



TADA! YOUTH THEATER

Janine Nina Trevens, Executive and Producing Artistic Director

Presents

COMMON GROUND

Books and Lyrics by Lisa Diana Shapiro

Music by Julia Jordan Kamanda

With Additional Music by Georgia Stitt

Director/Choreographer: Alex Sanchez

Music Director/Orchestrator: Emmanuel Vidales

Set Designer: Mengyi Liu

Lighting Designer: Steve O'Shea

Production Supervisor: Jeremiah Dude

Artwork by: Santiago Parra

TADA! Educational Resource Guide!

Show Recommended Ages 11+

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ABOUT TADA!

WHAT IS TADA! YOUTH THEATER?

TADA! Youth Theater's mission since 1984 has been to provide young people from different social, racial, economic, and cultural backgrounds with musical theater programs that inspire them to learn to be creative, and think differently through high-quality productions, positive youth development and education programs.

TADA!'s vision is that all young people grow up feeling successful, creative, confident, accepted, and accepting of themselves. Through learning the ability to express themselves, we believe that people can break down barriers of racism and inequality and create positive active citizens.

TADA! is a "non-profit" company, which means we rely on the generous donations of our supporters to support our vision. We abide by a set of regulations that all non-profit companies follow, like having an amazing Board of Directors that help support all of TADA!'s operations.

For over 39 years TADA! has provided opportunities for tens of thousands of New York City children, teens, and families to learn from, be enthralled by, and be inspired through the arts.

99+
Productions

184k+
Audience Members

1600k+
Educational Arts Programs

848+
Participants in Programs

ABOUT COMMON GROUND

WHAT IS COMMON GROUND ABOUT?

Common Ground begins with an ensemble of individuals introducing us to different eras of high immigration into the United States - the Irish in 1815, the Chinese in 1882, Jewish people in 1939, and so on. Together they beg the question: what is the American Dream? What is the American story? We slowly begin to meet our main characters and where they are from. We meet Sajita who is reminiscing of her home in Nepal, Marina and her younger sister Liliana who are beginning their journey from Honduras, Abdolaye who is being sent away from his war torn home in Abidjan, Ysabella who has dreams of becoming a star in NYC, and her brother Isai, who still feels conflicted about leaving Colombia. We also meet our NYC natives: Emma, a misfit high school student, and Lexi, a senior who has just received an internship at U.R.S.A. (United Rescue Support Association) to start an afterschool program to help immigrant students learn the English language and tutor them in their academic studies.

At school, Lexi hands out flyers for her English tutoring program and gives one to each of the immigrant students. In an interaction with Ysabella, she questions Lexi's motivations for starting the program while revealing her own - to become a popular social media influencer. Isai teases her for her perfectionism, while Ysabella remains firm in her resolve, and sees learning English as the next stepping stone to help her in her journey. Meanwhile, Marina and Liliana prepare to cross the border into Guatemala. Mariana reveals to another group of asylum seekers that she and Liliana are going to find their mother in NYC, who came to the US already.

Back at school, Emma struggles to maintain school friendships, but simultaneously believes that she will be able to rise above it by simply "not caring" and focusing on the future. Lexi prepares for the first session and meets Emma who is volunteering to help her. They begin to clean the messy storage room they were given and over their conversation realize that they do not see eye to eye on how to help the students adjust to life as a teenager in America and learn the English language. Emma believes that at the end of the day, fitting in has nothing to do with language and everything to do with personality. Abdoulaye and Sanjita arrive and Lexi and Emma begin to help them get settled in. As Ysabella and Isai arrive, a popular song, "Ping (the Baby Baby Baby song)" begins to play from Emma's phone. Ysabella teaches everyone the trending dance to the song and there seems to be a temporary collective bonding moment over this song. But soon after, Ysabella and Emma butt heads and an argument breaks out between them. Lexi attempts to end the fight. Uncomfortable, Abdoulaye and Sanjita leave. A frustrated Lexi yells at Emma while Ysabella and Isai make their exit.

