



## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

### The Tenement Museum's *Your Story, Our Story* project turns students into historians.

Museums have always asked visitors to imagine the lives of objects in their historic collections. Now, the Tenement Museum invites students across the country to share their stories in a new online digital storytelling exhibit: *Your Story, Our Story*.

*Your Story, Our Story* highlights immigration and migration stories of the past and the present. Each story reveals one student's family experience. Collectively, the stories tell America's story and highlight the patterns that bind us together, no matter where we came from or how long we've been there.

This interdisciplinary project connects to English Language Arts, Social Studies, American and Global History, and technology curricula. Use the site to explore immigration and migration stories, have students publish their own stories, and create a classroom exhibit.

*"Our students felt they were truly able to make a difference through their stories. Students used their photo essays to give voice to the many immigrants in our communities who reside in New York City and this could not have been possible without the Museum's generous support."*

-Shahzia Pirani-Mellstrom, teacher at Brooklyn International High School

*Your Story, Our Story* gives students the opportunity to:

- Select an object that tells a family story and photograph it.
- Interview family to better understand their family's cultural identity.
- Write a personal essay.
- Learn about other cultures in their classroom community.
- See their work preserved in a digital museum exhibit.
- Explore the ways their personal history connects to larger historical trends.

*In this curriculum, you will find:*

- [Project Overview for Teachers](#)
- [Exploring the Exhibit](#) worksheet
- [Brainstorming Your Story](#) organizer
- [Sample Object Story](#) with story arc
- [Preparing your Story](#) worksheet
- [Writing Your Story](#) checklist
- [Instructions for Uploading](#) guide

A visit to the Tenement Museum is a great complement to this project.

Visit <http://www.tenement.org/groups.php> for more details.

### Create a Group Gallery

- Go to: <http://yourstory.tenement.org/for-educators/resources>
- Click “Start a Group Page”
- Complete all required fields, using ***Tips for Starting a Group***
- Give students link to group gallery to submit their stories.

### Explore the *Your Story Our Story* Exhibit

- Select a story from the site, or upload your own, to introduce the project.
- Invite students to explore the stories independently, in small groups, or as a class.
- Use our ***Exploring the Exhibit*** worksheet to structure student work.

### Story Brainstorm

- Assign students to brainstorm an object in class or as a take-home.
- Use our ***Object Brainstorm*** organizer to help students select a meaningful object.
- Review students’ selections to ensure the objects fit the project guidelines.
- You may choose to use the ***Sample Object Story*** to discuss or teach a story arc.

### Story Writing

- Distribute the ***Preparing Your Story*** worksheet to guide students’ prewriting.
- Students compose their object story using the preparation worksheets.
- Ask students to photograph or draw their object. *We require a photo of the object, but students can choose to include a photo of themselves, and a photo of a family member.*
- Students should create tags for their story, and choose a category for their object.
- Review the ***Writing Your Story*** checklist with students to ensure their story includes all the necessary components for inclusion in the exhibit.

### Story Uploading

- Visit [yourstory.tenement.org](http://yourstory.tenement.org) and click on ‘Add Your Story’
- Create a class tag for all of your students’ stories. *This tag will allow you to access an online gallery of all your students’ work. Tag format: TeacherName\_Year*
- For each student’s story, follow instructions on the screen, including photographs and tags. *Students can upload their own stories if internet access is available.*
- Refer to our ***Instructions for Uploading*** guide for a step-by-step process.
- Please note that accepting our Terms of Use will be part of the uploading process, after which the Museum will retain the rights to the images and story in the exhibit.

### Story Presentation (Optional Closure Activity)

- Students present their stories in class. *Presentations can take the form of a class exhibition and/or presentations for family members or other classes. You’ll be able to print stories directly from the site should you choose to make an exhibit.*
- Invite students to find connections between their stories and their classmates’, and consider how each of their family’s experience is part of American history.



## STARTING A GROUP GALLERY

A group gallery on Your Story, Our Story allows teachers and group leaders to create a Your Story, Our Story webpage for their participants to exhibit their stories and share with others. Group leaders edit and approve their group stories, and decide whether to publish them on the Your Story, Our Story website.

