions, and ideas for longer papers. Most activities can be accomplished in one to two class periods.



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Introduction

Some Strategies to Maximize the Effectiveness of Plays

1. **Open with the Vocabulary Activity.** Each unit has a vocabulary practice worksheet. Completing this exercise before acting out the play prepares students for difficult words and helps them make sense of the content. It can also be a good idea to practice pronouncing these words as a class.
2. **Read stage directions aloud during the play.** This reminds students of what to do and allows you to direct while you read.
3. **Consider assigning yourself the narrator's role.** Due to the number of high-level vocabulary words, the job of the narrator can be tough for many students. If a student is going to play the part, make sure he or she is a strong reader.
4. **Give students time to highlight or practice their lines.** This could be done for homework or at the beginning of class.
5. **Choose a lead who is extroverted and a good reader.** Both qualities in a lead help to make the play more enjoyable and fluid.
6. **Assign roles ahead of class.** Although it can be fun to have students lobby for certain parts, preassigned roles make for a calmer start. Also, if you need to assign two roles to one person, it gives you time to make sure they aren't in overlapping scenes.
7. **Read through the play with room set-up in mind.** You will want to think ahead of time about where some scenes will take place and what extra furniture you might want at the front of the room.
8. **Be sensitive to student responses to stage directions.** One of the most fun aspects of these plays is students acting out stage directions (running, high fiving, dropping to the floor, etc.). That being said, some students will be reticent, particularly if the directions require contact between girls and boys. These situations can't be totally planned for since girls often end up playing boys' parts. Be flexible and conscious of this while students act out their parts. Students will let you know what parts they don't want to do.
9. **Facilitate a discussion about historical accuracy.** It can be helpful to remind students that even though the dialogue and some of the actions are fictional, everything is based on historical facts.

10. **Perform the play twice.** Often, students want to perform the play again. Not only does this give them another opportunity to hear and learn about the history, but the plays also run more smoothly the next time through. It can also be fun to allow students to trade parts for the second show.
11. **Edit the play.** Add to or change the plays to better fit your class's focus. You also might want to edit some of the vocabulary to minimize students stumbling over words.

Common Core Standards

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies » Grades 6–8

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8 Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.10 By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies » Grades 6–8

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1 Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2 Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

English Language Arts Standards in Speaking and Listening » Grade 8

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2 Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.3 Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

English Language Arts Standards in Writing » Grade 8

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

● I've Been Working on the Railroad ● Chinese Immigration

Few people know just how badly the Chinese were treated when they immigrated to the United States. That they added so much to our country despite physical intimidation, racism, and discriminatory laws penned specifically against them is astounding. The following play centers on a fictional character named Ming Chu. The scenes are representative of what many Chinese people experienced after immigrating to America.



I've Been Working on the Railroad

Chinese Immigration

Characters

- Narrator
- Ming Chu
- Li Chu
- Ming Chu's Friend
- Chinese Miner 1
- Chinese Miner 2
- White Gold Miner 1
- White Gold Miner 2
- White Gold Miner 3
- Tax Collector
- Dynamite
- Mountain
- Snowdrift
- Poon Chu
- Fong Sing
- Immigration Official
- Chinese Railroad Worker 1
- Chinese Railroad Worker 2
- Chinese Railroad Worker 3
- Native American
- Angry White Worker 1
- Angry White Worker 2
- Railroad Owner
- Politician
- Sam Chu
- John Candy
- Albert Pujols
- Sergey Brin
- Levi Strauss

scene 1. Gold Diggers

MING CHU and LI CHU stand at the front of the room.

NARRATOR. The first Chinese immigrants arrived in the early 1800s. They came in small numbers and were mostly merchants. This changed in 1848, when the discovery of massive amounts of gold at Sutter's Mill caused people from all over the world to "rush" to California. A Chinese population of around 4,000 in 1850 exploded to over 100,000 by 1880—about one-tenth of California's population.

LI CHU. So, you're leaving tomorrow.

MING CHU. Yes.

LI CHU, *annoyed*. And why are you doing this again?

MING CHU. I hear there are mountains of gold. I'll pick up a few piles, bring it back home, and we can live in luxury for the rest of our lives.

LI CHU. Right, since it's so easy to cross the Pacific Ocean.

MING CHU. It'll be worth it, I promise.

LI CHU. And I get to stay here, raise our kids, and take care of your parents.

MING CHU. Yes.

LI CHU *folds her arms and glares at* MING CHU.

MING CHU. Would this be a good time to say I love you?

LI CHU. This would be a good time to keep out of my way.

Exit LI CHU. *Enter* MING CHU'S FRIEND.

NARRATOR. An estimated 95 percent of the Chinese that came during this time were male. Women were expected to stay at home, raise the kids, and take care of their husbands' families. Most men did not expect to remain long in America. They hoped to strike it rich in the gold fields and return.

MING CHU. We made it to California!

MING CHU'S FRIEND. Let's go find one of those mountains of gold we've heard so much about.

MING CHU. I can't wait to be the richest person from Guangdong!

MING CHU and MING CHU'S FRIEND, *together*. Let's do this! *(They chest bump. They then pretend to pickax the floor.)*

Enter WHITE GOLD MINER 1, WHITE GOLD MINER 2, and WHITE GOLD MINER 3. *All three stand off to the side.*

MING CHU, *straightening up*. Have you found anything yet?

MING CHU'S FRIEND. Nope. There seems to be a lot of dirt on this mountain of gold.

MING CHU. We'll get there. Don't give up.

MING CHU'S FRIEND. Oh look, here comes someone to meet us.

WHITE GOLD MINERS *walk up to them*.

WHITE GOLD MINER 1. Gobbly googly boggly woob.

MING CHU. I didn't quite get that. Could you try that slower?

WHITE GOLD MINER 2, *slowly*. Jeeby jeeba bobby woob yooda.

MING CHU'S FRIEND. Nope, I didn't get that either.

WHITE GOLD MINER 3, *holding a fist near their faces*. Bajja wooja.

MING CHU'S FRIEND. Now I think I know what they're getting at.

MING CHU. But we're not leaving. We got here first and have a permit. *(He holds up an invisible piece of paper.)*

WHITE GOLD MINER 1 *grabs the "permit" from him and pretends to rip it in half. All three WHITE GOLD MINERS beat up MING CHU and MING CHU'S FRIEND until they run away. Exit WHITE GOLD MINER 1 and WHITE GOLD MINER 2.*

NARRATOR. Being beaten up and having their digging sites taken away happened regularly to the Chinese. And there was very little they could do about it. In 1854 the U.S. Supreme Court declared that the Chinese were not allowed to testify against white people because they were "a race of people whom nature has marked as inferior." In response to this, many Chinese chose worse areas and worked in large teams to protect themselves from being attacked. That didn't mean their problems were over, though.

Enter MING CHU and MING CHU'S FRIEND. They pretend to shovel soil from a "stream" into their "pans." Enter CHINESE MINER 1 and CHINESE MINER 2, who get down on their knees and pretend to hold a pan. Enter TAX COLLECTOR, who stands off to the side.

MING CHU'S FRIEND. Okay, this really isn't a mountain of gold.

MING CHU. No need to complain. Keep working.

CHINESE MINER 1. I miss my wife.

MING CHU'S FRIEND. I miss my children.

CHINESE MINER 2. Oh, I got some!

MING CHU *walks over and looks at where CHINESE MINER 2 has been shoveling.*

MING CHU. He does! I'll start digging in that section too.

CHINESE MINER 1. At least we'll make some money today.

CHINESE MINER 2. Uh oh. Who's that coming over to us?

TAX COLLECTOR *walks up to them.*

MING CHU'S FRIEND. Oh, it's just one guy. He's no threat against all of us.

TAX COLLECTOR. Hello, nice to meet you.

MING CHU, suspiciously. What do you want?

TAX COLLECTOR. I'm here to collect taxes.

CHINESE MINER 1. How much?

TAX COLLECTOR. Three dollars per person a month.

CHINESE MINER 2, *shocked*. But I only make six dollars in a good month!

TAX COLLECTOR. I can bring in the police if this is going to be a problem.

MING CHU. We don't want that. But since when do we have to pay a tax?

TAX COLLECTOR. California just passed it into law. It's a foreign miner's tax.

CHINESE MINER 1. Do all foreigners have to pay this?

TAX COLLECTOR. Just ones that aren't going to become citizens.

CHINESE MINER 2. I want to be a citizen. Does that mean I don't have to pay the tax?

TAX COLLECTOR. Uh, no. Chinese immigrants aren't actually allowed to become citizens.

MING CHU'S FRIEND. So, basically, we should just call it the Chinese Miner's Tax.

TAX COLLECTOR. If you're not happy here, you can always go back to China. We're tired of you people taking all of our jobs, anyway.

CHINESE MINER 2. Is that the real reason for this tax?

TAX COLLECTOR. See it how you want to, but I'm done answering questions. I need twelve dollars from your crew, and expect to see me next month as well.

The CHINESE MINERS shake their heads, but reach into their pockets and pay up.

scene 2. Choo-Choo

MING CHU, CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 1, CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 2, and CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 3 *sit in a circle in the front of the room*. SNOWDRIFT *stands on the right side of the room*.

NARRATOR. After the gold rush, many Chinese continued to mine, some moving on to mine silver and other precious metals. But many moved on to new jobs. Some worked as servants, ran restaurants, or ran laundries. Many tried to get started as fishermen, but due to a Chinese Fisherman's Tax and a law that made them stay within three miles of the West Coast, few continued.

Many became farmers, and Chinese immigrants played a significant role in California's agriculture. They are credited with greatly helping the shift in focus of California's agriculture from wheat to fruit. And one Chinese immigrant, named Ah Bing, was pivotal in the creation of the Bing cherry.

Another job heavily populated by Chinese Americans was working for railroad companies. In 1863 the Central Pacific Railroad began making the western half of the transcontinental railroad. The workforce that built the section reaching from Sacramento to Promontory Summit, Utah, was estimated to be 90 percent Chinese.

MING CHU. It feels good to be on a break.

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 1. Yes, this railroad gig is much harder work than panning for gold.

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 2. Eight hours on, eight hours off, eight hours back on again. I'm losing track of day and night.

MING CHU. The money is good, though.

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 3. It's less than what they pay the white men, I've heard.

MING CHU. That's so unfair! But I'm still looking forward to making thirty dollars this month.

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 2. We should get to bed

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 3. Agreed.

The four men lie down on the floor and fall asleep. After a minute, SNOWDRIFT comes rushing across the room, grabs CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 3, pulls him to the other side of the room, and sits on him. The others wake up.

MING CHU. What happened?

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 1. Snowdrift!

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 2. I think we lost our friend.

MING CHU. Can we bury him?

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 1. I don't think we'll be finding his body until next season.

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 2. He's buried in snow.

NARRATOR. During the winter of 1866, huge snowdrifts, some as high as sixty feet, swept away whole camps of workers.

DYNAMITE *comes to the left side of the room.* MOUNTAIN *stands on the right side of the room.*

NARRATOR. In addition to the harsh weather and living conditions, the railroad's route was complicated by the Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountains. Initially, workers pickaxed their tunnels through them. The invention of dynamite did save them a lot of time, but it also created new dangers.

MING CHU, *exhausted*. Another mountain?

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 1. Let's start pickaxing.

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 2. No, wait, we're supposed to use a new invention.

MING CHU. What is it?

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 1. They call it "dynamite." It blows holes through mountains.

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 2. Sounds incredible. Let's get some.

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 1 *and* CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 2 *pick up* DYNAMITE *and carry it to* MOUNTAIN. MING CHU *pretends to light* DYNAMITE. MING CHU *and* CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 2 *run and hide behind the teacher's desk, but* CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 2 *stays to watch for a moment too long and ...*

DYNAMITE, *jumping up and yelling*. Kaboom!

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 2 *flies through the air and smashes into a wall*.

MING CHU. Oh no! He should have gotten away faster.

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 1. I'd say he was moving pretty fast at the end there.

MING CHU. Back to work?

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKER 1. Seven hours to go.

scene 3. Chinese Exclusion Act

ANGRY WHITE WORKER 1, ANGRY WHITE WORKER 2, POLITICIAN, NATIVE AMERICAN, RAILROAD OWNER, *and* MING CHU *stand at the front of the room*.

NARRATOR. A recession in the 1870s caused animosity toward the Chinese to increase even more, resulting in the harshest anti-Chinese law yet, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

ANGRY WHITE WORKER 1, *shaking his fist*. I'm out of a job and it's all because of the Chinese people!

ANGRY WHITE WORKER 2, *waving his arms around*. They're going to take over the United States! They should stay in their own country!

MING CHU. Where are your parents from?

ANGRY WHITE WORKER 1. Ireland, and I see where you're going with that question. But the Irish are not as foreign as you guys.

ANGRY WHITE WORKER 2. And my parents have been here forever.

NATIVE AMERICAN. Oh yes? What tribe are they from?

ANGRY WHITE WORKER 2. Well, not forever. But for a very long time.

NATIVE AMERICAN. You two seem very selective about how you define being American.

RAILROAD OWNER. As for me, I actually want to defend the Chinese. They are hard workers and we have them to thank for much of the railroad that is now spurring our economy, revolutionizing travel—

NATIVE AMERICAN, *interrupting.* Cutting through our land, destroying our hunting grounds, and—

RAILROAD OWNER, *putting his hand over the mouth of* NATIVE AMERICAN. And helping America to be the best country in the world. I don't think we could have done it without the Chinese.

ANGRY WHITE WORKER 1. Well, of course you support them. You like that they work for cheap.

MING CHU, *turning in surprise to* ANGRY WHITE WORKERS. So you want me to be paid more?

ANGRY WHITE WORKER 2. Get paid how much you want—as long as you stay in China.

POLITICIAN. I understand both sides of this argument. My grandfather emigrated here from Germany and our country has many amazing immigrants.

MING CHU. But . . . ?

POLITICIAN. But the Chinese are too different. The Germans, the Irish, even the Italian maybe, are like us. But the Chinese, with their queue braids and different religion, are a people not suited to our fantastic country. We need to stop this yellow peril before we no longer control our own country.

ANGRY WHITE WORKER 1. A politician that actually listens. You have my vote.

POLITICIAN. And so I support, wholeheartedly, the Chinese Exclusion Act, which will stop new Chinese from coming to our shores.

ANGRY WHITE WORKER 2. Great!

NATIVE AMERICAN. Is it too late to pass a European Exclusion Act?

NARRATOR. China was the only country whose citizens were ever specifically barred from immigrating to the United States. President Grover Cleveland once praised the Chinese Exclusion Act, saying the Chinese were “an element ignorant of our Constitution and laws, impossible of assimilation with our people and dangerous to our peace and welfare.”

scene 4. Angel Island

FONG SING *sits in a chair at the front of the room. He is slumped and dejected.* POON CHU *stands near him.*

NARRATOR. The Chinese Exclusion Act stopped most Chinese from immigrating, and the number of people with Chinese ethnicity in the United States dropped by more than 40 percent by 1920. There were some exceptions, though, and some Chinese still came. Immigrants who arrived on the East Coast went through Ellis Island. For immigrants who crossed the Pacific Ocean, the processing station was on Angel Island, right off of San Francisco, not far from Alcatraz. While Europeans usually passed through the processing station in only a few hours, it took the Chinese anywhere from a couple of weeks to years.

POON CHU, *to Fong Sing.* Do you mind if I sit here?

FONG SING. Sure.

POON CHU, *sitting down next to Fong Sing.* How long have you been here?

FONG SING, *shrugging.* I've lost count of the days. Did you arrive recently?

POON CHU. Yesterday. They say it'll still be a few days before I can talk to an official.

FONG SING. That means a few weeks, if you're lucky.

POON CHU. It shouldn't be a problem. I'm joining my dad and two brothers.

FONG SING. That's what I thought.

POON CHU. I've heard the interrogation can be tough. Any advice?

FONG SING. Know the answers to their questions.

POON CHU. Thanks. *(He pauses and looks around.)* What do you do all day?

FONG SING, *tonelessly.* I look through the barbed wire fence at the peaceful water and try to pretend there's no barbed wire.

POON CHU. Why don't you go back to China?

FONG SING. I think about it every day. But I spent a lot of money to buy the boat ticket here. I sold my house, borrowed money . . .

POON CHU. I'm sorry.

FONG SING. It is what it is. Good luck.

POON CHU. Thank you.

FONG SING *gets up and stands off to the side.* IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL *sits in a chair facing POON CHU.*

IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL, *saying all questions sharply and quickly.* Who are you reuniting with?

POON CHU. My father and my two brothers.

IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL. Why did they come here without you?

POON CHU. I was too young.

IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL. What are their names?

POON CHU. Um. Ming Chu is my father. Jan and Li are my brothers.

IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL. You paused. Why did you have to think about your father's name? Is he actually your father, or a family friend?

POON CHU. He's my dad.

IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL. Do you have any diseases?

POON CHU. No.

IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL. What about hookworm?

POON CHU. I said no. And I had a health check here.

IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL. What will be your line of work?

POON CHU. My dad owns a laundry; I'll help him.

IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL. Have you ever smoked opium?

POON CHU. Huh? No.

IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL. Have you ever smoked opium?

POON CHU. I said no.

IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL. Why are you being defensive?

POON CHU. I'm not.

IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL. Is your family involved in any illegal activities?

POON CHU. Not that I know of. I mean, no.

IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL. Are you sure?

POON CHU. No, I mean yes.

IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL. What's your father's name?

POON CHU. Ming.

IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL. And what town was he from originally?

They mime the interrogation continuing, with POON CHU becoming more confused and flustered. FONG SING returns to the front of the room.

NARRATOR. The conditions were not terrible on Angel Island, but they were not good. People slept in barracks. Some had access to toilet paper and soap only if their families provided them. The biggest hardship was simply being in limbo, not knowing if or when they'd join their families. Many expressed their frustrations by writing poetry on the walls of their rooms. Fong Sing will read one that has been saved.

FONG SING, *pacing back and forth*. I leaned on the windowsill and gazed.
The revolving sun and moon waxed and waned. Changing again and again.
I think about my brothers a lot. But we cannot see one another.
The deep clear water casts reflections as waves toss in sympathy.

NARRATOR. The Chinese Exclusion Act was in place until 1943. It was repealed because China was a U.S. ally in World War II. Recently, Chinese immigration has started to increase again. Currently, 3.3 million Americans claim Chinese ancestry, making theirs the largest of the Asian groups in America. In 2011 they were the second-biggest group in the world to immigrate to this country, behind Mexicans.

scene 5. Chinese Success

SAM CHU and MING CHU *sit in chairs at the front of the room*.

NARRATOR. Despite discrimination, the Chinese have been very successful in America. By 2010 the average Chinese American was making \$15,000 more a year than the average American and attending college at almost twice the rate (52 percent to 28 percent). This last scene with Ming Chu features him talking to a great-grandson, Sam Chu.

SAM CHU. Are you happy you came to America?

MING CHU. Of course. I've spent my life here.

SAM CHU. But you were treated so badly.

MING CHU. Nah. Most people in this country have been good to me. I'm proud to be an American, with my American great-grandkid going to college.

SAM CHU. Seriously, I've read what it was like for you. There were anti-Chinese riots, horrible things were said about you in the papers, Congress passed laws specifically against us as a race. How can you be so positive?

MING CHU. Oh, those people. They were just jealous. *(He laughs.)* Come on. You think about the past too much.

scene 6. Immigrant Additions to Our Country

LEVI STRAUSS, JOHN CANDY, SERGEY BRIN, and ALBERT PUJOLS *come to the front of the room.*

NARRATOR. The Chinese path is one common among many groups that have immigrated to this country. America has been one of the countries most open to immigration. Still, newcomers have often been met by discrimination, particularly during hard economic times. The extent to which immigrants help the economy is a complicated and much-debated issue, but it is difficult to imagine what our country would be like without the hard work and accomplishments brought here by people from all over the world. Let's meet a few famous first-generation immigrants.

LEVI STRAUSS, *addressing the class.* Raise your hand if you're wearing jeans right now. *(He pauses as students wearing jeans raise their hands.)* Well, you might not be wearing them if it wasn't for me. I came from Germany and opened up a store in San Francisco. Another immigrant, from Latvia, had the idea for blue jeans. We went into business together and the rest is history.

SERGEY BRIN. You may not have heard of me, but you definitely know of my coinvention. Larry Page and I invented this little company called Google. You don't believe me? Google it. I came here from the Soviet Union when I was six.

JOHN CANDY. You like to laugh? Well, you probably wouldn't have as much if it weren't for all of the Canadian comedians who immigrated here. Besides me, the following comedians were born in Canada: Dan Aykroyd, Jim Carrey, Martin Short, Mike Myers, Phil Hartman, Norm MacDonald, Eugene Levy, Leslie Nielsen, Tom Green, Howie Mandel, Rick Moranis, and newcomers Seth Rogen, Will Arnett, and Michael Cera. Additionally, Lorne Michaels, the producer of *Saturday Night Live*, was born there.

The class stares in stunned silence.

JOHN CANDY. I know—can you believe it? Who knew us Canucks were so funny?

ALBERT PUJOLS. And you probably can't imagine American baseball today without me and my Dominican Republic countrymen. Over five hundred players born on that little island have played in the major leagues. Some other great players from my country are Pedro Martínez, Manny Ramírez, David Ortiz, José Reyes, and Felipe Alou.

Exit **LEVI STRAUSS, JOHN CANDY, SERGEY BRIN, and ALBERT PUJOLS.**

NARRATOR. And we could go on. To see the influence of immigration everywhere, let's see it in this class.

Stand up if you were born in a foreign country.

Stand up if either of your parents was born in a foreign country.

Stand up if any of your grandparents were born in a foreign country.

Unless you are 100 percent Native American—stand up.

This is why America is often called a country of immigrants. Let's give everybody a round of applause!

Name. _____

Date. _____

Chinese Immigration Questions

1. What brought a large number of Chinese immigrants to California?
2. Why did so few Chinese women come over?
3. What are some of the jobs the Chinese worked in after they came to America?
4. Why did Congress pass the Chinese Exclusion Act?
5. Why do you think people wrote poetry on the walls of their barracks at Angel Island?
6. What are some examples of discrimination against the Chinese?
7. How were Chinese immigrants treated differently from European immigrants?

Name. _____ Date. _____

Immigration Policy Paper

Immigration continues to be a complicated issue today. Below are some of the main concerns. Choose one subject from below, research to find out about the current situation, take a stance on the issue, and use supporting evidence (quotes, statistics, facts, and/or anecdotes) to defend your stance.

LEGAL IMMIGRATION

Should the number of immigrants allowed into our country be increased, decreased, or kept the same? Should every type of worker or just certain types of workers be allowed in? Should the application process be made simpler?

U.S./MEXICO BORDER

How much should be spent on U.S./Mexico border security? Should we spend more, less, or the same as we already do?

ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

Should illegal immigrants already here be deported, ignored, or given a chance to become citizens? Should only certain illegal immigrants get the chance to become citizens?

BUSINESSES

Should businesses be punished for hiring illegal immigrants? If so, how severely?

Name. _____ Date. _____

Chinese Immigration Vocabulary Activity

Write the letter of the definition in front of the vocabulary word. Use the context sentences (all from the play) for help.

- A. Give evidence as a witness in court.
- B. A transitional place.
- C. A province in southern China.
- D. The fear that the mass immigration of Chinese people would take over and destroy America.
- E. To examine by questioning.
- F. Across the continent.
- G. A Chinese hairstyle where the front of the hair was shaved off and the rest of the hair was braided into a long pigtail.

_____ **GUANGDONG**
*I can't wait to be the richest person from **Guangdong**.*

_____ **TESTIFY**
*In 1854 the U.S. Supreme Court declared that the Chinese were not allowed to **testify** against white people.*

_____ **INTERROGATION**
*I've heard the **interrogation** can be tough. Any advice?*

_____ **TRANSCONTINENTAL**
*In 1863 the Central Pacific Railroad began making the western half of the **transcontinental** railroad.*

_____ **LIMBO**
*The biggest hardship was probably simply being in **limbo**.*

_____ **QUEUE**
*But the Chinese, with their **queue** braids and different religion, are a people not suited to our fantastic country.*

_____ **YELLOW PERIL**
*We need to stop this **yellow peril** before we no longer control our own country.*

● The Ghost Dance Craze ● Wounded Knee

In 1890 over one hundred Lakota men, women, and children were shot at Wounded Knee Creek. Most were unarmed. Perform “The Ghost Dance Craze” to see how a dance and tragic relations led to this massacre.



The Ghost Dance Craze

Wounded Knee

Characters

- Narrator
- Wovoka
- Paiute Man
- Paiute Woman
- Ghost Dancer 1
- Ghost Dancer 2
- Ghost Dancer 3
- Sitting Bull
- Lakota Girl
- Lakota Boy
- General Custer
- 7th Cavalry Soldier 1
- 7th Cavalry Soldier 2
- Crazy Horse
- Kicking Bear
- Lakota Man
- Lakota Woman
- Indian Agent 1
- Indian Agent 2
- Lakota Policeman 1
- Lakota Policeman 2
- Horse
- Catch-the-Bear
- Spotted Elk
- Black Coyote
- Sergeant William Austin
- President Benjamin Harrison
- Sarcastic Native American

scene 1. Enter Wovoka

PAIUTE WOMAN and PAIUTE MAN stand at the front of the room. WOVOKA stands off to the left side.

NARRATOR. Wovoka was a Paiute Indian from Nevada. After the death of his father, he was taken in by a local white ranching family, from whom he learned about the Bible. As an adult, he became a medicine man for the Northern Paiute people, combining his Christian and indigenous beliefs. On January 1, 1889, he had a vision during an eclipse.

WOVOKA walks up to PAIUTE WOMAN and PAIUTE MAN.

WOVOKA. I had a vision, guys.

PAIUTE WOMAN. During the solar eclipse? I hope you didn't look at it directly.

PAIUTE MAN. Yes, I hear you can really hurt your eyes doing that.

WOVOKA, impatiently. No, listen to me. I saw something that I need to share. I was taken into the spirit world. All the red men were taken up into the sky.

PAIUTE WOMAN. And the white men?

WOVOKA. Swallowed up by the earth.

PAIUTE MAN. Yeah, right. And then you woke up?

WOVOKA. And then I was told that we could make this vision a reality.

PAIUTE MAN. Through dreaming?

WOVOKA. No, by dancing. We must dance, nonstop, for five days. If our people can join in, the red men will return from the spirit world, the buffalo will be abundant again, and we will rule our land like before.

PAIUTE WOMAN. And all we have to do is dance? How? Like this? *(She starts disco dancing.)*

WOVOKA, *shaking his head*. No.

PAIUTE MAN. Like this? *(He starts doing the twist.)*

WOVOKA, *shaking his head*. No!

Actual Teacher, *getting up as though about to dance*. Like the Harlem shake?

The entire class yells, "Please, no!"

WOVOKA. No, I mean like this.

WOVOKA *begins a sort of slow run in a small circle, exaggerating the movements in his arms*.

PAIUTE WOMAN. I can do that. *(She joins him.)*

PAIUTE MAN. Me too. *(He joins.)*

GHOST DANCER 1, GHOST DANCER 2, and GHOST DANCER 3 *also join*.

WOVOKA, *stopping and moving off to the side*. You guys are getting it. Just five more days to go!

Anyone else from the class who wants to join the Ghost Dance comes up to the front and starts dancing with them.

NARRATOR. Wovoka also said that for his vision to come true they'd need to live in the old ways, not drink alcohol, and be peaceful. The Ghost Dance caught on, and soon Native Americans from all over the West were coming to Wovoka to find out about it.

scene 2. Sitting Bull Reminisces

SITTING BULL *sits in a chair at the front of the room*. LAKOTA BOY and LAKOTA GIRL *are on the floor facing him*.

NARRATOR. The Ghost Dance eventually became popular on many Lakota reservations, located in the Dakotas. Sitting Bull lived on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Native Americans revered Sitting Bull for his lifelong resistance toward settlers stealing their land.

LAKOTA BOY. Can you tell us a story?

SITTING BULL. Of course.

LAKOTA GIRL. But can this one have a happy ending for once?

SITTING BULL, *pausing for a moment to think*. But all my stories are depressing.

LAKOTA BOY. It's okay. Just make sure there's a lot of action.

SITTING BULL. That shouldn't be a problem. Wait, I do have an upbeat one—at least from my perspective. It was 1876 . . .

GENERAL CUSTER, 7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 1, and 7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 2 *come up to the left side of the room*. CRAZY HORSE and KICKING BEAR *come up to the right side of the room*.

SITTING BULL. I foresaw it all. The story, yet again, begins with our land being taken from us. The U.S. government had forced us to sign a treaty, leaving us with land that couldn't be used for hunting. And then the whites discovered their precious yellow metal in the Black Hills. We were told we couldn't hunt on the land and would have to move to reservations. Many of our people refused. General Custer was sent to force us to move onto a reservation.

LAKOTA GIRL. What had you foreseen?

SITTING BULL. The soldiers falling onto our camp like grasshoppers.

LAKOTA BOY. And that meant . . .

SITTING BULL. We were going to destroy them.

GENERAL CUSTER, *to his soldiers*. So they're down in that valley.

7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 1. That's what we've been told.

7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 2. What are they doing there?

GENERAL CUSTER. I have no idea. We gave them an ultimatum months ago to move to a reservation, but they still insist on wandering around hunting buffalo. Let's go get them.

7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 1. But we're supposed to wait for reinforcements.

7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 2. Yes, so we can block both sides of the valley.

GENERAL CUSTER. What? Are you guys scared of a few redskins? It's an order! We're going in now.

SITTING BULL, *to LAKOTA BOY and LAKOTA GIRL*. But they didn't realize how many of us there were.

LAKOTA BOY. Were you in the battle?

SITTING BULL. I was the spiritual chief for this battle, so I didn't fight.

LAKOTA GIRL. Did people accuse you of being too weak or scared to fight?

SITTING BULL, *laughing*. Considering I spent the week before fasting and cutting one hundred pieces of flesh out of my arms . . .

LAKOTA BOY. So no, then.

SITTING BULL. Yes, no one thought that. But I have great respect for the warriors who fought—especially our war leader, Crazy Horse.

KICKING BEAR, *to* CRAZY HORSE. When do you think they're coming for us, cousin?

CRAZY HORSE, *staring straight ahead*. I hear soon. Bring them on.

KICKING BEAR. But they have better weapons.

CRAZY HORSE. I laugh at bad odds.

KICKING BEAR. Remind me not to go to Las Vegas with you.

CRAZY HORSE. Sitting Bull predicted this won't be pretty. And it won't—not for them.

KICKING BEAR. If you say so.

CRAZY HORSE. Here they come. Fight like you've never fought before, cuz.

GENERAL CUSTER, 7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 1, *and* 7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 2 *pretend to ride horses toward* CRAZY HORSE *and* KICKING BEAR.

SITTING BULL, *to* LAKOTA BOY *and* LAKOTA GIRL. Our people fought valiantly and made my vision come true.

The five shoot at each other. GENERAL CUSTER, 7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 1, *and* 7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 2 *fall dead to the ground.*

CRAZY HORSE, *leaning over them*. Yeah! We took you down!

CRAZY HORSE, GENERAL CUSTER, 7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 1, *and* 7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 2 *return to their seats.* KICKING BEAR *goes to the right side of the room.*

SITTING BULL, *to* LAKOTA BOY *and* LAKOTA GIRL. At least half of them were killed, including Custer, while only a hundred or so of our men were lost.

LAKOTA BOY. And then what happened?

SITTING BULL. Oh, then it gets depressing. The U.S. government sent in more troops and most of the warriors were forced back onto reservations.

LAKOTA GIRL. And you?

SITTING BULL. I ran off to Canada for a while. But that's a whole other story.

LAKOTA GIRL. Another depressing one?

SITTING BULL. A little.

Enter KICKING BEAR.

SITTING BULL. What's up, Kicking Bear? Glad you came to visit. Run along, children.

Exit LAKOTA BOY *and* LAKOTA GIRL.

SITTING BULL, *stands up and gives* KICKING BEAR *a manly bro-hug*. It's good to see you, Kicking Bear.

KICKING BEAR. You, too, Sitting Bull.

SITTING BULL. I heard you visited Wovoka.

KICKING BEAR. Yes, it was amazing. I have shared the Ghost Dance with the Lakota in Pine Ridge Reservation.

SITTING BULL. I'm not sure I'm a believer, but if it makes the people happy . . .

KICKING BEAR. It gives them hope.

SITTING BULL. It's true, we have so few rituals left. You should show my people this dance.

scene 3. Whites Grow Concerned

KICKING BEAR *stands on a chair*. LAKOTA MAN *and* LAKOTA WOMAN *stand in front of him*. INDIAN AGENT 1 *and* INDIAN AGENT 2 *stand off to the left side, watching*.

KICKING BEAR. I have come to tell you about the Ghost Dance.

LAKOTA WOMAN. We've heard about it.

LAKOTA MAN. What's the big deal? You think dancing is really going to solve all of our problems?

KICKING BEAR. It's more than just dancing. Our gods are punishing us for leaving our traditional ways and coming to these horrendous reservations.

LAKOTA WOMAN. I don't remember having a choice.

KICKING BEAR. One always has a choice. Some of us fought and others happily came to the reservations believing the white man would provide us with food. And how is that food?

LAKOTA WOMAN. We don't get enough!

LAKOTA MAN. And the meat's often rotten!

KICKING BEAR. And we are a people who can take care of ourselves. For generations we thrived on these plains.

LAKOTA WOMAN. And then they took all the good land and left us with the bad. And then they came back and took parts of the bad land.

LAKOTA MAN. And now they're taking parts of the worse land left over from the bad land.

KICKING BEAR. And our buffalo! The precious animals we used for food, shelter, clothes, and fuel are now almost extinct, because white men have overhunted them.

LAKOTA WOMAN. It's like they want us to be extinct too.

KICKING BEAR, *enthusiastically*. So are you with me? Who wants to Ghost Dance with me until the earth swallows up the white man and we can rule this land again?

LAKOTA MAN, *excitedly*. It's worth a shot!

LAKOTA WOMAN, *even more excitedly*. I'm in!

KICKING BEAR, LAKOTA MAN, *and* LAKOTA WOMAN *start Ghost Dancing*. GHOST DANCER 1, GHOST DANCER 2, *and* GHOST DANCER 3 *join them*.

INDIAN AGENT 1. I don't know about this Ghost Dance. It's making me nervous.

INDIAN AGENT 2. Why? They're just dancing.

INDIAN AGENT 1. Do you hear what they're saying? They're preaching that they want us to disappear off the earth.