As a new day begins, Mariana and Liliana cross the Mexican border. At school, Emma and Ysabella struggle under the mounting pressure of juggling social and academic life, feeling as if though the other is to blame for their problems. The following week back at the after school program, Lexi helps Sanjita and Abdoulaye through confusing English words, starting a list of words that are often confused. Ysabella and Isai return moments before Emma does and the two square off as Ysabella questions Emma's reason for returning. Emma begs Lexi to let her stay saying that she would even sit in a corner and just do crafts. This spurns a competition between Ysabella and Emma to see who can craft the tallest tower out of whatever is in their classroom. The competition happens and it looks like Emma has won, but before they can determine that, Isai storms in and destroys both towers. Ysabella berates him and he runs off. Emma and Ysabella bond over their anger towards Isai, as well as their desire to make various crafts (t-shirts for Ysabella and bracelets for Emma), but still maintain a degree of standoffishness towards each other.

Later, back in the classroom, Lexi excitedly reports that everyone has begun to bond over the crafting of a makeshift city, while also learning the English language. Emma and Ysabella grow closer and Ysabella reveals that she and her family first stayed with their Aunt, but had to move due to minimal space while she and her family wait for their visas to go through. The two join in a partnership as Emma says she will help Ysabella sell her t-shirts through her Etsy store.

Please note: while Common Ground is inspired by real events, portions of the plot has been fictionalized by the creators of the show.

ABOUT COMMON GROUND

WHAT IS COMMON GROUND ABOUT?

At the next session, Abdoulaye and Sanjita bond over the difficulty of assimilation, but discuss the possibility of college in their future. Lexi brings a celebratory cake for everyone for making it to the end of the winter quarter. Everyone agrees to wait until Ysabella and Isai arrive to dive into the cake, but Emma arrives with terrible news. Ysabella and Isai's family have been picked up by ICE and are being held in a detention center.

The top of Act 2 finds Ysabella separated from Isai and her parents in a detainment center with Marina and other girls who have also been picked up. The two discuss how they ended up where they are, and Marina tells the story of why she left her home to come to the US and on how she was separated from Liliana in Texas after they crossed the border. One of the other detainees tells Ysabella she can try and send Isai a message by leaving a note in the bathroom.

Back at the after school program, Emma, Lexi, Abdoulaye, and Sajita do what they can to help Ysabella and Isai. They decide that through social media, they might be able to cause enough of a stir to help them and hopefully organize a rally. They begin a social media campaign to raise awareness and have high hopes. But those are quickly dashed when no one shows up to their rally. Emma and Lexi talk about and realize how even though their social media post received thousands of likes, to commit to real life action is completely different.

In the detention center, Isai is finding it difficult to adjust especially without his phone and reminisces with the other detained boys over the fact that he told his father that things would be worse if they moved to NYC. This leads him to telling the other detainees about how he was mugged and his father decided it would be best to move. One of the other detainees gives him the note that Ysabella left for him in the bathroom. Together, Isai and the other boys talk about how life and video games seem to have a similar trend - no matter how many times you try to overcome something, there is always a new villain or challenge to knock you back down.

Between the detention center and school, everyone struggles with loneliness and feeling like there is no one actually out there standing with them. Emma shares with the after school club that she might have found a way to help Ysabella and her family. If there was a family with citizenship that could sponsor them, they might be able to be released. Together they realize that Ysabella and Isai's aunt, who they first stayed with, could be an ideal candidate to sponsor them - they have to find her first though. Emma suggests that the group looks through Ysabella's Instagram followers and send messages to see if anyone can help them find her aunt. Eventually they are able to locate her and send her the information about their detainment.

Together, the group waits impatiently, while also slowly continuing to assemble their craft city. Ysabella and Isai arrive and reveal that their aunt was able to get them out of detention, but their parents are going to be sent back to Colombia. They tell the story about how their father was accused of shoplifting, which is how the police was able to find out that their visas were expired.