To start a group page, go to: [yourstory.tenement.org/groups/new](http://yourstory.tenement.org/groups/new)

**Multiple classes from one school should create separate group galleries.**

Before starting a group, you will need:

1. A group name (your school or organization)
2. A group tag (we recommend SchoolName\_TeacherYear)
3. A group image (logo or other representative image)

After completing a group form, it will be helpful to:

1. **Bookmark** the “secret” gallery link to access editing and approval (only you or a trusted colleague should access this link)
2. **Read** incoming stories for content and editing
3. **Decide** whether to approve your stories for publishing on the website (published stories are visible and searchable for all website visitors)
4. **Share** your group gallery with students, parents, and others to spread the word!

Tips for Editing Stories:

1. **Use** the “secret” link to access story editing functions.
2. **Review** all stories for spelling and grammar.
3. **Encourage** students to review a peer’s story or their own for editing.
4. **Require** students to meet story guidelines, and encourage students to rewrite until their story can be approved.



## EXPLORING THE EXHIBIT: HIGH SCHOOL

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Select and read 2-3 stories from the *Your Story, Our Story* website and answer the following questions:**

1. Compare and contrast two object stories. In what ways are they similar and/or different from each other?
2. What do the stories reveal about American identity?
3. What do the stories reveal about cultural identity?
4. In what ways do the objects connect to your own life?
5. How does personal history relate to American history?



## BRAINSTORMING YOUR STORY

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Once you've had a chance to explore the exhibit, complete the statements below to begin brainstorming your own object story:**

1. List any physical objects you can think of that:

A. Are important to your identity/culture:

B. Were passed down or given to you by relatives:

C. Are important on holidays or special occasions:

2. Use the space in the frame to brainstorm words or draw pictures that describe the object(s); what they look/feel like, why they're important to you, etc.



# SAMPLE OBJECT STORY

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Review this *Your Story, Our Story* submission from a high school student, which uses a narrative story arc (exposition, inciting incident/rising action, climax, falling action, resolution) to complete the object story:

## Sewing Machine



### **Exposition:**

Introduce the characters.

My mother gave up a big dream in order for her children to explore theirs in the land of opportunity. She was fortunate because children in Benin are either in fields working, or selling the goods in a big supermarket called Tokpa in Cotonou. After failing an exam, she was forced to seek an alternative interest to secure a good future. She loved cultural dresses and had pleasure learning to sew. With financial aid from her parents, she frequented an institution for seven years before receiving the diploma of clothing artisanship. Her love for that occupation grew as she bought her own shop and started training four apprentices. While in a relationship with my father, she was asked to reside in the United States. Days after landing in the United States, she looked for jobs based on her knowledge. Endeavoring her goal while not knowing English, she enrolled in night school. At her children's arrival, she realized that her night school wouldn't benefit them. Her presence at night was valuable to their strength of succeeding in school. She then focused on taking care of the family by cooking, doing the laundry, cleaning the house, learning English by reading books and being our therapist. She recently said "This cotton gin reminds me of the seven years of hard work." One part of her life that hasn't changed is her diligence in using that old sewing machine. My mother closed a massive door from her life and because of that my little door keeps getting bigger.

**Inciting Incident/Rising Action:** What happened to the characters?

### **Falling action:**

Why is this story important to share?

### **Resolution:**

How does the object represent you?

**Climax:** Why is the object the foundation of the story?

— Wilfried Assongba

**Tags:** mybihs, mother, 2010s, garment industry, Benin, education

[illegible]



## PREPARING YOUR STORY

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Once you have selected an object, begin the story writing process by answering these questions:**

1. What is your object called?

2. Which category does the object fit into (circle one)

Attire

Foodways

Fun

Miscellaneous

Religion

Work/Education

3. Describe the object. What is it made from? How is it used?

4. Where in the world did this object come from?

5. Who in your life gave you or told you about this object?

6. What special occasions, celebrations or holidays do you connect to this object?

7. Why is this object important to you?

8. How does this object connect you to your identity/culture?

9. Write a list of the tags (topics) that are related to this object story?





## WRITING YOUR STORY CHECKLIST

When you're ready to add YOUR STORY to the Tenement Museum's digital exhibit of American immigrant and migrant stories, please review this checklist to ensure that your submission meets the criteria for participation.