INDIAN AGENT 2. Can you blame them? We've given them disease, taken their land, and destroyed their way of life.

INDIAN AGENT 1. The sooner they can take on our ways, the better for them.

INDIAN AGENT 2. Maybe, but a little singing and dancing shouldn't hurt anybody.

INDIAN AGENT 1. I don't know. I'm going to call the government and report on what's happening. If nothing else, we need to take away their weapons.

INDIAN AGENT 2. I don't think that's a good idea . . .

INDIAN AGENT 1. If you're such an Indian lover, why don't you go join them in their hooting and hollering? We need reinforcements to get these savages under control.

SITTING BULL. I'm not going with you. Our people have the right to dance, and I haven't had much to do with it anyway. But if there's anyone who needs to do some Ghost Dancing, some reconnecting to the old ways, it's sellouts like you guys.

LAKOTA POLICEMAN 1. You're coming with us whether you like it or not.

They drag him across the room to HORSE.

LAKOTA POLICEMAN 2. Get on the horse.

HORSE. Neigh?

SITTING BULL. I'm not mounting that horse. *(To HORSE)* Nothing personal.

HORSE. Neigh.

LAKOTA POLICEMAN 1. Don't make us force you.

SITTING BULL. You think after all I've been through that I'm scared of you two jokesters?

LAKOTA POLICEMAN 2. We tried asking nicely.

LAKOTA POLICEMEN *try to lift SITTING BULL onto HORSE. SITTING BULL resists. LAKOTA MAN, LAKOTA WOMAN, and CATCH-THE-BEAR come forward to watch this taking place, and they aren't happy.*

LAKOTA MAN, yelling. What are you doing to Sitting Bull?

LAKOTA WOMAN, yelling. How dare you treat him like that!

CATCH-THE-BEAR, pointing a rifle at them. Let him go now!

LAKOTA POLICEMEN *keep holding on to SITTING BULL and turn and point their guns at CATCH-THE-BEAR.*

LAKOTA POLICEMAN 1. Catch-the-Bear, put that gun down.

LAKOTA POLICEMAN 2. NOW.

CATCH-THE-BEAR. I told you to let him go! *(He shoots LAKOTA POLICEMAN 1 in the shoulder.)*

LAKOTA POLICEMAN 1 *falls back in pain and shoots SITTING BULL in the chest. SITTING BULL slams into LAKOTA POLICEMAN 2, who shoots SITTING BULL in the head. SITTING BULL freezes and remains standing as the NARRATOR speaks.*

NARRATOR. More gunshots were fired. Eight policemen and six supporters of Sitting Bull were killed, and later that day, Sitting Bull himself died. Five years previously, Sitting Bull had had a vision in which a meadowlark told him, "Your own people, Lakotas, will kill you." Another vision had come to pass.

SITTING BULL *collapses to the floor.*

NARRATOR. The authorities worried about Sitting Bull's influence even after his death. Lye was poured onto his body to make it unrecognizable, and he did not receive a public burial. In 1953, his family exhumed what they believed to be the remains of his body and reburied him near his birthplace.

scene 5. Wounded Knee Creek

LAKOTA MAN, LAKOTA WOMAN, LAKOTA BOY, LAKOTA GIRL, BLACK COYOTE, *and* SPOTTED ELK *sit in a circle at the front of the room.* BLACK COYOTE *holds a gun (represented by a broomstick, measuring stick, etc.).* 7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 1, 7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 2, *and* SERGEANT WILLIAM AUSTIN *stand near them.*

NARRATOR. After Sitting Bull's death, Spotted Elk started leading a group of Lakota south toward Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Before arriving at the tribal headquarters, however, they were intercepted and escorted to Wounded Knee Creek by the 7th Cavalry—the same unit that had been defeated at Little Bighorn. Camping out at Wounded Knee were an estimated 350 Lakota, 230 of whom were women and children. The date was December 29, 1890.

SERGEANT WILLIAM AUSTIN, *to his soldiers.* Good job getting them to come out here. Now we need to disarm them.

7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 1. Wait, aren't I dead?

7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 2. Nope, same cavalry, but we're different soldiers.

7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 1. Phew. I better not die in this scene, too. Let's go get their weapons.

7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 1 *pretends to be entering teepees and bringing out weapons.* 7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 2 *walks up to the group on the floor.*

7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 2, *to* BLACK COYOTE. I'll need your gun.

BLACK COYOTE *ignores him.*

7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 2. I said, I need your gun right now, or I'm just going to take it.

BLACK COYOTE *doesn't respond, so* 7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 2 *grabs his gun.* BLACK COYOTE *stands up, and they start fighting over the weapon.* LAKOTA MAN, LAKOTA WOMAN, LAKOTA BOY, LAKOTA GIRL *and* SPOTTED ELK *stand up.*

SPOTTED ELK. Black Coyote is deaf; he can't hear you.

NARRATOR. At that point, many claim the gun went off in the air, triggering the slaughter. No one knows for sure who shot first. According to one version, after Black Coyote's gun went off, the medicine man threw dust into the air, which signaled the Lakota to start firing. Others claim it was the 7th Cavalry who shot first.

LAKOTA MAN, LAKOTA WOMAN, LAKOTA BOY, LAKOTA GIRL, SPOTTED ELK, BLACK COYOTE, *and* 7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 1 *collapse to the ground.*

7TH CAVALRY SOLDIER 1. Again?

NARRATOR. What is known is that twenty-five U.S. soldiers and an estimated three hundred Lakota died, including up to two hundred Lakota women and children. Dead women and children were found up to two miles from the initial gunfire, supporting reports that U.S. soldiers chased down and killed fleeing women and children. Some claim U.S. soldiers shouted, "Remember Custer."

scene 6. Aftermath

PRESIDENT BENJAMIN HARRISON, SERGEANT WILLIAM AUSTIN, *and* SARCASTIC NATIVE AMERICAN *stand at the front of the room.*

NARRATOR. Twenty soldiers from the 7th Cavalry received Medals of Honor for their actions at Wounded Knee.

PRESIDENT BENJAMIN HARRISON, *putting an invisible medal around* SERGEANT WILLIAM AUSTIN's *neck.* It is my honor to bestow this award onto Sergeant William Austin for the extraordinary heroism he showed while leading troops at the Battle of Wounded Knee.

SARCASTIC NATIVE AMERICAN, *sarcastically.* Congratulations for shooting unarmed women and children.

SERGEANT WILLIAM AUSTIN. You guys shot, too. And twenty-five of us died.

SARCASTIC NATIVE AMERICAN. Mostly by your own friendly fire! You guys deserve Medals of Dishonor.

Exit SERGEANT WILLIAM AUSTIN *in outrage.*

NARRATOR. The reaction across America was mixed. Many felt the Ghost Dancers were dangerous and were glad the movement was over. Others thought that the army had overreacted. This may have led to the government offering the Lakota more favorable deals concerning their land.

PRESIDENT BENJAMIN HARRISON. So, about those leftover areas from the land we forced you to settle.

SARCASTIC NATIVE AMERICAN. Yes?

PRESIDENT BENJAMIN HARRISON. We're going to let you keep them.

SARCASTIC NATIVE AMERICAN. Okay.

PRESIDENT BENJAMIN HARRISON. And we're going to make sure full rations of food are given at the reservations and give you a bit more money to make up for that other part we took.

SARCASTIC NATIVE AMERICAN. Okay.

PRESIDENT BENJAMIN HARRISON. I thought you'd be happier.

SARCASTIC NATIVE AMERICAN. It'll make things a little better, but—

PRESIDENT BENJAMIN HARRISON. But?

SARCASTIC NATIVE AMERICAN. I was still sort of hoping you and your people would be swallowed up by the earth. No offense.

PRESIDENT BENJAMIN HARRISON. None taken.

SARCASTIC NATIVE AMERICAN. And what about the land you took away from us during the Black Hills gold rush?

PRESIDENT BENJAMIN HARRISON. Not a chance.

Exit PRESIDENT BENJAMIN HARRISON and SARCASTIC NATIVE AMERICAN. Enter WOVOKA, GHOST DANCER 1, GHOST DANCER 2, and GHOST DANCER 3.

NARRATOR. The Lakota are still fighting to get back the land they lost during the Black Hills gold rush. In 1980, the U.S. Supreme Court sided with the Lakota, but instead of receiving their new territory, they were offered \$17.5 million. The Lakota wanted land, not cash, so they refused to take the money. After Wounded Knee, the Ghost Dance movement quickly faded.

WOVOKA. Hey, guys. Time to start another five-day Ghost Dance!

GHOST DANCER 1. Thanks, but we're not really into that now.

GHOST DANCER 2. Yeah, did you hear about Wounded Knee? We don't want to get shot for dancing.

GHOST DANCER 3. And it doesn't really look like your vision is going to happen.

WOVOKA. Don't give up the faith! The Lakota were doing it wrong.

GHOST DANCER 1. The dance steps?

WOVOKA. No, that part was fine. It was everything else. Some were preaching violence toward the white man. I said no one should be harmed.

GHOST DANCER 2. I heard some were wearing ghost shirts they believed would protect them from bullets.

GHOST DANCER 3. Yeah, that didn't work out so much.

WOVOKA. Exactly. See, I actually preached that we should do everything to get along with the white people.

GHOST DANCER 2. It was fun while it lasted. But we've heard of a new dance movement that sounds way more fun.

GHOST DANCER 3. Yes, it's called twerking, have you heard of it?

Wovoka, *dropping to his knees*. NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

NARRATOR. And with that, the play ends. Let's give this great cast a huge round of applause!

Name. _____ Date. _____

Wounded Knee Questions

1. Why do you think the Ghost Dance became so popular with Native Americans?
2. What happened at the Battle of Little Bighorn?
3. Why is Sitting Bull famous?
4. What is something Crazy Horse is famous for?
5. Why was Sitting Bull arrested?
6. Why do most people feel that soldiers of the 7th Cavalry should not have received Medals of Honor for what happened at Wounded Knee?
7. In your opinion, how could the massacre at Wounded Knee have been avoided?

Name. _____ Date. _____

Native American Removal Song

Aside from the incidents in the play, numerous other important Native American events took place during the nineteenth century. Select an event from below, research it, and turn it into a song.

REQUIREMENTS

- Has at least sixteen unique lines
- Has a rhyming pattern in each verse
- Has a repeating chorus/hook (which doesn't have to rhyme)
- Includes main details about the event

POSSIBLE EVENTS

- The Indian Removal Act
- The Chase of the Nez Percé
- The Trail of Tears
- Buffalo Bill
- Indian boarding schools
- The Black Hawk War

Name. _____

Date. _____

Wounded Knee Vocabulary Activity

Write the letter of the definition in front of the vocabulary word. Use the context sentences (all from the play) for help.

- A. To dig up a body that has already been buried.
- B. Shooting that accidentally hits people on your own side.
- C. To present as a gift or honor.
- D. Land set aside by the government for special use, such as for Native Americans to live on.
- E. A unit of soldiers who fight on horseback.
- F. Native to a particular area.
- G. Final demand.

_____ **RESERVATION**

*We gave them an ultimatum months ago to move to a **reservation**, but they still insist on wandering around hunting buffalo.*

_____ **ULTIMATUM**

*We gave them an **ultimatum** months ago to move to a reservation, but they still insist on wandering around hunting buffalo.*

_____ **INDIGENOUS**

*As an adult he became a medicine man for the Northern Paiute people, combining his Christian and **indigenous** beliefs.*

_____ **CAVALRY**

*Nope, same **cavalry**, but we're different soldiers.*

_____ **EXHUMED**

*In 1953, his family **exhumed** what they believed to be the remains of his body and reburied him near his birthplace.*

_____ **BESTOW**

*It is my honor to **bestow** this award onto Sergeant William Austin for the extraordinary heroism he showed while leading troops at the Battle of Wounded Knee.*

_____ **FRIENDLY FIRE**

*Mostly by your own **friendly fire**!*

● World War Not So Great ● U.S. Involvement in World War I

The United States may not have entered World War I until the very end, but the war still had major effects at home. Perform the following play to find out the details about how it started, what was debated at home, the U.S. role in the war, and the effects of the Spanish flu.



World War Not So Great

U.S. Involvement in World War I

Characters

- Narrator
- Archduke Franz Ferdinand
- Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg
- Gavrilo Princip (Assassin)
- Nedeljko Cabrinovic (Assassin)
- Leopold Loyka (Driver)
- Grenade
- Policeman
- Serb
- Frenchman
- German
- Austro-Hungarian
- Russian
- Englishman
- Jane Addams
- Eugene Debs
- Henry Ford
- Theodore Roosevelt
- Woodrow Wilson
- Allied Soldier 1
- Allied Soldier 2
- U.S. Soldier 1
- U.S. Soldier 2
- U.S. Soldier 3
- U.S. Soldier 4
- David Lloyd George
- Georges Clemenceau
- Mathematician
- Scientist

scene 1. Causes of World War I

Four chairs are set two by two at the front of the room, as though seats in a car. LEOPOLD LOYKA sits on the front left chair pretending to drive. In the two seats behind him sit ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND and SOPHIE, DUCHESS OF HOHENBERG. NEDELJKO CABRINOVIC and GRENADE stand on the left side of the room. POLICEMAN stands on the right side of the room.

NARRATOR. The Great War, as World War I was often called, resulted in the deaths of over sixteen million people and the disappearance of four empires. The entire world was affected. But what caused these huge events to take place? As would be expected with a war involving so many countries, the reasons are complex. That being said, the single, immediate cause that triggered the whole thing occurred in Sarajevo during a visit from the Archduke of Austria and his wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg.

DUCHESS OF HOHENBERG, *worriedly.* Are you sure this is a good idea?

ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND, *confidently.* Of course it is. We've been asked to come. Do you think I'm scared of a few hooligans?

DUCHESS OF HOHENBERG. But aren't people in Bosnia upset that Austria has taken over their country?

ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND. Some of them, sure, but look at the crowds who've come to see us. They love us here!

DUCHESS OF HOHENBERG. I think we should at least be in a closed car.

ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND. I have taken all the necessary precautions. I wouldn't want anything to risk the life of my son. *(He pats his wife's stomach.)*

DUCHESS OF HOHENBERG. Who says it's a boy?

They both laugh.

NEDELJKO CABRINOVIC, *off to one side, pretending to pull a pin out of* GRENADE. This is my chance. Long live Serbia! *(He throws GRENADE.)*

GRENADE. *(Flies through the air, bounces off the car, and lands behind it.)* BOOM!

NARRATOR. The grenade missed them, barely. The car following them and people on the street were not so lucky. Twenty people were wounded.

POLICEMAN, *shouting at* CABRINOVIC. Stop!

NEDELJKO CABRINOVIC. I won't let you arrest me. I'm taking this cyanide pill and jumping into the river.

NEDELJKO CABRINOVIC *swallows a "pill" and jumps off to the side.* POLICEMAN *runs up to him.*

POLICEMAN, *grabbing* CABRINOVIC's arm. I got you.

NEDELJKO CABRINOVIC. That wasn't supposed to happen.

POLICEMAN. Well, this river is four inches deep. About your pill, I'm sorry to say it didn't work. Actually, I'm not sorry to say; I want you to suffer in jail for a while.

POLICEMAN *drags* CABRINOVIC *to his seat then returns to his seat.* GAVRILO PRINCIP *goes to the left side of the room.*

NARRATOR. The archduke and his wife made it to the town hall, but they were shook up. After their reception, they decided to change their plans and visit the wounded in the hospital. Along the way, the driver took a wrong turn.

LEOPOLD LOYKA. Oops.

ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND, *freaking out.* What do you mean "oops"? What happened?

GAVRILO PRINCIP. Now is my chance! *(He walks toward them, aiming a "gun.")*

DUCHESS OF HOHENBERG. Who is that man? And why's he coming up to us?

ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND, *screams.* Get us out of here!

LEOPOLD LOYKA, *trying to start car, makes the sound of a car that can't quite start.* I can't. The car is stalled.

GAVRILO PRINCIP. Get out of our country, imperialists! *(He fires his gun twice, yelling, "Bang! Bang!")*

ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND *is hit in the neck by the first bullet.* **DUCHESS OF HOHENBERG** *tries to protect him and the second bullet hits her. They both slump over in their seats.*

NARRATOR. Franz Ferdinand, his wife, and their unborn child died that day. This was certainly a tragedy for Austria, but why did it cause a world war? Pay attention carefully.

Exit ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND, DUCHESS OF HOHENBERG, LEOPOLD LOYKA, and GAVRILO PRINCIP. Enter AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN, RUSSIAN, SERB, GERMAN, ENGLISHMAN, and FRENCHMAN. *These characters should make sure they know who is playing the parts of the characters they'll be talking to.*

AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN, to SERB. Hey, Serbia. Guess what? We're going to attack you for killing our archduke!

SERB, to AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN. Fine! We have friends who'll help us.

RUSSIAN, to AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN. Yeah, like us. If you attack Serbia, then Russia will defend them.

GERMAN, to RUSSIAN. Well, we have an alliance with the Austro-Hungarian Empire, so now we're going to war with you as well. In the meantime, we'd better invade France in case they attack us first.

FRENCHMAN, to GERMAN. Oh, I see how it is. Well, now we're attacking you just for that!

ENGLISHMAN, to GERMAN. And we have an alliance with France, so that means we attack you, too!

EVERYONE. Let's go!

All the countries pretend to fight and then return to their seats.