Emma talks about the unfairness of the situation, sharing that she was caught shoplifting and that her only punishment was that she had to volunteer with the group Lexi started. This spurs an argument, with Ysabella saying she feels betrayed and that Emma was dishonest about her intentions from the beginning. As she is about to leave, she notices the signs they made for their failed rally. Sajita and Abdoulaye tell Ysabella about their social media campaign, the rally they tried to organize, and their efforts to track down her aunt. And their desire to do so because they are all friends. Saying that the American dream - the one they were promised - might be a lie, but if they stand together, there could be hope for a better future.

Please note: while Common Ground is inspired by real events, portions of the plot has been fictionalized by the creators of the show.

INTERVIEW

AN INTERVIEW WITH LISA DIANA SHAPIRO

I had the pleasure of sitting down with Lisa Diana Shapiro, the playwright and lyricist of Common Ground, and she told me the story of its origins and what the story means to her!

Lisa. Tell me the story of Common Ground. What inspired you to write it? What has this journey been like for you?

That's such a big question, I could spend the next four hours answering that question for you. The journey has been a roller coaster. It's been in development for seven years now. "Common Ground" was inspired by two summers I spent teaching for the International Rescue Committee's Refugee Youth Summer Academy. I was teaching filmmaking to a bunch of middle school and high school students with almost no English. And these kids were amazing. In 2017, Nina commissioned "Common Ground" as a one-hour children's show about immigrant kids who come to the U.S and take on the town, pursuing their dreams. In this version, workshopped in 2019, there was a very brief detention, but the character got out immediately and it was not the focus of the show. But at the time, so much was happening in the country around immigration. Our young actors at TADA! had questions about how we could write a show about immigrants without addressing the current events. Nina doubled down on her commitment to the show, re-commissioning it as a full-length show, and she allowed me to write a story reflecting what was really happening in the United States at that time. The characters, who are inspired by individuals I had interviewed and worked with, remained, but the story changed drastically and became what it is now.



*Playwright and lyricist,
Lisa Diana Shapiro*

I've heard that this show is inspired by real life experiences and people. What is it like seeing them come to life in the rehearsal room?

It's really exciting. The characters, in all these years that I've been living with them in my head, have now taken on a life of their own. The stories that these characters tell, the things they say about the places that they came from, their experiences, their journeys, how they came to the United States—all of that is inspired by interviews and came out of my work with these students. The central three immigrant characters—Ysabella, Sajita, and Abdoulaye —were inspired by three young people I worked with. They were my students the first summer that I taught at the IRC and later became my assistants. So I got to know them very well. I was able to do extensive interviews with them initially, and then later after the scope of the show changed, I was able to re-interview two of them. At that point, they were in their twenties. I was able to ask them questions that they hadn't had answers to originally, but as young adults they had new perspectives which were invaluable. I am very grateful to them for sharing their stories.

INTERVIEW

You are the Playwright and Lyricist on Common Ground. What does that mean?

The playwright, or book writer, is the person who creates the story of the show. People think of it as just the script and the dialogue, but it's really the story. The story always comes first. So I created the story, then I wrote all the dialogue and the lyrics to the songs. Because for me, the lyrics are an extension of the dialogue and I want the voices to be the same. I really enjoy writing both dialogue and lyrics.

What are your responsibilities now during the rehearsal process?

Rewrites! I sit in rehearsal and I listen. Particularly with this show because it's so contemporary and we have actors who are the same age as the characters in the show. I listen. And if a line doesn't work, I'm able to suggest changes to the director or ask the actors for their input. A big part of what I do as we go through this first production is rewrites on stage directions, characters, and scenes to make sure it's all there. Because sometimes it's in my head, but not on the page.

What challenges did you face in this experience?