- ☐ You have the link provided by your teacher to submit your story.
- ☐ Your story is based on a physical object.
- ☐ Your story has a title that relates to the object.
- ☐ Your story fits into one of these categories: Attire, Foodways, Fun, Miscellaneous, Religion, Work/Education.
- ☐ You know the year your story takes place—guessing is okay.
- ☐ You have a photo of your object, or you have drawn a picture of your object.
- ☐ OPTIONAL: you have a photo of the family member(s) the object reminds you of, and/or a photo of yourself.
- ☐ Your story is based on immigration to the United States, migration within the United States and/or American identity.
- ☐ Your story is no more than 240 words.
- ☐ You have chosen tags (topics) related to your story.
- ☐ You have included the class tag assigned to you by your teacher.

Once you have met all of these requirements, you are ready to submit your object story. Thank you for your contribution to this important project!



# INSTRUCTIONS FOR UPLOADING

To begin uploading, go to the link provided by your teacher.

Select this link to begin

**YOUR STORY OUR STORY**

**YOUR STORY, OUR STORY**  
features objects that tell personal stories of American immigration and migration

[READ MORE +](#)

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**TENEMENT**

**HI THERE NYC SCHOOL!**  
10002

Manhattan, NYC. As part of our school's social studies curriculum, students submit stories to Your Story, Our Story.

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**YOUR STORY**

Help us tell a more complete story of American immigration and migration by contributing a family object story to the collection.

[ADD YOUR STORY +](#)

# ADD YOUR STORY TO NYC SCHOOL

1


2

What is your object called?

Select the closest match from six categories: Attire, Education/Work, Foodways, Fun, Religion, Miscellaneous

**TIP:** Your object doesn't need to be something in your possession, or something that's valuable! You can draw the object or think creatively to represent your story through an object.

3 Image of your object (max. 4). Author must have rights to all photos.


 Select a photo of object (required)

DRAG + DROP YOUR IMAGE TO THIS AREA

or

**BROWSE**

Describe photo, max 40 characters

 Select a photo of author (optional)

DRAG + DROP YOUR IMAGE TO THIS AREA

or

**BROWSE**

Describe photo, max 40 characters

Please include the following images, in this order:

- Photo or illustration of your object (required, this will be the main image for your story)
- Photo of someone central to your story (optional)
- Photo of you (optional)

5 Your Story (required)

**B** *I* ☰

Include people, places, and events to bring your story to life.

**Your story must be less than 1500 characters, including spaces (about 240 words).**

**Your story should include details related to the following questions (but is not limited to!):**

How does your object represent your family's cultural identity?

Where did your family members immigrate or migrate from, and where did they land?

Why is your family's story unique?

How does your family's story connect to other family stories you're familiar with?

**If you don't know details about your family's history, that's important too!**

**We want stories with questions, as well as answers.**

6 Tags (e.g. holiday, cooking, Italy) ▼

7 Places important to story (e.g. China, New York)

8 Year of immigration/migration

9 Relationship to im/migrant (required) ▼

Use your best guess if you don't know for sure.

**Search tag words and select the closest match.**

**Popular tags include:**

Subjects/themes ("homesick", "language")

Objects ("hijab")

Places ("China")

People ("grandfather")

Eras ("1920s")

Culture ("Catholic"), etc.

\*also check that your story includes the tag assigned by your teacher.

10

11

12

13 ☒ Accept Terms of Use

After you submit, your entry will be sent through our moderation process; once it's approved, you'll receive a confirmation email. **After that, it's officially part of our digital exhibit!**

**Thank you for sharing your story!**

Please write to [yourstory@tenement.org](mailto:yourstory@tenement.org) with any questions.