NARRATOR. As well as this complex system of alliances, there were additional reasons that get more to the root causes of the war. A particularly big issue was trade routes. One reason landlocked Austria-Hungary may have taken over Bosnia was so that it could have access to a sea. Germany, which had been gaining power since it became a unified nation in 1871, was building a railroad to connect it to Asia. This whole operation made England and France upset because they didn't want a competitor to their trade with Asia. Add to that numerous nationalist movements, which made countries all want the most power for themselves, and Europe was a powder keg ready to explode. And did it ever . . .

scene 2. Should the United States Join?

JANE ADDAMS, THEODORE ROOSEVELT, HENRY FORD, EUGENE DEBS, and WOODROW WILSON *stand at the front of the room.*

NARRATOR. And so on July 28, 1914, the Great War began. But would the United States join it? There were many different opinions about this, but at first, most Americans wanted to stay out.

EUGENE DEBS. My name is Eugene Debs. I support the workers over big factories. I've run for president four times as the Socialist Party candidate.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT. And lost four times.

EUGENE DEBS. No need to rub it in. Besides, you lost once, too.

WOODROW WILSON. To me, the current president.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT. True, but I also won once. And don't forget, the teddy bear is named after me.

EUGENE DEBS. Am I supposed to be impressed?

JANE ADDAMS. Enough, boys. I'm Jane Addams. I'm famous for a lot of things, the biggest of which hasn't happened yet. Which means you'll have to wait to find out. (*Pauses.*) Okay, fine, I'll tell you. In 1931, I'll win the Nobel Peace Prize.

EUGENE DEBS. Show-off!

JANE ADDAMS. I couldn't resist. Right now, I'm famous for helping out working-class families and pushing to get women the right to vote. Your turn, Henry.

HENRY FORD. Do I really need to introduce myself? Have you heard of the assembly line? Model T cars? Yep, that's me.

WOODROW WILSON. So, what do you guys think we should do about this big war going on in Europe?

EUGENE DEBS, *shaking his fist in rage.* This is simply a war between capitalist countries using the poor to die for their capitalist needs. The American worker has no place giving his life so England or Germany can improve its trade routes or increase its colonies.

HENRY FORD. Well, I am the ultimate capitalist and I still don't think we should get involved. Have you heard about the carnage there? The young men of those countries are being massacred.

JANE ADDAMS. I agree, Henry. War is not necessary. Give peace a chance. And I swear I'm not just saying that so that I can eventually win a Nobel Peace Prize.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT. Whether or not we end up going to war, we had better be prepared. Our military needs to be bigger.

WOODROW WILSON. Good points, everyone. Let's stay neutral for now, and by neutral I mean selling weapons to Britain and France, but not to Germany.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, *checking his cell phone.* Uh, just got some bad news. One of our merchant ships got sunk by the Germans.

WOODROW WILSON. What? How could they? Don't they get the concept of neutral? Let's put some weapons on our merchant ships so they can protect themselves.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT. More bad news. The German submarines, called U-boats, aren't worried about guns on the decks of our ships. They've sunk a few more of ours and have said they'll shoot down any ships bringing weapons to their enemies.

WOODROW WILSON. What?! If they don't watch their step, we'll join this war against them.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT. Whoa, looks like they don't care. We just intercepted a message that reveals that the Germans offered to help Mexico get Texas back if Mexico agrees to attack us.

WOODROW WILSON, *wiping his brow and fuming.* They have pushed this ex-professor too far.

JANE ADDAMS. Keep calm, Woody. Granted, I'll one day win a Nobel Peace Prize, but I don't think I'm alone in being opposed to this war. Many people in this country don't want to fight somebody else's war.

WOODROW WILSON. Don't worry, Jane. *(He strikes a noble pose.)* This will be the war to end all wars and make the world safe for democracy.

EUGENE DEBS. I couldn't agree with you less, Mr. President. This is a war of imperialist countries fighting over their domination of the world's resources. I'm going to try to convince our country that no one should fight in this flawed war.

Enter **POLICEMAN.**

WOODROW WILSON, *walking up to* **EUGENE DEBS** *and wagging his finger at him.* Then I'm going to send you to jail.

EUGENE DEBS, *slowly.* Make. My. Day.

WOODROW WILSON *snaps his fingers and the* **POLICEMAN** *drags* **EUGENE DEBS** *to a "jail" by the classroom door.*

EUGENE DEBS, *from his new spot across the room.* What happened to making this country safe for democracy?

WOODROW WILSON. Democracy is for after the war. And anyway, no one messes with the professor. Next one to meet my wrath: Germany.

NARRATOR. And so on April 6, 1917, the United States declared war against Germany. It's difficult to know how the public felt about entering the war, since there were no opinion polls at that time. The newspapers made it sound like people were very excited to join the fighting. On the other hand, the United States was forced to institute a draft to get enough people to fight. Interestingly, Eugene Debs, who had been jailed for violating the Espionage Act, made his last presidential run while in jail in 1920 and received 913,693 votes.

scene 3. The United States Goes to War

ALLIED SOLDIER 1 and ALLIED SOLDIER 2 stand at the front of the room. U.S. SOLDIER 1, U.S. SOLDIER 2, U.S. SOLDIER 3, and U.S. SOLDIER 4 stand off to the side.

NARRATOR. It was the Allied powers (France, Britain, Russia, Serbia, the United States, Italy . . .) versus the Central powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire . . .). Significantly, in November 1917, Lenin and the communists overthrew Russia's government. By the next month, Russia had made peace with the Central powers. This meant Germany no longer had to worry about its eastern front and could focus on the western arena of the war. U.S. troops were coming in; would they be enough?

The U.S. SOLDIERS walk up to the ALLIED SOLDIERS.

ALLIED SOLDIER 1. Well, look who's here.

ALLIED SOLDIER 2. Nice of you guys to show up.

U.S. SOLDIER 1. We could always go back home if you don't want us.

ALLIED SOLDIER 1. Nah, we're just giving you a hard time.

ALLIED SOLDIER 2. We could use some fresh troops. We're exhausted.

U.S. SOLDIER 2. Have you heard about Russia opting out?

ALLIED SOLDIER 1. Yeah, I'm both mad and jealous.

U.S. SOLDIER 3. So, about Germany—

ALLIED SOLDIER 2. They'll probably be striking pretty hard here soon.

U.S. SOLDIER 4. For sure they will. And—?

ALLIED SOLDIER 1. And we're pretty happy that we have you guys.

ALLIED SOLDIER 2. Let's finish this war off, brothers.

*The soldiers make a circle, put their right hands together in the middle, raise them up, and yell, "Go team!"
The ALLIED SOLDIERS have a seat. GRENADE stands off to the side.*

NARRATOR. The type of warfare used in World War I was called trench warfare. It consisted of soldiers standing in dugout trenches protected by barbed wire. This was a particularly brutal way to fight, with many casualties and little to no change in the positions of the trenches.

U.S. SOLDIER 1. This is a horrible.

U.S. SOLDIER 2. I want my mommy.

U.S. SOLDIER 3. I want out of here.

U.S. SOLDIER 4. I want—

GRENADE, *jumping and landing next to them in the “trench.” BOOM!*

All the soldiers fall to the side. U.S. SOLDIER 1, U.S. SOLDIER 2, and U.S. SOLDIER 3 get up after a minute, clearly shaken. U.S. SOLDIER 4 stays on the floor.

U.S. SOLDIER 3, *looking at U.S. SOLDIER 4.* I wonder what he wanted.

U.S. SOLDIER 2. We’ll never know.

U.S. SOLDIER 1. Okay, guys, we have orders to run across no man’s land to the German trenches.

U.S. SOLDIER 3. That’s suicide!

U.S. SOLDIER 1. No questions! Let’s do it.

The three remaining soldiers pretend to climb out of the “trench” and run across the room. Before they get to the other side, they are all shot and fall to the ground.

NARRATOR. The number of American troops sent to fight in the war was relatively small, but their arrival was well timed. It is impossible to know what would have happened if America had not joined the war effort. Would Germany’s ability to direct all its attention to the western front have led to a Central powers victory? Or would the Allies have done just fine without the additional U.S. troops? Regardless, after holding off the German’s “Spring Offensive,” the Allied powers made a final attack—the “Hundred Days Offensive.” The war was won by the Allies on November 11, 1918.

Students in class stand up and cheer. Anyone wearing a hat throws it joyfully in the air.

scene 4. Treaty of Versailles

WOODROW WILSON, DAVID LLOYD GEORGE, and GEORGES CLEMENCEAU *sit in chairs at the front of the room facing each other.*

NARRATOR. The Great War was over. Next, the winners had to decide what would happen to the losers. Since this truly had been a worldwide war, the decisions made here affected countries all around the globe. Woodrow Wilson laid out his Fourteen Points in a speech given in early 1918 (before the war was over), outlining what he hoped the postwar world would look like. Many countries were invited to the negotiations (Central powers and Russia were not), but most of the decisions were made by U.S. president Wilson, British prime minister David Lloyd George, and French prime minister Georges Clemenceau. The final agreement was called the Treaty of Versailles.

WOODROW WILSON. So, what do you guys think of my plan to end all wars?

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE, *with perfect British accent*. Jolly good.

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU, *with convincing French accent*. Yes, the Fourteen Points. Can you remind us of the key ideas again?

WOODROW WILSON. I want to reduce the size of militaries, allow free trade, let people rule themselves, create a League of Nations to protect countries from being taken over, and bring back the country of Poland.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE *and* GEORGES CLEMENCEAU *whisper between themselves*.

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU. We like a lot of it. For example, having Poland return would be good.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE. Yes, the map just didn't seem the same without it.

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU. And we very much like the fact that if we allow people to rule themselves, Austria-Hungary will be broken up.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE. Yes, that hyphen was getting on my nerves. Naturally, we assume this self-rule lark won't apply to our colonies.

WOODROW WILSON. Of course not!

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE. So, overall a good document, old chap. But—

WOODROW WILSON. But what?

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE. We'd just like it to be a bit more, well—

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU. How do you say in English? Harsh.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE. Yes, we just feel Germany needs to be a spot more—

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU. What is the word? Punished.

WOODROW WILSON. How so?

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU. For example, the Germans should have to pay us back for the damages of this war they started.

WOODROW WILSON. They started it?

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE. More or less.

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU. We're thinking \$12.5 billion, paid in yearly installments.

WOODROW WILSON. Wow.

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU. And we're thinking that all of their overseas colonies—

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE. Should go to the winners.

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU. Meaning Britain and France.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE. Oh, and we also love the part about reducing the size of militaries. But we're thinking—

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU. It should really only apply to Germany's military.

WOODROW WILSON. I guess so. Although I'm not sure if I can get all this approved at home.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE. That's fine. You just make your own treaty. Thanks again for helping us out in the war.

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU. And thank you for this lovely rough draft of a treaty.

NARRATOR. The U.S. Congress did not pass the treaty, although the result of this was simply that the United States would not join the League of Nations (which would eventually be replaced by the United Nations). Germany, which was greatly affected by the treaty, had been expecting an agreement more akin to Wilson's original Fourteen Points, and German citizens were furious with the punishments to their country. Many historians think the harshness of the Treaty of Versailles set the stage for World War II.

scene 5. Spanish Flu

MATHEMATICIAN *stands at the front of the room holding a calculator.*

NARRATOR. Of the many legacies of World War I, one of the most deadly was the spread of an influenza virus called the Spanish flu. It had nothing to do with Spain, but people thought there was a connection because Spain reported on it more than most countries. An estimated 500 million people were infected and between 50 million and 100 million died. From the Arctic to remote Pacific islands, barely anywhere in the world remained untouched. Additionally, unlike most flu viruses, which tend to target the elderly and children, this flu did most of its damage to young, healthy adults, possibly by causing an overreaction of the immune system. To get an idea of how deadly this epidemic was, a mathematician will help us.

MATHEMATICIAN, *nerdily*. First off, let's just start with the raw numbers. Around 16 million people died in World War I. At least THREE TIMES AS MANY died from this flu.

The class gasps.

MATHEMATICIAN. Oh, I'm only getting started. By one estimation, this flu killed more people in twenty-four WEEKS than AIDS has killed in twenty-four YEARS.

The class gasps again.

MATHEMATICIAN. The United States lost an estimated 600,000 people to this virus. Imagine everyone in this class has died of the flu. *(Everyone in the class falls to the floor.)* So that equals, let's see, 600,000 divided by the number of people in this class . . . That means _____ classes this size passed away from this deadly virus. *(He pauses dramatically for effect.)* I believe I've made my point.

Exit MATHEMATICIAN. Enter SCIENTIST, ALLIED SOLDIER 1 and ALLIED SOLDIER 2. Students get back into their seats.

SCIENTIST. So, what does this have to do with World War I? Well, the obvious answer is that soldiers fighting in Europe, Asia, Africa, and on various islands passed a virus all over the world. But this doesn't seem to fully explain this flu's devastation. One theory is that the fact the soldiers were away from home might have been a major part of the problem.

ALLIED SOLDIER 1, coughing. I feel terrible.

ALLIED SOLDIER 2, coughing more. You think you feel bad? I don't even think I can function.

ALLIED SOLDIER 1. We probably have that terrible flu that's going around. I think I'll be fine, but you should go to the doctor.

Exit ALLIED SOLDIER 1. ALLIED SOLDIER 2 has a seat in a chair at the front of the room.

SCIENTIST. With many flus like this one, there are various strains of the virus. The worst of the strains usually don't spread, because people tend to stay in their homes and either recover or . . . well . . . die before they can pass on the virus. That is not what happened to soldiers who were infected. Many had to travel on crowded trains.

ALLIED SOLDIER 2, coughing even more than before. I'm sorry, everybody on this train. I'm trying my best, but . . . *(He has another coughing attack.)*

SCIENTIST. And they were treated in crowded hospitals.

ALLIED SOLDIER 2 lies across two chairs.

ALLIED SOLDIER 2. Man, I hope I don't get these sick people even sicker. Of course, I have to be alive to get anybody sick. *(He coughs louder and harder than ever, then goes still.)*

NARRATOR. But before people knew it, the Spanish flu was over. By the end of 1918, the flu had mostly disappeared. And with that passed a momentous period in human history: a pandemic over, an epic war ended, the largest country in the world overthrown, powerful empires gone, new boundaries drawn. And in just twenty years, there would be an even more momentous war.

To be continued . . .

Name. _____ Date. _____

World War I Questions

1. How did a Serb killing an Austrian archduke lead to World War I?

2. What were some other causes of World War I?

3. What were some arguments against the United States getting involved in the war?

4. What were some events that led the United States to enter the war?

5. What was trench warfare like?

6. Some historians believe the Treaty of Versailles set the stage for World War II.
Why might this be?

7. What was so bad about the Spanish flu?

Name. _____ Date. _____

"Should We Enter" Paper

Choose one of the following perspectives and write a paper arguing whether or not the United States should enter World War I. Include at least three reasons why or why not, and make sure to support your arguments with facts, statistics, or quotes.

PERSPECTIVES

- Pacifist (opposes the use of violence for resolving disputes)
- Imperialist (wants to take over/control other countries, often for their resources)
- Socialist (focuses on rights for workers)
- Capitalist (focuses on increasing profits)

Name. _____

Date. _____

World War I Vocabulary Activity

Write the letter of the definition in front of the vocabulary word. Use the context sentences (all from the play) for help.

- A. Slaughter.
- B. An extremely poisonous chemical compound.
- C. A system in which trade and business are controlled by private owners for profit.
- D. Equal payments made separately over a period of time.
- E. A mode of combat in which opponents attack and counterattack from a relatively permanent system of ditches, protected by barbed wire.
- F. Pact.
- G. The kind of country that takes over or controls other countries.
- H. A zone of conflict between armies.

_____ **CYANIDE**
*I'm taking this **cyanide** pill and jumping into the river.*

_____ **IMPERIALIST**
*This is a war of **imperialist** countries fighting over their domination of the world's resources.*

_____ **CARNAGE**
*Have you heard about the **carnage** there?*

_____ **CAPITALIST**
*This is simply a war between capitalist countries using the poor to die for their **capitalist** needs.*

_____ **FRONT**
*This meant Germany no longer had to worry about its eastern **front** and could focus on the western arena of the war.*

_____ **TREATY**
*The final agreement was called the **Treaty** of Versailles.*

_____ **INSTALLMENTS**
*We're thinking \$12.5 billion, paid in yearly **installments**.*

_____ **TRENCH WARFARE**
*The type of warfare used in World War I was called **trench warfare**.*

Fearless Flier Amelia Earhart

Amelia Earhart's exploits captivated our nation during the 1930s. Women had only just received the right to vote, and here was a woman risking her life to break aviation records. Perform the next play to learn about Earhart's childhood, the risks she took, and the conspiracies that followed this "fearless flier."



Fearless Flier

Amelia Earhart

Characters

- Narrator
- Amelia Earhart
- Amelia's Friend
- Stunt Pilot
- Grandmother
- Amelia's Mom
- Pidge
- Rat 1
- Rat 2
- Rat 3
- Captain Hilton H. Railey
- Secretary
- Bill Stultz (pilot)
- Slim Gordon (mechanic)
- U.K. Reporter
- Fred Noonan
- Radio Guy 1
- Radio Guy 2
- George Putnam
- Conspiracy Theorist
- Franklin Roosevelt
- Susan B. Anthony
- Elizabeth Blackwell
- Louisa Swain

scene 1. Exhilaration

AMELIA EARHART, AMELIA'S FRIEND, *and* STUNT PILOT *are at the front of the room.* AMELIA EARHART *and* AMELIA'S FRIEND *are watching* STUNT PILOT *as STUNT PILOT mimes being in a plane and flies around the room.*

AMELIA'S FRIEND. This is fun.