I would say the most challenging thing about it was that I had to respond to current events. As most writers do, I write from a deep well of my own experience. It takes me a while to synthesize what I am feeling and turn it into something. In this case, I didn't have a lot of time, because I was writing about what was happening in the moment. After Nina re-commissioned the show as a full-length production, I knew that we had to follow those young people into the detention center. Normally I would go do the research. But at the time in 2019, you couldn't get into a detention center. Talking to people was tricky too - I would get in touch with someone and then schedule an interview and they wouldn't show up, because they weren't sure if it was safe. Ultimately it was a RYET mother who is an immigration lawyer who was able to put me in touch with a young lady who had been detained, who had come from Honduras to El Paso, then to New York. The story she told was absolutely harrowing. This 17-year-old was able to tell me in granular detail every single thing from the moment that she decided to leave her abusive father in Honduras to the moment she got to New York. And this story was so terrifying and so detailed, this story was so powerful that the scope of this show changed again because this story needed to be told too. Writing the show was a journey of having to discover what needed to be in it because of what was happening in our country.

One of the things I love about Common Ground is that we watch these teens grapple with these really heavy things - immigration, family problems, etc. - and we also watch them go through these very normal teenage experiences. Fitting in and making friends. Struggling to balance school and social life. Is there a moment you relate to from your own teenage experience?

You know it's funny, I have a really similar relationship with my best friend as Ysabella and Emma have. We hated each other on sight. Emma very much comes from a deep part of me. It's so painful - in a good way. She's trying so hard and she just doesn't fit in. She just is obnoxious and she just can't key into what it seems like every other kid already knows. All your friends are hip and cool and you're just not. Everything you do is wrong. And that is exactly how I felt in high school. Completely!

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INTERVIEW

AN INTERVIEW WITH JULIA JORDAN KAMANDA

I was so grateful to have the opportunity to speak with the composer of Common Ground, and RYET Alumni, Julia Jordan Kamanda. She told me about how her creative process and what it's like being back at TADA!



Composer Julia Jordan Kamanda

Julia! You are the composer behind the songs of Common Ground. Can you explain a little bit about what that means? What was your responsibility during the development phase of the production. What about now as the show is in rehearsal?

So my role on this project is to basically turn the text that was sent to me into music. Lisa wrote the lyrics for the songs with a certain kind of rhythm scheme in mind. She would send me the lyrics and we would have a meeting about what's happening in the scene. My job was to figure out how to use music to create the feeling of that moment. I would look at the vibe of the scene - a character starts off angry then they start to drift into wishfulness and then they come back to anger. So I would decide, for example, with anger, I should experiment with dissonant tones and notes that sound like they clash. And I would sing along and create melodies and music to go with these lyrics. It's kind of a long process, because we are a co-writing team. I always try to err on the side of where Lisa saw it first, because she's been working on this

project forever and she wrote the lyrics. Sometimes it doesn't always work and we had to go back and forth and back and forth. It's a long process, but it's really a fun part of putting together a show like this.

How has this project been different than other projects you've worked on? What have some of your challenges been?

This was definitely the longest project I've worked on. One of the challenging parts of it has been that, the story changes and then all these songs that you were super into no longer fit and then you have to figure it out like... well, there has to be a song. It was just this constant process of tossing out this and trying this. I think that one of the biggest challenges for me is that I'm not a visual musician, I'm an auditory musician. So I write based on the way I think I like the sound of things. And then later I go, "Oh shoot, I gotta get this on paper. Someone else has to actually play this." I have to psyche myself up. It's so weird, to this day, I can read music and I can teach, but writing it can be super intimidating. I write with a lot of triplets and syncopations and it would take me forever to get certain phrases down correctly, because I'd have to put it in and then play it and hear what I was looking at. And then be like, "Okay, that's too long. Okay, that's too short. Okay, that's almost long enough". But it's just that for 17 songs. Changing constantly. So that was the biggest challenge.

Is there a scene from Common Ground that really speaks to you? Or that you relate with on a personal level?

Something from my own childhood that really has sat with me is the relationship between Ysabella and Emma. And the fact that Ysabella's father was accused of shoplifting and that's how they ended up in the detention center. But Emma actually did shoplift and got away with a warning. Simply because of biases and stereotypes. And then the question of can Emma and Ysabella specifically ever really find common ground? I grew up in New York City, and people look at me and don't quite know what my background is

INTERVIEW

racially. So I've always been able to slip in and out of different groups. Like if I'm with *this* group, I look like that group. But I've always been able to have these deeper conversations with friends who I carry more privilege than they do because I just am lighter skinned. It's just a real thing. So this situation between those two girls, I've experienced that in friendships before, in one way or another from different angles as a teenager.

I'm sure it can be difficult to choose, but do you have a favorite musical number or scene from the show?

Why?

It's hard to answer that. It really is. "Superhero" breaks my heart every time. That song was the very first song that I wrote. I just sat down and wrote it. It felt like it already had a bit of a pattern. And it just breaks your heart and you cannot help but feel the story when you hear that song. So that one really goes deep. And I really really like that and I like that TADA! is going there. And that they're going to put something in the show that makes teenagers and tweens go like, "Oh...my heart." You know? I want the audience to cry. I really do. I want them to feel that, because if you don't feel it, it's not really happening. Like this is a real story and it's not just for our show. I think in this show, the audience can't leave complacent. They can't leave like, "Oh wow. That was good. Yeah, that was kinda heavy. But it's good." You want them to be like, "Oh my God. That one part, I cried. I can't even believe it. I didn't know..." I want it to be a conversation starter.

What is working with TADA! and the members of RYET like?

You have such a unique angle as someone who is an Alumni.

What is it like to be back at TADA! as an adult professional?

First of all it just feels so full circle and fantastic. I was really surprised, because like I said, I've done some work like this, but this is the biggest project I've done. So the fact that Nina believed that I could do this, was a testament to her knowing what I'm capable of. And that is how she's always treated me. She's always pushed me beyond what I thought I needed to do. TADA! demands professionalism regardless of your age. So I've operated at that level with creative work ever since. When she came to me asking about this, it was an intimidating request. But I knew how to operate at that creative level. And so I absolutely loved every minute of my time at TADA!. I was watching rehearsal the other weekend and I watched some of these scenes come together and some of the music and everything just came together. These kids are FANTASTIC. And they are just as professional as I remember. So it feels really full circle. I feel super honored to be in this role. I got to bring my daughter to rehearsal. Theater is her passion even more than it was mine when I was her age. She studies it and she loves it. She came and sat with me in rehearsal. It's just really cool for her to see it. Like we were sitting in the room and she was like, "Wait a second...you wrote this, mom!" And she was recording some of it on her phone. She's like, "Mom, it's really good." I was like "Oh my God. I'm making my daughter proud!" I have the cool mom status for the next couple weeks. At this point I'm just floating high as a balloon with this. So yeah, it's been amazing.



Julia during her time in the Resident Youth Ensemble of TADA!

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INTERVIEW

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALEX SANCHEZ

It was such an honor getting to speak with Alex Sanchez, the director of Common Ground and someone who is brand new to the TADA! family, early on in the rehearsal process. Here's what he had to say about joining the TADA! family and working on Common Ground.



Director Alex Sanchez

Alex - tell me about yourself! Who are you? How did you end up at TADA! directing Common Ground?

I'm Alex Sanchez. I'm originally from Chicago, where I trained and started my performing career, I moved to New York and began performing in Broadway shows. I was on Broadway for 13 years performing in 10 different shows. After my last show, I started to make my way into choreography, which led to directing, regionally and in New York. Recently working back on Broadway as the Musical Stager of Paradise Square, in 2022 and also choreographing at the Metropolitan Opera and Lincoln Center. When the new year came around, I saw this advertisement in LinkedIn about Common Ground and I was reading the article that was part of the job description of the show and I thought, "Oh. This is a really interesting topic." I put in my resume and a little blurb about myself. After that, I was contacted by Javier for an initial interview, a second interview with Nina and then a third

interview with Nina, Lisa and Javier. We talked more about the show. Nina and Lisa liked what I had to say, so she hired me to direct and that's how I became involved with Common Ground.