AMELIA EARHART, *bored.* Yeah, I guess.

AMELIA'S FRIEND. Amelia, this was your idea!

AMELIA EARHART. True, but I thought it would be more exciting.

At that moment, STUNT PILOT begins to fly a little closer to them as he circles the room.

AMELIA'S FRIEND. Oh my, this is a little too close for comfort.

AMELIA EARHART. I think he saw us and is trying to give us a little scare.

AMELIA'S FRIEND. Well, it's working. Let's move back to the crowd.

AMELIA EARHART. He won't hit us.

STUNT PILOT *swings around the room once and then slowly flies directly at AMELIA EARHART and AMELIA'S FRIEND. The FRIEND runs out of its path, while AMELIA stands her ground, smiling the whole time. Right before running into her, STUNT PILOT turns and goes back to flying around the rest of the room. AMELIA'S FRIEND comes running up and grabs AMELIA EARHART'S arm.*

AMELIA'S FRIEND, *upset.* Amelia! Are you okay? I can't believe how close he got to you. Come on now, we need to complain about that daredevil.

AMELIA EARHART, *excited.* Oh, there's no need for that. That was the highlight of the day. Come on, stay with me here. Maybe he'll do it again.

AMELIA'S FRIEND. Amelia, you are a thrill seeker. I'm not surprised you enjoyed that. Do you now admit that coming here was fun?

AMELIA EARHART. Oh, indeed. This has been more enjoyable than I expected. But you know who's having the best time?

AMELIA'S FRIEND. Who?

AMELIA EARHART, *pointing to STUNT PILOT.* Him.

NARRATOR. Amelia was twenty-one. She later said about the moment, "I did not understand it at the time, but I believe that little red airplane said something to me as it swished by." Amelia's love of flying was only just beginning, but she had long had a love of adventure.

scene 2. Growing Up

AMELIA EARHART and PIDGE *play on the left side of the room. AMELIA'S MOM and GRANDMOTHER sit in chairs in the center of the room. RAT 1, RAT 2, and RAT 3 lie on the floor on the left side of the room.*

NARRATOR. Amelia's family moved a lot in her life, but she was born in Kansas. She and her sister spent much of their childhood exploring their neighborhood, climbing trees, and collecting bugs. Some people felt this was not ladylike behavior.

GRANDMOTHER. What on earth are they wearing?

AMELIA'S MOM. Bloomers. It's much easier for them to run around and play in than if they wore dresses.

GRANDMOTHER, *shaking her head disapprovingly.* Well, I don't see any other neighborhood girls wearing them. It looks like something a boy would put on.

AMELIA'S MOM, *rolling her eyes.* Mom, you know I have no interest in raising perfect little ladies.

GRANDMOTHER. Be careful what you wish for.

AMELIA'S MOM. They'll be respectful. I just think boys shouldn't be the only children having fun.

PIDGE *and AMELIA EARHART walk up to them.*

AMELIA EARHART. Mom, have you seen the .22?

GRANDMOTHER. Twenty-two what?

PIDGE. No, Grandma, she means the rifle.

GRANDMOTHER. Oh, my. When I was your age . . .

AMELIA'S MOM. It's in the toolshed. What do you need it for?

PIDGE. Rats!

AMELIA EARHART. Thank you, Mom!

AMELIA EARHART *and* PIDGE *run to the right side of the room, take out two pretend rifles, run back to the left and begin to shoot the RATS. The RATS make loud squeaks and then fall over on their backs.*

GRANDMOTHER. You were saying?

AMELIA'S MOM. Well, she did say thank you.

Exit AMELIA'S MOM and GRANDMOTHER.

NARRATOR. Amelia and her sister had many other adventures. Another one that stands out is when they built a roller coaster. After seeing one at a country fair, Amelia's uncle helped her create a ramp that was attached to the toolshed. Amelia took the first ride down the wooden track.

AMELIA EARHART *stands on a chair on the right side of the room. PIDGE stands next to her on the ground.*

AMELIA EARHART. Let's do this!

PIDGE. You the woman, Amelia!

AMELIA *jumps off the chair, runs across the room, and smashes into a wall.*

PIDGE, *running to her side.* Are you okay?

AMELIA EARHART. It's just like flying! I want to go again!

PIDGE. Me first!

NARRATOR. After graduating high school in Chicago, Amelia started college in Pennsylvania. But on a trip to Canada to visit her sister, she saw wounded soldiers returning from World War I. She wanted to help, so she left college in 1917 to become a nurse's aide. It was around this time that she saw the stunt pilot and became interested in learning to fly. After moving to Los Angeles in 1920 she went on her first flight. She never looked back.

scene 3. Transatlantic Flight

AMELIA EARHART *stands on the right side of the room, looking busy. Near her, SECRETARY sits in a chair. CAPTAIN HILTON H. RAILEY sits on the left side of the room.*

NARRATOR. Using all the money she could muster, Amelia began taking flying lessons and eventually bought her own plane, a used bright-yellow Kinner Airster biplane she called “The Canary.” In 1922, she set the altitude record for a female pilot, flying to 14,000 feet, higher than any woman ever had before. In 1928, while at her new job as a social worker, she got the offer of a lifetime.

SECRETARY, *picking up invisible phone.* Hello? *(To AMELIA EARHART.)* It’s for you.

AMELIA EARHART. I’m too busy to talk to anyone right now. Can you take a message?

SECRETARY, *into the phone.* She can’t come to the phone right now. *(She pauses, then turns to AMELIA EARHART.)* He says it’s very important.

AMELIA EARHART. Yes, well, I’m sure it’ll be fine if I call him back in a little bit.

SECRETARY, *into the phone.* I’m sorry, may I ask who is calling? *(She pauses, then turns to AMELIA EARHART.)* Amelia, he says he’s a captain and that you’ll be very happy to take his call.

AMELIA EARHART. What must he want? Okay, fine. I guess I’ll take this persistent man’s call. *(She takes the invisible phone.)* Hello?

CAPTAIN HILTON H. RAILEY. Is this Amelia Earhart?

AMELIA EARHART. Speaking.

CAPTAIN HILTON H. RAILEY. Would you like to be the first woman to fly the Atlantic?

AMELIA EARHART, *leaping up into the air.* Yes!

Exit SECRETARY and CAPTAIN HILTON H. RAILEY. BILL STULTZ and SLIM GORDON come to the front of the room and stand next to AMELIA. Near them should be three chairs, two in front and one behind.

NARRATOR. Amelia Earhart wasn’t the first woman to try this. Three different women had disappeared trying to make the journey—this means it is assumed they died in the attempt. But that didn’t mean there wasn’t still competition for Amelia. Two other women, Mabel Boll and Thea Rasche, were trying to get their own flight together so that they could be the first women to cross the Atlantic. Would Amelia be the first?

They’d be leaving from Trepassey, a tiny town in Newfoundland, Canada. Since the plane was flown using instruments she didn’t know how to operate, she didn’t pilot it herself. Her flight crew consisted of herself, pilot Bill Stultz, and copilot/mechanic Slim Gordon.

AMELIA EARHART. Is this really the best spot to leave from?

BILL STULTZ. It's the closest spot to Europe.

AMELIA EARHART. The harbor's just so small. What do you think, Slim?

SLIM GORDON *shrugs his shoulders.*

AMELIA EARHART. Well, I guess it's now or never.

The three have a seat in the chairs, SLIM GORDON and BILL STULTZ in the front seats, AMELIA in the back. BILL STULTZ starts the engine. All three shake in their seats.

BILL STULTZ. Time for lift off!

They all shake some more and then stop.

AMELIA EARHART. What happened? Slim?

SLIM GORDON *shrugs his shoulders.*

BILL STULTZ. The plane is too heavy to get into the air. We need to dump out some fuel and try again.

AMELIA EARHART. Why didn't we do that in the first place?

BILL STULTZ. Less fuel will make it easier to take off, since the plane will be lighter. But at the same time, we don't want to run out of fuel while we're flying over the Atlantic Ocean.

NARRATOR. They tried to get going for the next two weeks. But a combination of bad weather and too much fuel made them unable to take off. Many said they should give up. Then, on June 17 . . .

AMELIA EARHART. I can feel it in my gut that today will be our day.

BILL STULTZ. Don't you say that every day?

AMELIA EARHART. Today is different. I just know it. What do you think, Slim?

SLIM GORDON *shrugs his shoulders.*

BILL STULTZ. There's no more reason to talk about it. Let's start. *(He starts the engine.)*

The three shake in their seats again and then . . .

AMELIA EARHART. We're up! We're going to make it!

BILL STULTZ. At least into the air. But we only have 700 gallons of fuel! Now comes the hard part.

AMELIA EARHART. Not true, Bill. The difficult thing is the decision to act; the rest is merely tenacity.

BILL STULTZ. Let's hope you're right.

NARRATOR. Twenty hours and forty minutes later.

AMELIA EARHART. I see land!

BILL STULTZ. It's Burry Point in the United Kingdom. We're going to make it! (*He steers the plane downward.*)

AMELIA EARHART. We made it!

BILL STULTZ. Yes!

All three get out of their seats. They are met by U.K. REPORTER.

U.K. REPORTER. Amelia! How does it feel to be the first woman to fly across the Atlantic?

AMELIA EARHART. Fantastic. But you know, Stultz did all the flying—he had to. I was just baggage, like a sack of potatoes. Maybe someday I'll try it alone.

U.K. REPORTER. I'm sure you will. Bill, how are you feeling?

BILL STULTZ. I'm just happy to be back on solid ground. I wasn't sure we'd make it into the air and then I wasn't sure we'd have enough fuel to make it. But we're here now.

U.K. REPORTER. And you, Slim, tell us what it was like to be the mechanic for this historic trip.

SLIM GORDON *shrugs his shoulders.*

NARRATOR. Amelia Earhart was now a celebrity. After making the front pages of newspapers around the world, she and her crew returned to the United States for a ticker-tape parade and a reception held by President Calvin Coolidge.

scene 4. Women's Rights

SUSAN B. ANTHONY, ELIZABETH BLACKWELL, LOUISA SWAIN, *and* AMELIA EARHART *stand at the front of the room.*

NARRATOR. It is hard to imagine today, but in the 1800s, U.S. women couldn't vote, weren't allowed to own property, and had very limited job choices. Many women helped society change. Let's put a few of the most important women's rights leaders in the same room together and see what happens.

SUSAN B. ANTHONY. Elizabeth, it is very good to see you.

ELIZABETH BLACKWELL. Likewise. This play should really be about you.

SUSAN B. ANTHONY. It's all right. I did get a coin named after me.

ELIZABETH BLACKWELL. As you should have. You're considered one of the most important advocates of women's rights. Your speeches and papers were key to helping women achieve suffrage.

SUSAN B. ANTHONY. And what about you? The first American woman to get a medical degree! I'm sure that wasn't easy.

ELIZABETH BLACKWELL. No, no, not at all. (*To LOUISA.*) And do I know you? I don't believe we've met.

LOUISA SWAIN, *shaking hands with ELIZABETH.* My name is Louisa.

SUSAN B. ANTHONY. And what are you known for?

LOUISA SWAIN. I was the first woman to vote for a president.

ELIZABETH BLACKWELL. Are you serious? Tell us about it.

LOUISA SWAIN. Well, it was 1870 and I was in Wyoming, which allowed women to vote a long time before the Nineteenth Amendment was passed. I was up early and on my way to buy some yeast when I saw the polling place. I had no idea I'd be making history. It didn't seem like it should be a big deal.

SUSAN B. ANTHONY. And it shouldn't have been. Why we had to put up such a fight just to be able to vote escapes me.

ELIZABETH BLACKWELL. But fight we did—especially you, Susan. Didn't you get arrested for trying to vote?

SUSAN B. ANTHONY. I did. Can you believe it? Now, Amelia, it's nice to meet you and I don't mean to be rude, but . . .

AMELIA EARHART. Yes?

SUSAN B. ANTHONY. I'm not sure you belong here. Flying planes seems so . . .

ELIZABETH BLACKWELL. Trivial?

SUSAN B. ANTHONY. Yes, trivial. Was there anything else you did?

AMELIA EARHART. Actually, yes. I became an associate editor at *Cosmopolitan* magazine, published books, lectured on the importance of the Equal Rights Amendment . . . But I don't think that's why I'm in this room.

SUSAN B. ANTHONY. Do tell.

AMELIA EARHART. If we're just talking about political importance, recognition belongs with so many more women than me. You fought for and won women legal rights they'd never had before. As for me, I only desired to live how I chose. And I wanted young women to know that they could do anything. And that they should take risks! I was the next step. If a woman could fly a plane, what couldn't she do?

ELIZABETH BLACKWELL. You make a good point.

SUSAN B. ANTHONY. You've convinced me.

AMELIA EARHART. But really, I owe it all to you guys.

LOUISA SWAIN. Group hug!

All four women hug.

scene 5. Final Flight

On the right side of the room, RADIO GUY 1 and RADIO GUY 2 sit in chairs. AMELIA EARHART and FRED NOONAN sit in two chairs facing the audience.

NARRATOR. To no one's surprise, Amelia Earhart was not satisfied with her flight across the Atlantic. She wanted to accomplish the feat as the pilot, not as "baggage." On May 20, 1932, she became the first woman pilot and the second person—Charles Lindbergh being the first—to cross the Atlantic on a solo flight.

After this, Amelia continued to break records. In 1933 she became the first woman to fly nonstop from coast to coast across the United States. In 1935 she flew solo from Hawaii to California, Los Angeles to Mexico City, and Mexico to New Jersey. With each of those three flights, she was the first person—man or woman—to accomplish the challenge. In 1937 she embarked on her most ambitious challenge yet—a flight around the world. This would not be done solo; a navigator would come with her and they would make stops. But no woman had ever before succeeded in doing this. Additionally, she planned to travel along the equator, so it would be longest worldwide flight by anyone. Would Amelia succeed?

AMELIA EARHART. Let's go, Fred!

FRED NOONAN. Here goes nothing!

FRED and AMELIA *shake in their chairs for a little and then stop while AMELIA pretends to steer.*

AMELIA EARHART. We're up! This is already going better than our first attempt.

FRED NOONAN. I know, right? Nothing like a blown tire to ruin a flight.

AMELIA EARHART. Only 29,000 miles to go!

NARRATOR. The first 20,000 miles, with stops in South America, Africa, Asia, and Australia, went relatively smoothly. The next 7,000 miles would be the most difficult, crossing the Pacific Ocean. The plan was to stop at a small island, Howland, where they'd be directed in by radio.

RADIO GUY 1. I wonder how they're doing?

RADIO GUY 2. Amelia, do you hear us?

AMELIA EARHART. Yes. (*She makes static sound.*) Cloudy. (*Another static sound.*) Weather cloudy. (*More static.*)

RADIO GUY 1. We got that. Where are you?

AMELIA EARHART. (*Makes static sound.*)

RADIO GUY 2. We didn't get that.

AMELIA EARHART. (*Makes static sound.*)

NARRATOR. Several hours later . . .

AMELIA EARHART. We must be over you, but we cannot see you. Fuel is running low. Have been unable to reach you by radio. We are flying at 1,000 feet.

RADIO GUY 1. We got that Amelia.

RADIO GUY 2. We need more information to help guide you.

AMELIA EARHART. (*Makes static sound.*)

RADIO GUY 1. You must be close, but we don't see you.

RADIO GUY 2. Do you hear us?

AMELIA EARHART. We're running north and south.

RADIO GUY 1. What does that mean?

RADIO GUY 2. We need more information.

AMELIA EARHART. (*Makes static sound.*)

RADIO GUY 1. Amelia, do you hear us?

RADIO GUY 2. Where are you?

AMELIA EARHART and FRED NOONAN *shake in their chairs, then fall onto the floor. They lie there for the rest of the scene.*

RADIO GUY 1, *becoming upset.* Amelia, we need confirmation.

RADIO GUY 2. I don't think she hears us.

RADIO GUY 1. What do you mean? She's not going to make it if she doesn't hear us.

RADIO GUY 2. Which is why I'm thinking . . .

RADIO GUY 1. What? What are you thinking?

RADIO GUY 2. That we may have lost them

RADIO GUY 1. We can't give up yet.

RADIO GUY 2. Of course not. But it's not looking good.

scene 6. Mystery

FRED NOONAN *walks off to the right side of the room. AMELIA has a seat in a chair at the front of the room.*

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT *comes to the front of the room and sits in a chair facing AMELIA. CONSPIRACY THEORIST also comes to the front of the room, but goes to the left side of the room and stays standing.*

NARRATOR. Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan were never found. The U.S. government spent four million dollars searching the ocean around Howland with no success. Her death remains a mystery.

CONSPIRACY THEORIST. Many maintain that Amelia and Fred simply plunged to their deaths in the Pacific Ocean. But there are many other theories out there. I'm going to share three with you. Number one: Amelia Earhart was a spy.

AMELIA EARHART. Yes, Frankie, I heard you wanted to talk to me.

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT. Good to see you, Amelia. I have a very important question for you.

AMELIA EARHART. Sounds interesting.

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT. Would you like to be a spy?

AMELIA EARHART. Wow, I didn't expect you to say that. Tell me more.