What has been your process and experience of directing Common Ground? How is it different from other shows you've worked on?

Well, the really cool thing about Common Ground is that it's a new piece. I really enjoy working on new pieces - uncharted stories. What I really dig about the story is that it's taken from the experience of the writer, Lisa Shapiro, as a teacher working with these immigrant kids. The first thing I did was to do a session with Lisa to find out more about these kids. Find out their quirks, personalities, and ambitions. Find out what it was that inspired her to write characters based on them. Lisa gave me so many wonderful tidbits of information that I actually shared in the rehearsal and could be more specific with these characters. So, the experience with Common Ground in the room is one of discovery. When we rehearse in the room, it generates a lot of inspired thoughts or generates questions that will get us deeper into the subject. I make sure that I have an environment that is safe, that is loving, and an environment where failures are good and accepted as a learning experience that is part of the discovery. Sometimes great moments happen based on mistakes or failures. Because there's nothing really set in stone, there's a lot to be discovered. What is interesting and great to me is that I'm literally working with actors who are acting their correct age. I'm not working with adults playing 15, 16, 17. So there's an authentic energy and mindset to that. When you see these actors playing their age, there's a grounded organic realism to it. This topic really needs that and we all need to be on the same page with the storytelling of Common Ground.

INTERVIEW

There are so many topics and themes that are addressed in *Common Ground*. Is there a something from the story that really speaks to you?

When I was reading the script, there's a scene in the second act when we see three of the characters we've fallen in love with, in the detention center. That to me was heartbreaking, even though it wasn't anything that I personally experienced. Being Puerto Rican, we are automatic citizens of the United States. We never have to deal with any sort of the immigration issues of crossing borders. Still, it was a heartbreak to see, because I have two daughters, 16 and 19 years old. I imagined myself thinking, "Oh my God, what if Puerto Rico was an independent country and I did find a way to sneak in, but my daughters were caught and sent to detention." It broke my heart to think that I would put them in harm's way where they would be detained in that manner. I mean, those detention centers looked sterile, cold and barren. They lacked any sort of compassion. It's something that I wish no child had to experience and the reality is that there are children that do experience that. So I think that moment in the show is the one that is really a trigger for me.

As a Puerto Rican man, why did you want to direct this show? What does the stories and messages of *Common Ground* mean to you? I've heard from some people that one can feel like an immigrant as a Puerto Rican - have you encountered that and why?

First of all, as a human being, I wanted to be a part of telling this story. It's important that people know about this. As a Puerto Rican kid growing up in Chicago, we were definitely segregated in our own neighborhood. Most of us were in the area of Chicago called Humboldt Park, which even today has a huge Latin community. There was always a sense that I was from someplace else. I don't know that a lot of people, oddly enough, recognize that Puerto Rico is part of the United States. I think that there were people who thought Puerto Rico is its own country, like Cuba or the Dominican Republic. There was always that feeling of being a second-class citizen, the feeling that we were a lower income class. It was always a subtext. It wasn't something that was expressed verbally, but you can sense it. You could sense it by the way that certain people treated you or talked to you. As I got older, I could see it a lot and recognize it with my other family members. Outside of our neighborhood, I could see the differences in the way that my family was being treated. I would see the disrespectful way my mother, aunt and uncle were being talked to and it really bothered me.

What is working with TADA! and the members of RYET like? How is it different from working with other companies or other youth performers?

I think that there's a really wonderful program and system in place for the kids. What I've noticed is that the system teaches professionalism, organization and how to troubleshoot issues that come up. They know when things are going to happen before it happens. They know how to stop an unfocused moment and help the kids get back on track. These kids learn how to behave professionally. I call it the TADA! Way. If it wasn't for that particular system, I don't know that I could have accomplished as much as I've done so far. *Common Ground* has twice the material they normally perform. It requires a lot of preparation and homework for the actors. TADA makes sure that the kids do their homework because of the short amount of rehearsal time we have. What's different about TADA from other youth institutions is that the expectations are higher with TADA. The actors of TADA act professionally. Even though each kid comes with different skill sets, they all have an enthusiasm and professionalism for the work. I appreciate that. I don't have to spend time teaching them how to do something because they already know how to do it. That's an advantage with TADA youth and the TADA way. I have not experienced that with other youth organizations.

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INTERVIEW

AN INTERVIEW WITH MENGYI LIU

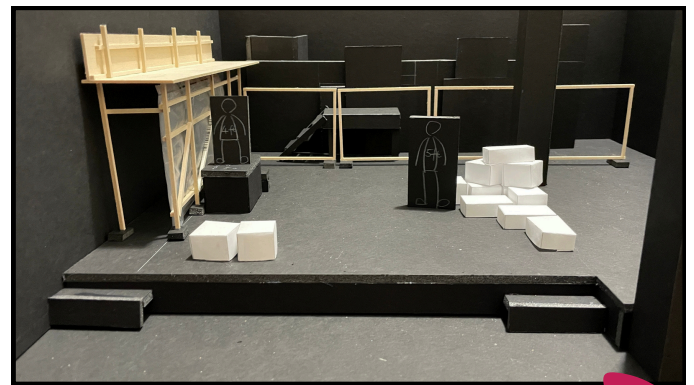
I was so happy that I was able to catch the scenic designer Mengyi Liu during her process of designing the set for Common Ground. We had a great chat about her process and what the story means to her, especially as an someone who has recently moved to the U.S. from China.

Mengyi! You are the scenic designer on this show. What does that mean? What is your responsibility with this production during its initial development phase? How do you overlap with other designers?

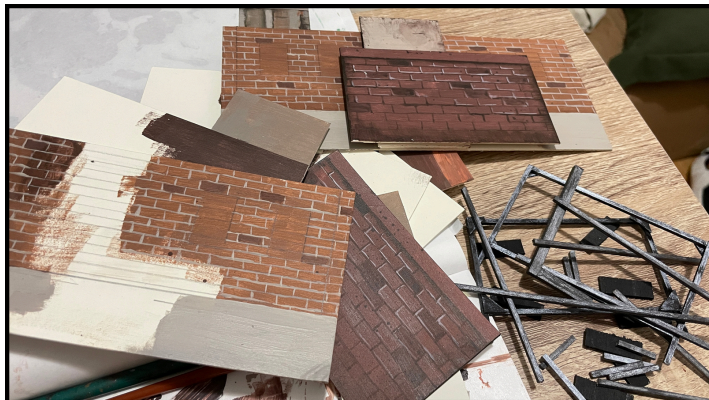
So being the scenic designer on a show means that we're gonna have a meeting with the director in the very beginning of the process and we're gonna have a big picture of how the show is looking. And scenic is basically the base of the other designs. We give a world for the other designers to create the story. Which can be really stressful. And as a scenic designer, we are not only making a set as the script is describing, we're also gonna have to interpret the story. We're gonna think about what this world looks like. What do we want to show? What do we want the audience to see in this world? So it's more than just a background, it's also a part of the story. And often when I have a sketch or a rough model of the set it is the point where I push this to the other departments. During tech, there's gonna be a lot of changes because everything is on stage. Performers, scenic, lighting...Everything! So together we're gonna figure out what works and what doesn't. It's gonna be a problem solving process.



Set Designer Mengyi Liu



Set models in progress that Mengyi built for the Common Ground artistic team.