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT. Well, as you are well aware, there's a major war going on. The United States is trying to stay neutral, but we need to be prepared. We're worried about Germany, of course, but Japan is also a concern.

AMELIA EARHART. Where do I come in?

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT. Japan has been taking over islands in the Pacific. We could pretend that you were trying to fly around the world, then have you land your plane on a Japanese-controlled island and use that as an excuse to take over the island.

AMELIA EARHART. Brilliant plan! Wait, what about Fred?

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT. He'll be fine with it.

AMELIA EARHART. And my husband—can I tell George?

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT. No, but think of how excited he'll be when he realizes what you did for our country.

AMELIA EARHART. A smashing idea. Let's do it!

CONSPIRACY THEORIST. There are many version of this theory. But some think the Japanese suspected she was a spy and shot her plane down.

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT *returns to his seat.* **FRED NOONAN** *has a seat in the chair next to AMELIA. They act like they're flying a plane.*

CONSPIRACY THEORIST. A second theory is that she and Fred eloped.

AMELIA EARHART. It's now or never, Fred.

FRED NOONAN. Do you really want to go through with this, Amelia? Think of how amazing it would be to fly around the world.

AMELIA EARHART. That's the last thing I want, Fred! I'm so tired of all this fame. I only want to live my life without all the newspapers reporting my every move.

FRED NOONAN. What about George?

AMELIA EARHART. I'm done with George. It's you I love.

FRED NOONAN. And I love you, Amelia.

AMELIA EARHART. Let's go land this plane on a deserted island and start our life anew.

CONSPIRACY THEORIST. The third and last theory I will share with you is a new one. This theory proposes that Amelia crashed into the coral flats near the deserted Pacific island of Nikumaroro, 400 miles from Howland. Supporting this, a skeleton and a high-heel shoe were found on the island in 1940. Also, a sonar image from 2012 shows a crashed plane in the coral flats. I would've preferred to share about how she was abducted by aliens, but your teacher wouldn't let me. Anyway, the mystery of Amelia's disappearance lasts to this day. Maybe one day, possibly soon, we'll find out what really happened.

Exit FRED NOONAN, AMELIA EARHART, and CONSPIRACY THEORIST. Enter GEORGE PUTNAM, reading a letter.

NARRATOR. After the U.S. government called off the search, Amelia's husband, George Putnam, spent his own money to continue looking. Eventually he gave up. Still, it needs to be noted that, sad as it is that Amelia Earhart never made it around the world, she did know the risk she was taking. To illustrate this, the play will end with George Putnam reading part of the actual letter she left him in case she didn't make it back.

GEORGE PUTNAM. "Please know I am quite aware of the hazards. I want to do it because I want to do it. Women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be but a challenge to others." *(He gets choked up and cries for a moment. He gathers himself together.)* Amelia, I—and the world—will never forget you.

GEORGE *and the entire audience break down crying.*

Name. _____ Date. _____

Amelia Earhart Questions

1. What is one way that you relate to Amelia Earhart?
2. Why did Amelia consider herself “just baggage” on her first flight across the Atlantic?
3. What did the Nineteenth Amendment change in the U.S. Constitution?
4. Which of the women in scene 4 do you think had the most notable accomplishment, and why?
5. What are some records that Amelia set?
6. Which of the theories about Amelia’s disappearance do you think offers the most likely explanation? Why?
7. Why is Amelia Earhart still talked about today?

Name. _____ Date. _____

Women Firsts Paper

The following are other women who did something first. Research them, focusing on three questions:

1. What are some more details about what they are most known for?
2. What challenges did they face, and how did they overcome these?
3. What are some of their other accomplishments?

Summarize your findings in a $\frac{3}{4}$ - to 1-page paper.

CHOICES

- Elizabeth Blackwell (first woman to get a medical degree)
- Babe Didrikson Zaharias (first woman to compete in a men's golf tournament)
- Clara Barton (founded the Red Cross)
- Jane Addams (first American woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize)
- Sandra Day O'Connor (first female justice on the U.S. Supreme Court)

Name. _____

Date. _____

Amelia Earhart Vocabulary Activity

Write the letter of the definition in front of the vocabulary word. Use the context sentences (all from the play) for help.

- A. People who publicly support a particular cause.
- B. When the U.S. Constitution was changed to give women in every state the right to vote.
- C. Loose-fitting trousers for girls that gathered at the knees or ankles.
- D. Run away to secretly get married.
- E. Persistent determination.
- F. The right to vote.
- G. Would have changed the U.S. Constitution so that civil rights could not be denied because of gender. It has never passed.
- H. A celebration during which spectators throw massive amounts of shredded paper onto the participants.

_____ **BLOOMERS**

Bloomers. *It's much easier for them to run around and play in than if they wore dresses.*

_____ **TICKER-TAPE PARADE**

*After making the front pages of newspapers around the world, she and her crew returned to the United States for a **ticker-tape parade**.*

_____ **TENACITY**

*The difficult thing is the decision to act; the rest is merely **tenacity**.*

_____ **SUFFRAGE**

*Your speeches and papers were key to helping women achieve **suffrage**.*

_____ **ELOPED**

*A second theory is that she and Fred **eloped**.*

_____ **EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (ERA)**

*I became an associate editor at Cosmopolitan magazine, published books, lectured on the importance of the **Equal Rights Amendment**.*

_____ **ADVOCATES**

*You're considered the most important **advocates** of women's rights.*

_____ **NINETEENTH AMENDMENT**

*Well, it was 1870 and I was in Wyoming, which allowed women to vote a long time before the **Nineteenth Amendment** was passed.*

● The Great Depression! ●

On Black Tuesday, our economy crashed. Watch our nation's struggle to get back on its feet as students act out important events, daily challenges, and even economic theories in "The Great Depression!" How do you make our country's worst economic crisis fun? By turning it into a play!



The Great Depression!

Characters

- Narrator
- Teacher
- Teacher's Pet
- Sassy Student
- FDR
- Factory Worker 1
- Factory Worker 2
- Factory Worker 3
- Factory Owner
- Bank
- Investor (Fred)
- Secretary (Sally)
- Herbert Hoover
- Dad
- Mom
- Son
- Wacky Economist
- Farmer
- Hungry Man
- Cow
- Economy

scene 1. Your Classroom

TEACHER *stands at the front of class. SASSY STUDENT and TEACHER'S PET are in the scene but will speak from their desks. They should refer to TEACHER by the real teacher's name. The student playing TEACHER is also free to add in any mannerisms or phrases the teacher of this class uses a lot. Also, SASSY STUDENT and TEACHER'S PET should be called by their real names.*

TEACHER, *pretending to eat an apple.* Okay, let's get started, class. But first, who gave me this apple?
It's fantastic.

TEACHER'S PET. Oh, I did. A fantastic teacher deserves a fantastic fruit.

TEACHER. Thank you , *[student's name]*.

TEACHER'S PET. And what wonderful and exciting learning experiences do you have for us today,
[teacher's name]?

TEACHER. Oh yes, our lesson. Today is going to be even better than most days.

TEACHER'S PET. I can't even imagine how that would be possible.

TEACHER. I know. It's hard to believe. How do you improve on perfection, right? But today I will.
That's because we are beginning a unit on the Great Depression.

SASSY STUDENT, *sarcastically.* Sounds exciting.

TEACHER. I know, *[student's name]*, learning about an era called the Great Depression might not
sound captivating.

SASSY STUDENT. You think?

TEACHER'S PET. I think it sounds fascinating.

SASSY STUDENT. Of course you do, but the rest of us would prefer something a little more, I don't know, uplifting.

TEACHER. Well, our upswing from the lowest depths of a ruined economy is, arguably, the most uplifting story in our history. We certainly rose pretty high.

TEACHER'S PET, to SASSY STUDENT. Oh! You got schooled!

SASSY STUDENT. Really? I thought it was just a bunch of dirty people in breadlines.

TEACHER. That was part of it too.

TEACHER'S PET. Enough chitchat. I want to find out what happened.

TEACHER. Thank you, [student's name]. You always do such a good job of keeping us on task. Let's start in 1929 with the biggest crash in stock market history, also known as Black Tuesday.

scene 2. Black Thursday, Friday, Monday, and Tuesday

INVESTOR *stands on a chair looking off to the side of the class.* SECRETARY *stands behind him.*

NARRATOR. Between 1924 and 1929, the Dow Jones Industrial Average quadrupled. More than a quarter of that money would be lost in just four working days. On Thursday, October 25, the market closed with stock prices taking a nosedive. On Friday, investors panicked and made thirteen million sales, a record for that time. Monday and Tuesday brought more of the same. On Tuesday, the worst of the days, three million shares were traded within the first thirty minutes after the stock exchange opened. On Black Tuesday alone, \$14 billion was lost, equal to around \$378 billion in today's dollars. The stock market wouldn't return to its previous heights until 1954.

SECRETARY, *concerned.* Fred?

INVESTOR, *staring out window.* Oh, sorry, Sally. Do you need something?

SECRETARY. I was bringing in some coffee. Why are you looking out the window?

INVESTOR, *tonelessly.* It's a nice view.

SECRETARY. But the window's open. And you're standing on a chair.

INVESTOR. Don't mind me.

SECRETARY. Let's have a seat. Okay, Fred?

INVESTOR *gets down from the chair and sits.* SECRETARY *sits next to him.*

SECRETARY. Is there something that you want to talk about?

INVESTOR. It's a bit cold for October, don't you think?

SECRETARY. Fred, let's not talk about the weather. How are your investments doing?

INVESTOR. I've had better days.

SECRETARY. But have you ever had worse?

INVESTOR. Not even close.

SECRETARY. It can't get any worse, though, right?

INVESTOR. That's what I thought on Thursday, Friday, and Monday.

SECRETARY. There's always tomorrow. The stocks will rebound. Isn't that how it always works on Wall Street?

INVESTOR. Sally, there's not going to be a tomorrow.

SECRETARY. Stop that talk.

INVESTOR. Not that. I'm not going to jump. But I won't be working tomorrow. I'm done.

SECRETARY. Fred, there's no reason—

INVESTOR, *interrupting*. Sally, I had \$100,000 last week. Today I have \$43,000—

SECRETARY. Well, that's not too bad!

INVESTOR. —in debt—\$43,000 in debt.

SECRETARY. Oh. (*She pauses.*) Wait—

INVESTOR. Yes, that does mean I'll be letting you go.

SECRETARY. I see.

INVESTOR. I'm sorry.

SECRETARY. No need for that.

NARRATOR. That lots of Wall Street investors jumped to their deaths on Black Tuesday is now considered a myth. (Although this rumor, interestingly, started during the crash.) Fred, like most investors, did not jump. But it was a historically bad day for investors and its repercussions were felt around the entire world.

scene 3. Reasons

TEACHER, FACTORY WORKER 1, FACTORY WORKER 2, FACTORY WORKER 3, *and* FACTORY OWNER *come to the front of the room.* BANK *sits at a desk at the front of the room.*

TEACHER. The Roaring Twenties were a time of rapid economic expansion in the United States. As European countries recovered from World War I, America filled the economic vacuum. By some estimates, America produced almost half of the entire world's industrial output from 1925 to 1929. Use of credit was also on the rise. Companies were taking out huge loans to expand their businesses, and households were taking on their own debts in order to buy more consumer goods.

FACTORY WORKER 1. I wish I had enough money to buy a refrigerator.

FACTORY WORKER 2. And I wish I could buy a car.

BANK. Hey, guys. No problem. I'll give you money!

FACTORY WORKER 1. Great!

FACTORY WORKER 2, *suspiciously.* Wait a second. Why would you just give us money?

BANK. You will have to pay me back later, with interest.

FACTORY WORKER 1, *enthusiastically.* You had me at "later."

FACTORY WORKER 2, *still suspicious.* Why don't we just save it ourselves first? Then we wouldn't ever have to pay the extra interest.

FACTORY WORKER 1. Obviously, because then we wouldn't get the money immediately.

FACTORY WORKER 2 *shrugs and both put out their hands.* BANK *pretends to hand them money.*

FACTORY OWNER, *walking up to* BANK. And I'd like some more money, too.

BANK. Sure! And what are you going to do with it?

FACTORY OWNER. Build another widget factory. (*He holds out his hands to receive money. Then he addresses* FACTORY WORKER 3.) Do you want a job?

FACTORY WORKER 3. Yahoo! (*He does a happy dance.*)

BANK, *to* FACTORY OWNER. Do you want more money?

FACTORY OWNER. Actually, I don't think the world needs many more widgets.

BANK. You could invest the money we give you in stocks and see what happens.

FACTORY OWNER. I do hear the market just keeps going up and up.

BANK. Some say stock prices will rise forever. What a time to live!

FACTORY OWNER. What could go wrong?

TEACHER. This might be an oversimplification, but I think you get the point. This theory says that businesses ended up creating more goods than people could buy. When businesses couldn't find enough customers, many invested their profits in stocks instead of in expansion. About two out of every five dollars a bank loaned were used to buy stocks in 1929. This caused the stock market to rocket up to record heights, followed by an epic fall.

FACTORY OWNER. Hey, bank. About those stocks—

BANK. Yeah, sorry to break it to you, but they're worthless now.

FACTORY OWNER. Oh, man.

BANK. And you need to pay me back for all that money you borrowed.

FACTORY OWNER. Uh oh. Looks like I'll need to close down those factories.

FACTORY WORKER 1. But people need their widgets!

BANK, to FACTORY WORKERS. And I kinda need you guys to pay me back, too.

FACTORY WORKER 2, *horrified*. But I literally just lost my job!

FACTORY OWNER. If it makes you feel any better, I'm broke too.

FACTORY WORKER 3. That doesn't help. (*He does a sad dance.*)

BANK. What if I told you I'd be closing too?

FACTORY WORKER 3. I have to admit that makes me feel a little better.

scene 4. Life during the Great Depression (Short answer: not fun)

MOM, DAD, and SON sit in chairs facing each other. HERBERT HOOVER will speak from his desk, as the others listen to his voice on an invisible radio.

NARRATOR. By 1933, unemployment reached an estimated 25 percent. This means one out of four people could not get jobs. This followed an unemployment rate of under 5 percent in 1928 and doesn't even include the number of underemployed or people who were forced to take pay cuts. Throughout the thirties, life would be tough for most Americans.

HERBERT HOOVER. We have passed the worst. The economy just needs more time to sort itself out. We need to be patient.

DAD. Easy for him to say. He has a job—at least, until the next election.

HERBERT HOOVER. I know times are tough, but prosperity is just around the corner. We must give even a greater effort and endure.

DAD. Oh, so I'm not trying hard enough! Turn this idiot off.

MOM, *turning off the radio*. What's your plan today, honey?

DAD. There was some snow last night. If I'm lucky, I might get hired to shovel snow for the city for the day.

SON. Franz's dad tried that last week and he said his dad just sat in the cold all day.

DAD. I'm bigger than Franz's dad. (*He flexes.*) I've got a better chance of getting picked.

MOM. A better chance? I wish you sounded more confident.

DAD, *getting angry*. What do you think I should do? Since I got fired from the steel mill, I'm competing against every man in this town. And we're all looking for the same thing, a job that doesn't exist. I guess I could go stand in a breadline. That would at least guarantee us something.

MOM. Have you taken a look at those? They stretch around the block. Thank goodness we're not at that point yet.

SON. We're not far from it. For my birthday, I got an apple.

DAD. Oh, I don't want to hear it. Just be happy we're not living in a Hooverville.

SON. What's that?

DAD. A shantytown.

MOM. There's another one only a few blocks away now. It's dreadful.

DAD. I'll be passing it on my way downtown. Do you have any dresses for me to drop off at the store? They like your work.

MOM. Not quite. I should have one finished by this afternoon.

DAD. We'll need that. My cousin says he can't loan us any more money.

SON. Are we going to be okay?

DAD. We'll make it work, we always do. And anyway, I've heard if we get really desperate, a boy's organs will get us a nice price these days.

SON. What!?

DAD. Come here. *(He grabs at SON.)*

SON runs away.

MOM. Is that necessary?

DAD. We need some laughter here. It's just getting so . . . well . . . depressing. But I do need to go.

MOM. I love you, honey.

DAD. I love you, too. We'll be fine.

MOM. I hope so.

scene 5. FDR to the Rescue

FDR, WACKY ECONOMIST, FARMER, COW, and HUNGRY MAN *stand at the front of the room. FDR is seated; he should never get out of his seat during a scene.*

NARRATOR. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected president in 1932. Having contracted polio in his thirties, he was paralyzed from the waist down. He had been governor of New York and came to office promising a "New Deal" that would rescue the country from the Great Depression. Would it work?

FDR. Let's get this presidency rolling! First item on the agenda, let's help the farmers. *(He shakes FARMER'S hand and then Cow's hoof.)*

FARMER. Nice to meet you, Mr. President.

COW. Moo.

FDR. My pleasure to meet both of you. I hear you have lots of food, just no one to sell it to.

FARMER. It's true. Our stables are full, but no one can afford to buy anything, so we're going broke.

HUNGRY MAN. Well, I'm starving and could use some food.

FDR, to WACKY ECONOMIST. What if the government paid the farmer for the food and then we handed it out to hungry people?

WACKY ECONOMIST. Can't do it. I know it sounds heartless, but if we hand out food for free, it would lower the price of food and farmers would make even less from it. *(He pauses to think.)* How about we pay farmers not to plant all of their land and to kill their extra livestock?

FARMER. Excuse me?

COW, *very concerned.* Moooooo?

WACKY ECONOMIST. I know it sounds crazy, but it's just simple supply and demand. If we lower the supply of food, then the price of it should generally go up. That way, farmers can start to make a profit off the goods we start buying from them.

FDR. Genius! I'll get Congress to pass that as part of the New Deal. We can call it the AAA, for Agriculture Adjustment Act.

FARMER. Are you guys sure about this?

FDR and WACKY ECONOMIST, together. Yes!

FARMER *cuts Cow's throat.*

Cow. MOO! (*She falls over.*)

FARMER. Now what do I do with Bessie?

WACKY ECONOMIST. Doesn't matter—just don't give her away, unless you want the prices for your other cows dropping.

FARMER *drags Cow across the room and then has a seat. Cow stays there until the end of the scene.*

HUNGRY MAN. Uh, what about me? I'm still hungry.

FDR. Yeah, what are we going to do with him?

WACKY ECONOMIST. Let's get him a job.

HUNGRY MAN. You don't think I've been trying?

WACKY ECONOMIST. No, we'll make up a job for you.

FDR. More government spending? But we're getting so few tax dollars as it is. I'm a little scared to go any further into debt.

WACKY ECONOMIST. What's the worst that could happen—another depression? Also, many economists— shout-out to John Keynes (*raises the roof*)—think the government should spend more during a recession to make up for people being unable to spend.

FDR. I like it. I'll call it the Works Progress Administration, or WPA, and make it a key part of my second New Deal. These men want jobs and we'll provide them. And what town couldn't use an improved road, a new park, or a better school?

HUNGRY MAN. Sounds good to me. But do you mind if I have a little snack first?

HUNGRY MAN *walks over to Cow, pretends to start cutting it with a fork and knife.*

FDR and WACKY ECONOMIST, *together*. No!

NARRATOR. As well as the two aforementioned programs, Congress passed many other laws in FDR's first two terms in office, including legalizing alcohol again for adults (the end of Prohibition), reducing military spending, ending the gold standard, adding regulations for investors, and creating Social Security, which gave, and still gives, money to the elderly.

scene 6. Escaping the Depression

TEACHER *is at the front of the room*. FDR *sits in a chair* and ECONOMY *stands on a chair next to him*.

TEACHER. As we've covered already, in 1929 the U.S. economy was doing fantastic. (ECONOMY *dances energetically*.) Until it wasn't. (ECONOMY *falls to the floor*.) Hoover, the president at the time, has the reputation that he didn't do anything to help the country out of the Depression. This is not true. Although he was uncomfortable with too much governmental intervention, spending did increase during his presidency as he supported various public works.

HERBERT HOOVER. Including the building of the Hoover Dam!

TEACHER. And it should be mentioned, for no particular reason, that he has a game named after him.

HERBERT HOOVER. It's called Hooverball! It's a combination of tennis and volleyball, but you use a medicine ball. My doctor made it up for me. (*He acts out Hooverball, by straining to throw an invisible medicine ball over a net.*) It's so much fun!

TEACHER. Unfortunately, the economy remained weak.

ECONOMY *rolls around moaning on the floor*.

FDR. And then I got elected!

HERBERT HOOVER *drops his head and returns to his desk*.

TEACHER. Yes, and with the passing of the New Deal legislation, things did pick up.

ECONOMY *stands up and balances on one leg*.

TEACHER. By 1936, industry had risen to pre-Depression levels and the unemployment rate had dropped to 11 percent.

FDR. I won reelection in a landslide.

TEACHER. It was an electoral smackdown of 523 to 8. But troubles remained.

ECONOMY *begins to wobble as though about lose its balance*.

TEACHER. To lower government debt, taxes were raised and spending was cut.

SASSY STUDENT, *raising head up*. Where am I? (*Looks at teacher*.) Oh yeah. Did I miss anything?

TEACHER. Just the entire history of the Depression.

SASSY STUDENT. Anything that'll be on the test?

TEACHER. No comment.

SASSY STUDENT. Can someone summarize it for me? (*To TEACHER'S PET.*) Hey, [*student's name*], give me the highlights.

TEACHER'S PET. Oh, there are just too many! I really think we should do the play again. Please?

TEACHER. So, are you asking me in the actual play to do the play again? This play is getting very out there.

SASSY STUDENT. Any less strange than that guy playing Hooverball?

TEACHER. So you were paying attention.

SASSY STUDENT. I learned it through osmosis. Anyway, let's do it again, but this time I get to be the cow.

TEACHER'S PET. And me the farmer.

TEACHER. I don't know. We'll have to ask the real teacher. (*To the real teacher.*) What do you think?

If the real teacher announces "yes," then the whole class claps. If the real teacher announces "no," then the whole class collapses to the floor in tears.

Name. _____ Date. _____

Great Depression Questions

1. What happened on Black Tuesday?
2. Summarize the theory for why the stock market crashed.
3. What percentage of people in the United States were unemployed in 1933?
4. Newspapers did not show pictures of FDR in a wheelchair. Would today's press have done so? Why or why not?
5. Why were farmers paid to kill their own livestock?
6. What did the WPA do?
7. What may have caused the economy to fall again in 1937?

Name. _____ Date. _____

Compare and Contrast Paper

Write a paper that discusses similarities and differences between the Great Depression and America's worst recession since, in 2008. Answer the following questions to prepare for writing your essay.

- What were the causes of the Great Depression? What were the causes of the economic crisis of 2008?
- What are similarities and differences between the two crises with regard to the stock market and unemployment rates?
- What were some government programs started after the Great Depression and after the economic crisis of 2008?
- How long did these recessions last? Did something specific help the country to come out of each of these deep recessions?

Name. _____

Date. _____

Great Depression Vocabulary Activity

Write the letter of the definition in front of the vocabulary word. Use the context sentences (all from the play) for help.

- A. An economic theory for why prices go up or down.
- B. A crudely put together town created by homeless people during the Depression, named after the president of that time.
- C. A process in which a substance moves from one side of a barrier to another.
- D. A charge for borrowing money.
- E. Programs and policies introduced by Franklin Roosevelt to try to end the Great Depression.
- F. A unit you can buy that represents partial ownership of a company.
- G. A disease that can cause paralysis, shortness of breath, or death.
- H. Something owed.

_____ **DEBT**
*To lower government **debt**, taxes were raised and spending was cut.*

_____ **HOOVERVILLE**
*Just be happy we're not living in a **Hooverville**.*

_____ **POLIO**
*Having contracted **polio** in his thirties, he was paralyzed from the waist down.*

_____ **INTEREST**
*You will have to pay me back later, with **interest**.*

_____ **STOCKS**
*You could invest the money we give you in **stocks** and see what happens.*

_____ **SUPPLY AND DEMAND**
*It's just simple **supply and demand**. If we lower the supply of food, then the price of it will automatically go up.*

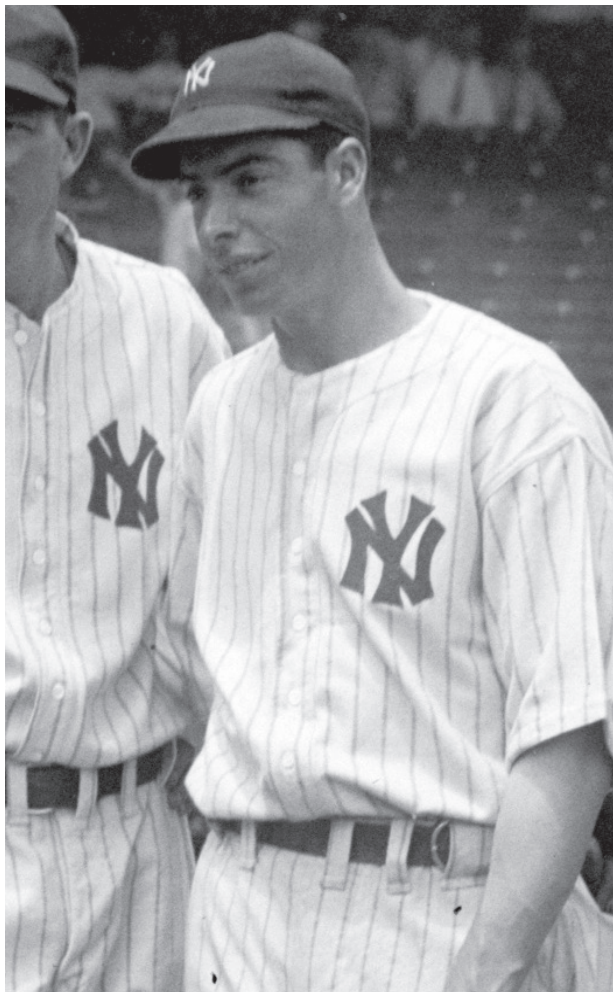
_____ **NEW DEAL**
*I'll get Congress to pass that as part of the **New Deal**.*

_____ **OSMOSIS**
*I learned it through **osmosis**.*

● **Joltin' Joe** ●

**Joe DiMaggio and the United States
during World War II**

Even when at war, or maybe especially then, a country likes its distractions. Joe DiMaggio's streak provided this and more during World War II. "Joltin' Joe" intertwines DiMaggio's life with the key events of World War II. They intersect more than you would think.



Joltin' Joe

Joe DiMaggio and the United States during World War II

Characters

- Narrator
- Joe DiMaggio
- Giuseppe DiMaggio
- Rosalia DiMaggio
- Vince DiMaggio
- Tojo
- Hitler
- Paul Simon (singer)
- Mussolini
- FDR
- Winston Churchill
- Stalin
- Ken Keltner (third basemen)
- Baseball Historian
- Stats Nerd
- Satchel Paige
- LeBron James
- NBA Reporter
- Hank Greenberg
- Ted Williams
- Baseball Commissioner
- Parent Born in 1946
- Kid Born in 1970
- Bill James

scene 1. Early Life (1914–1936)

GIUSEPPE, ROSALIA, and JOE DiMAGGIO stand at the front of the room. GIUSEPPE cradles JOE DiMAGGIO like a baby.

NARRATOR. Joe DiMaggio was born November 25, 1914, in Martinez, California. His parents were from Italy, the island of Sicily. He was the eighth of their nine children.

GIUSEPPE DiMAGGIO, in an Italian accent. Could he be even cuter?

ROSALIA DiMAGGIO, in an Italian accent. He's adorable. (She pinches JOE DiMAGGIO's cheeks.)

JOE DiMAGGIO. Goo goo ga ga.

GIUSEPPE DiMAGGIO. Let's name him after me.

ROSALIA DiMAGGIO. I like that. (She tickles JOE DiMAGGIO.)

JOE DiMAGGIO. Goo goo boo boo.

GIUSEPPE DiMAGGIO. I can tell he's going to be a fisherman just like me.

ROSALIA DiMAGGIO. I'm sure all the boys will be.

JOE DiMAGGIO, *crying*. WAAAAAAAAAA!

GIUSEPPE DiMAGGIO, *trying to hand him to ROSALIA*. I think he wants you.

GIUSEPPE DiMAGGIO *stops cradling* JOE DiMAGGIO. *They stay at the front of the room and are joined by VINCE DiMAGGIO. Exit ROSALIA.*

NARRATOR. The family soon moved to San Francisco. They lived in an Italian neighborhood called North Beach and Joe's father continued to work as a fisherman. The DiMaggio men had been fishermen for generations, and Joe DiMaggio was expected to follow in his dad's footsteps.

GIUSEPPE DiMAGGIO. Okay, boys. Time to clean out the boat!

VINCE DiMAGGIO. Do we have to, dad?

JOE DiMAGGIO. I'd love to help out, but I have some homework I need to finish.

VINCE DiMAGGIO. Homework? But—

JOE DiMAGGIO, *turning to Vince and putting his finger to his lips*. Shhhh! *(He turns back to his dad.)* Yeah, and I'll need Vince's help.

GIUSEPPE DiMAGGIO. I begin to notice, the only time you have homework is when I need you to clean the boat!

JOE DiMAGGIO. Such crazy coincidence! That's too bad. You know how I love the smell of the boat.

VINCE DiMAGGIO. You always say it makes you nauseous.

JOE DiMAGGIO *elbows* VINCE DiMAGGIO *in the side*.

VINCE DiMAGGIO. I mean, oh that's right, you love it. Well, we should get started with that, uh, homework. See you, Dad.

GIUSEPPE DiMAGGIO. You think I don't know where you're going? You two are off to that sandlot again. You're wasting your time with that poor excuse for a game—baseball. *(He shakes head.)* Now, boccie ball—that's a game.

JOE DiMAGGIO. Yes, boccie is the best. See you at dinner.

The boys run to the back of the room.

GIUSEPPE DiMAGGIO, *yelling*. Come back here, you good-for-nothing, lazy, poor excuses for children! What's baseball ever going to do for you?

Exit GIUSEPPE DiMAGGIO. JOE DiMAGGIO *and* VINCE DiMAGGIO *return to the front of the room. They pretend they're talking to each other on the phone.*

NARRATOR. Joe DiMaggio eventually dropped out of high school. He worked at the docks doing odd jobs like crating oranges, loading trucks, and delivering groceries. During this time, two of his older brothers were playing for a local minor-league baseball team.

VINCE DiMAGGIO. Hey Joe, I convinced the coach here to give you shot at shortstop. Are you interested?

JOE DiMAGGIO. Definitely.

VINCE DiMAGGIO. Don't mess this up, Joe. I've stuck my neck out for you.

JOE DiMAGGIO. Don't worry. If you and Tom can make money with this game, it shouldn't be a problem for me.

VINCE DiMAGGIO. Ha! You know you'll never be half the player I am.

JOE DiMAGGIO. We'll see about that, Vince.

NARRATOR. Joe had two excellent seasons playing for the San Francisco Seals. He was so strong a player that in 1934, even though he had torn ligaments in his left knee from stepping out of a vehicle, the New York Yankees traded five players and threw in \$25,000 for Joe's rights. He would more than make up for it.

scene 2. Joe's Rise and the Seeds of World War II (1936–1939)

TOJO, HITLER, and MUSSOLINI *sit in chairs at the front of the room.*

NARRATOR. Joe DiMaggio, at only twenty-one years old, debuted for the Yankees in 1936. The team won the championship that year, and won it each time for the next three years. Joe batted .323 and hit twenty-nine home runs, earning his first all-star nomination—an honor he would earn every summer of his thirteen-year career. Joe was also known for being a strong fielder and always giving his all. Later in his career he was asked why he tried so hard every game. He replied, "There is always some kid who may be seeing me for the first time. I owe him my best."

Baseball was the national obsession, easily our most popular sport, but more pressing matters were in the news. The Great Depression wreaked havoc on much of the world, the United States included. And, ominously, three countries were expanding their borders.

TOJO, to MUSSOLINI and HITLER. Hello, I'm Hideki Tojo. So, even though the Japanese emperor is technically in control of the country, the army is currently calling most of the shots. I'm an army guy pushing hard for an agreement with you two.

MUSSOLINI. Calling most of the shots, eh? I'm Benito Mussolini. I've been the one-man dictator of Italy since 1930.

HITLER. And I think everyone knows who I am.

MUSSOLINI, to HITLER. Congrats on annexing Austria and Czechoslovakia.

HITLER. Thanks, and good work in Ethiopia. Tojo, what's Japan been up to?

TOJO. Not much. I mean, other than trying to take over China.

MUSSOLINI. Oh, I heard about that. How's it going?

TOJO. We'll see. I think we're off to a good start. What about you? What are your reasons for taking over other countries?

HITLER. Mostly because I'm an evil psychopathic maniac. But also, I'm pretty bitter about the Treaty of Versailles. You know, where the Allied powers took away Germany's land and our colonies, downsized our army, and made us pay them money.

MUSSOLINI. Us too!

TOJO. Wait, wasn't Italy on the Allied side for the Great War?

MUSSOLINI. A big mistake. The Allies promised us land for joining their side and then they didn't give it to us. And why are you invading China, Tojo?

TOJO. Can't a country just want to get bigger? But also, it bothers us that most of Asia is under the control of Europeans. If anyone's going to control this continent, it should be Asians, right?

HITLER. Now Tojo, I love your country's aggressiveness, but . . . how do I put this—

MUSSOLINI. Adolf is a big fan of Aryans.

TOJO. Clearly, I'll never be a blond, blue-eyed white person. But, hey, I'm not Jewish.

HITLER. He makes a good point.

TOJO. Also, I might be Asian, but you have to agree—the Japanese are the best Asians.

MUSSOLINI. I like your attitude.

TOJO. And I don't want to rub it in, but my country hasn't been conquered in three thousand years.

HITLER. I think this is going to work. A true Aryan is less about hair color and more about racial purity. That's a concept I think you can get behind. I hereby consider the Japanese to be honorary Aryans.

TOJO. Thanks!

HITLER. What do you say, guys? Shall we take over the world?

MUSSOLINI and Tojo, *together*. Yes! (*All three fist-bump one another.*)

NARRATOR. In reality, these three key figures never actually all met at the same time. But Japan and Germany signed an agreement in 1936 and later added Italy in 1940 to form the Tripartite Pact. It appeared another “great” war was on the horizon.

scene 3. Joltin’ Joe’s Streak and World War II in Europe (1939–1941)

JOE DiMAGGIO *stands off on the left side of the room in a batting stance.* **HITLER, MUSSOLINI, FDR, STALIN, and WINSTON CHURCHILL** *stand at the front of the room.*

NARRATOR. In 1939, Germany invaded Poland. World War II had officially begun. Germany invaded France, Belgium, and the Netherlands in May 1940, and all fell within five weeks. This was thanks to Germany’s new style of fighting, known as blitzkrieg. The United States declared it was not going to enter the war, but that it supported the cause of the Allied powers. Roosevelt pressed Congress to give more support to the war, but received opposition from a group of “isolationists.” These Americans feared that funding the war would lead to actual involvement, as it had with World War I.

Americans were on pins and needles about entering the war that would prove to be the most devastating in world history. Meanwhile, Joe DiMaggio was off to another great season and started a streak that would captivate the country. On May 15, 1941, Joe DiMaggio hit safely in a game against the White Sox. He continued to get at least one hit a game for the next two months.

JOE DiMAGGIO, *swinging an invisible bat as he yells each number.* One, two, three, four, five . . .

WINSTON CHURCHILL, *to FDR.* The British could really use some more help.

FDR. I’m trying. A lot of lawmakers in Congress are against it. However, if I can pass the Lend-Lease Act it might help. We can at least get more weapons to you now.

WINSTON CHURCHILL. We appreciate that, but we could use some more soldiers.

FDR. I don’t think the country is ready yet.

JOE DiMAGGIO, *continuing to swing for each number.* Eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen . . .

NARRATOR. Germany continued to take over countries in Europe. On April 6, 1941, Germany attacked Greece and Yugoslavia and took over both within one month. Italy had previously failed to take over Greece.

HITLER, *to Mussolini.* Now that is how it’s done!

MUSSOLINI. No need to gloat. We tried our best.

JOE DiMAGGIO, *swinging for each number.* Twenty-five, twenty-six, twenty-seven, twenty-eight, twenty-nine . . .

NARRATOR. On June 22, Hitler shocked the world by invading Russia.

HITLER, *to* STALIN. Guess what! I declare war on you.

STALIN. But we had a treaty!

HITLER. Sorry about that.

STALIN. You're going to regret this.

JOE DIMAGGIO, *swinging for each number*. Forty-three, forty-four . . . *(He gives a final, big swing.)* . . . forty-five!

The class cheers.

NARRATOR. On July 2, 1941, Joe DiMaggio broke the record for the longest hitting streak in baseball history. How much longer could it continue? Very few baseball games were televised in this era, so most of the country followed the games on the radio. For the last twenty games or so, radio shows all over the country were interrupted when Joe DiMaggio batted.

Exit HITLER, MUSSOLINI, CHURCHILL, *and* ROOSEVELT. *Enter* KEN KELTNER. *He pretends to be playing third base.*

JOE DIMAGGIO, *swinging for each number*. Fifty-four, fifty-five, fifty-six . . .

NARRATOR. On July 17, the Yankees played the Cleveland Indians. In the first inning . . .

JOE DIMAGGIO *swings*. KEN KELTNER *dives to his right, catches the "ball," and then throws it to "first base."*

NARRATOR. In the fourth inning, Joe walked. And in the seventh inning again . . .

JOE DIMAGGIO *swings*. KEN KELTNER *again dives to his right, catches the "ball," and then throws it to "first base."*

NARRATOR. And in the eighth inning, Joe's last chance, he hit into a double play. The crowd watched Joe to see his reaction. Would he throw his helmet to the ground? Yell? At least shake his head? No, just as he had throughout the streak, Joe DiMaggio acted like nothing had happened and went to center field. That same day, his draft number for the war came up. Talk about a bad day! Years later, Keltner and Joe DiMaggio met. Joe signed a ball for Keltner, adding, "To the culprit."

Exit KEN KELTNER *and* JOE DIMAGGIO. *Enter* BASEBALL HISTORIAN, STATS NERD, *and* SATCHEL PAIGE.

BASEBALL HISTORIAN. DiMaggio's hitting streak record has never been broken. Pete Rose came the closest in 1978, but even he only got up to forty-four. Along with Cy Young winning 511 games, Joe DiMaggio's hitting streak is considered one of baseball's most impressive records.

STATS NERD, *nerdily*. I agree with you on the outstanding nature of Cy Young's record, and do see that as unbreakable, but I did a statistical analysis on my computer in which I simulated ten thousand baseball seasons. In my simulation, Joe DiMaggio's record was often broken.

BASEBALL HISTORIAN. I'm . . . not even sure what that means.

STATS NERD. If you flip a coin enough times, streaks are bound to happen.

BASEBALL HISTORIAN. Then why hasn't any other player gotten close? And anyway, a computer program can't take into account the pressure of having to get a hit every day under the eyes of the entire nation.

SATCHEL PAIGE. You two are forgetting another reason to question this record.

BASEBALL HISTORIAN. And what reason is that?

SATCHEL PAIGE. African American players like me! No disrespect to Joe, but he wouldn't have been getting hits for fifty-six straight days if I had been pitching to him.

STATS NERD. One person alone wouldn't have been able to stop a streak.

SATCHEL PAIGE. Actually, I'm talking about every other black player—including myself— not allowed in the major leagues.

BASEBALL HISTORIAN. That should be considered. Many of baseball's best players were not allowed to compete in the major leagues. This would begin to change with Jackie Robinson in 1947. Regardless, I think we can all agree that fifty-six straight games of getting a hit is still a truly remarkable achievement.

scene 4. The United States at War (1941–1945)

LEBRON JAMES *and* NBA REPORTER *stand at the front of the room*. JOE DiMAGGIO, TED WILLIAMS, *and* HANK GREENBERG *stand off to the side*.

NBA REPORTER. First off, LeBron, I wanted to congratulate you on another championship.

LEBRON JAMES. Thank you. I couldn't have done it without my teammates.

NBA REPORTER. And I also wanted to thank you for serving your country.

LEBRON JAMES. Oh yes, I'm always proud to represent the United States at the Olympics.

NBA REPORTER. I'm not talking about the Olympics; I'm talking about Afghanistan.

LEBRON JAMES, *confused*. Excuse me?

NBA REPORTER. You were drafted to fight the Taliban. Congratulations!

LEBRON JAMES. Uh . . . thanks

LEBRON JAMES *and* NBA REPORTER *have a seat*. JOE DiMAGGIO, TED WILLIAMS, *and* HANK GREENBERG *go to the center of the room*.

NARRATOR. It's hard to imagine athletes today being sent to war, but days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941), the United States officially declared war on Japan, Italy, and Germany. Young American men were drafted to fight. Would the celebrities of that day join up, too? In 1942, Joe DiMaggio registered to be a soldier. Let's hear about how the war was for him and two other Hall of Fame ballplayers who represented their country.

JOE DiMAGGIO. I have to admit, I didn't do a whole lot. I never was even a thousand miles from combat. I was stationed in California, Hawaii, and Atlantic City. I mostly worked as a P.E. instructor. I actually gained ten pounds. I tried to fight. I requested combat duty in 1943, but they turned me down.

TED WILLIAMS. Okay, hold up a minute. First off, this play should be about me. I was the better player. Joe was just more popular. The reporters didn't like me because they said I was surly and conceited.

JOE DiMAGGIO. It appears you haven't changed much.

TED WILLIAMS. I was the better soldier as well. I trained to be a pilot for the navy. Although I didn't fight in World War II, I was called up for the Korean War and flew thirty-nine combat missions. Also, does this class realize that it was me who won the Triple Crown in the same year they gave DiMaggio the Most Valuable Player award?

HANK GREENBERG. Now, now, you were both great. Better than me, but I did outlast you in the war. I had forty-five months of service, the longest of any baseball player.

JOE DiMAGGIO. You were a great player too, Hank. Two MVPs is nothing to sneeze at. And who knows how many more if you hadn't gone to war?

TED WILLIAMS. That's true for all of us.

Exit JOE DiMAGGIO, TED WILLIAMS, and HANK GREENBERG. Enter ROSALIA DiMAGGIO and GIUSEPPE DiMAGGIO.

NARRATOR. So it sounds like we still would have won the Battle of the Bulge without baseball player soldiers, but it was inspiring for Americans to see their sports heroes willing to join the action. Additionally, many gave up three years in their prime and their paychecks. Joe DiMaggio earned \$600 a year as a soldier, a significant downgrade from his \$43,000 a year baseball salary.

While the war raged in Europe, Asia, and Africa, there were challenges at home as well. The United States now had the biggest economy in the world and was expected to produce even more to provide materials for a world at war. But with many of the young men fighting in the war, these factories needed workers. An influx of women and African Americans from the South filled in. A very different domestic challenge concerned the fact that, being a country of immigrants, America was at war with countries from which many of its own people had come. This included Joe DiMaggio's parents.

GIUSEPPE DiMAGGIO, *very upset.* What?

ROSALIA DiMAGGIO. I heard it from the Spilotros.

GIUSEPPE DiMAGGIO. We can't go five miles from our house without a permit?

ROSALIA DiMAGGIO. And we'll need to carry photo ID at all times.

GIUSEPPE DiMAGGIO. How am I supposed to work?

ROSALIA DiMAGGIO. You can't. We'll need to apply to be citizens. The Spilotros said it shouldn't be a problem, but it might take a while.

GIUSEPPE DiMAGGIO. But I've been here for over forty years!

ROSALIA DiMAGGIO. It could be worse.

NARRATOR. And it could've been. Some U.S. residents of Italian and German heritage were sent to holding cells. Much worse, an estimated 110,000 Japanese Americans were sent to internment camps for years, many losing farms, other property, and jobs while they were gone.

Exit ROSALIA DiMAGGIO and GIUSEPPE DiMAGGIO. FDR and BASEBALL COMMISSIONER sit at the front of the room pretending to be on the phone.

NARRATOR. And baseball continued at home, although it looked very different.

FDR. I think we should keep baseball going.

BASEBALL COMMISSIONER. What message does that send to our troops?

FDR. That the Axis powers can't take away baseball.

BASEBALL COMMISSIONER. How is a family going to feel if they have a son risking his life in the war?

FDR. I don't think they'll see it that way. Sports are games, but they're also a distraction. And we could all use a healthy distraction.

BASEBALL COMMISSIONER. If you think so. But who's going to play?

FDR. Now that should be interesting . . .

NARRATOR. And it was. The wartime rosters included a one-armed player, a sixteen-year-old, and Frank Mancuso Jr., who, because of a paratrooper injury, couldn't look up, making catching pop-ups difficult. Even stranger, the Cubs made it to the World Series.

scene 5. War Ends

KID BORN IN 1970 and PARENT BORN IN 1946 *sit in chairs at the front of the room.*

NARRATOR. On September 2, 1945, Japan surrendered and World War II was over. America's role had been pivotal. An estimated 16 million Americans served, with over 400,000 soldiers giving up their lives, more than the numbers lost by the United Kingdom or France. Additionally, the Lend-Lease Act lent over \$50 billion worth of military support and food to the Allied powers. The returning soldiers came home to a booming economy and an increasing birth rate.

KID BORN IN 1970. You're a Baby Boomer, right?

PARENT BORN IN 1946. Yep.

KID BORN IN 1970. What does that mean exactly?

PARENT BORN IN 1946. A ton of babies were born right after World War II ended.

KID BORN IN 1970. Why?

PARENT BORN IN 1946. People didn't have many kids during the Depression or during World War II.

KID BORN IN 1970. Why not during the Depression?

PARENT BORN IN 1946. It was hard to support a family. But after World War II the U.S. economy became strong again.

KID BORN IN 1970. Why not during the war?

PARENT BORN IN 1946. Well, all the men were away at war.

KID BORN IN 1970. And?

PARENT BORN IN 1946. Well . . . let's talk about something else.

Exit KID BORN IN 1970 and PARENT BORN IN 1946. Enter BILL JAMES, TED WILLIAMS, PAUL SIMON, and JOE DiMAGGIO.

NARRATOR. Following the war, Joe DiMaggio rejoined the Yankees and quickly returned to form. In 1947 he won his third Most Valuable Player award and another World Series. In 1951, he won his Ninth World Series victory, but it was a down season for him. After his final game he told reporters . . .

JOE DiMAGGIO. When baseball is no longer fun, it's no longer a game. And so, I've played my last game of ball.

NARRATOR. So how good was Joe DiMaggio? Let's ask famous baseball writer Bill James.

BILL JAMES. Joe DiMaggio's numbers are very strong. Then you also have to take into account the fact that he missed out on three years of his prime because of the war.

TED WILLIAMS. But was he better than me?

BILL JAMES. Um, I hate to speak ill of a guy in his own play.

JOE DiMAGGIO. It's okay. I'm not insecure. (*He looks at Ted Williams.*) Like somebody I know.

BILL JAMES. Joe DiMaggio was clearly the better fielder and base runner.

TED WILLIAMS. But?

BILL JAMES. In my opinion, Ted Williams was better offensively, to the extent that I ranked him as the seventh best player ever and Joe DiMaggio the thirteenth.

TED WILLIAMS, *fist pumping*. Who's the man?

BILL JAMES. Still, thirteenth is amazing, and statistics don't capture everything that was great about Joe DiMaggio.

TED WILLIAMS, *shaking his head*. Come on.

BILL JAMES. He represented something special to this country.

JOE DiMAGGIO. It's true. I even had a song written about me. Sing it, Paul.

PAUL SIMON, *singing (feel free to be out of tune)*. Where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio, a nation turns its lonely eyes to you.

WHOLE CLASS, *singing*. Woo, woo, woo.

PAUL SIMON. What's that you say, Mrs. Robinson, Joltin' Joe has left and gone away.

WHOLE CLASS. Hey, hey, hey . . . Hey, hey, hey.

BILL JAMES. I heard you were upset about it at first.

JOE DiMAGGIO. I didn't get it. I felt like, I know it's 1968, but I was still around. But then I met Paul Simon and he explained it to me.

PAUL SIMON. It was about missing a star like him, a hero with grace and dignity. His fierce sense of privacy, that he kept and the country let him keep. A man who, when dying at eighty-four, chewed out his doctors for talking to the press. A man who married Marilyn Monroe . . .

JOE DiMAGGIO, *interrupting*. I'm not going to talk about that.

BILL JAMES. Of course not, Joe. And that's why we loved you.

GIUSEPPE DiMAGGIO, *yelling from his seat*. Imagine if he'd played boccie ball!

Everyone in the class stands up, pretends to swing a bat, and then cheers.

Name. _____

Date. _____

Joltin' Joe Questions

1. Why did many Americans not want to support Britain in World War II?
2. Why was Joe DiMaggio's streak so amazing?
3. What did Joe DiMaggio do during World War II?
4. What happened to Joe DiMaggio's parents during World War II?
5. Do you think America was right to keep playing baseball during World War II?
Why or why not?
6. Paul Simon missed having a superstar athlete whose privacy was respected and remained dignified. Do you think we should give athletes more privacy today?
7. List as many differences between World War I and World War II that you can think of.

Name. _____

Date. _____

1900–1950 Athlete Cereal Box

In the first half of the twentieth century, athletes grew in importance in this country. You get to pick an athlete, bring in a cereal box, and create an informative cereal box about that person.

FRONT: PICTURE SIDE

- The athlete's name
- A collage of pictures of the athlete
- At least one original picture drawn by you

BACK: INFORMATION SIDE

- Five fun facts about the athlete's life
- Four statistics that show the athlete's athletic prowess
- Three reasons the athlete is important
- Two quotes from or about the athlete and what you think those quotes mean
- One reason why you picked the athlete

ATHLETES

- | | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| • Jack Johnson | • Man o' War | • Satchel Paige |
| • Ty Cobb | • Joe Louis | • Ben Hogan |
| • Cy Young | • Babe Didrikson Zaharias | • Otto Graham |
| • Jim Thorpe | • Jesse Owens | • Jackie Robinson |
| • Walter Johnson | • Johnny Weissmuller | |
| • Babe Ruth | • Billy Gonsalves | |
| • Helen Wills | • Lillian Copeland | |
| • Lou Gehrig | • Josh Gibson | |
| • Jack Dempsey | • Ted Williams | |
| • Edith Cummings | • Don Budge | |

Name. _____

Date. _____

Joltin' Joe Vocabulary Activity

Write the letter of the definition in front of the vocabulary word. Use the context sentences (all from the play) for help.

- A. Taking possession of.
- B. Style of fighting named for the German word meaning "lightening war."
- C. The settlement after World War I that demanded major compensations from the Germans.
- D. A sport from Italy involving rolling balls on lawns.
- E. Enacted by Congress in 1941, it allowed the United States to support the Allied powers with military aid and other supplies.
- F. A German attack near the end of the war that caught the Allies by surprise.
- G. According to the Nazis, a non-Jewish Caucasian, especially someone who looks Nordic.
- H. A former country in Central Europe. In 1993 it split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

_____ **BOCCIE BALL**
Now **boccie ball**—that's a game.

_____ **CZECHOSLOVAKIA**
Congrats on annexing Austria and **Czechoslovakia**.

_____ **BLITZKRIEG**
All fell within five weeks. This was thanks to Germany's new style of fighting, known as **blitzkrieg**.

_____ **ANNEXING**
Congrats on **annexing** Austria and Czechoslovakia.

_____ **ARYAN**
A true **Aryan** is less about hair color and more about racial purity.

_____ **BATTLE OF THE BULGE**
So it sounds like we still would have won the **Battle of the Bulge** without baseball player soldiers.

_____ **TREATY OF VERSAILLES**
But also, I'm pretty bitter about the **Treaty of Versailles**.

_____ **LEND-LEASE ACT**
The **Lend-Lease Act** lent over \$50 billion worth of military support and food to the Allied powers.

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