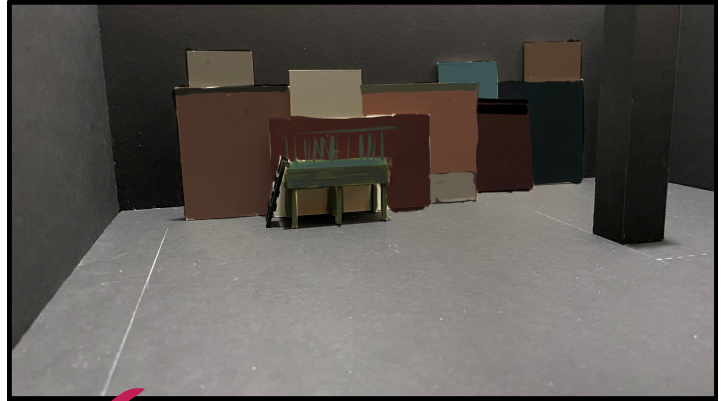
INTERVIEW

What is your process like for designing the set on a show?

I start with analyzing the script and then bringing some research images into a mood board. They can be anything. For example this show happens in New York, but that doesn't mean my research image have to be in New York. This show, to me, feels cold, but it also feels like there's a warm place in this cold world. So that is what I'm showing in my mood board. Then I'm gathering some details to determine what exactly we need. Like, Alex wants fences to be moved around to make different locations and Alex also asked for platforms because there's gonna be some scenes that don't happen in an actual location. So with that in mind, I'm gonna add in these elements into the picture that I already have. And then figuring out specifics - where are they, how tall are they, how wide are they. It's like basically building something in my mind.

Is there a moment or character that really speaks to you in this show?

I think the scene where Ysabella and Emma meet is a magic moment to me. Because they just met each other, they don't know much about each other and there's a lot of tension going on. And they're also kind of speaking different languages before that. And somehow when this song, Ping, starts playing - they start to dance together. And that is like...human beings are different, but there is something else there. That number to me feels like a common ground. And it reminds me of when I just went to school in Pittsburgh, which is the first time I went abroad. Started over at a new place, meeting new people and also speaking a language that I'm not so good at. I was so afraid that I'm different from other people. But then I realized that there's a lot of things that we share.



FLIP TO PAGE 14 TO HEAR MORE...

DEEPER DIVE

WHAT DOES COMMON GROUND MEAN TO YOU?

In each of my interviews, I was able to ask two questions that dive deeper into the heart of the story behind Common Ground. This is what they had to say...

A big topic in Common Ground is the idea of “Home.” What does Home mean to you in the individual sense, and in a communal sense?

LDS: Home to me is where your people are. Home is where the people that you love are, and are your community. I left my parents’ house at 18 and I never looked back. I lived in Chicago, I lived in Los Angeles, and now I live here. That to me is where home is. It’s part of the message of Common Ground. This little burgeoning community of friends is going to be a home for these kids going into their future. Home is not a place. To the young people that I interviewed, they lost their home, they had to leave. There are many reasons why these kids were uprooted, reasons that they didn’t understand – and they missed their home. One of the young people that I was able to interview a second time was the person who inspired the character of Sajita. When I first interviewed her, she was homesick for the beauty of Nepal and the people she left behind. When I interviewed her a couple of years later, in her twenties, she was able to articulate that she understood about the poverty she had been living in, which she hadn’t understood at the time. So although these young people missed their homes, every single one of them was focused on having an amazing future and taking advantage of all the resources available to them now.

JJK: So the first thing that pops into my head is actually what I’ve learned from my husband. Because my husband immigrated here from Sierra Leone when he was 13. There was a war and he and his family immigrated to the U.S. Then the war raged on for years and years and he didn’t go back for a really long time. And he always calls it home. I used to kind of be bothered by that, because I’d be like, we’ve built a home. We have kids. This is our home. He’s living here. Now he’s lived here more than he’s lived there. But that’s “home” for him. It’s not something I understand the way he does. It’s just part of how he references it. It’s really interesting how different people relate to home. I grew up in New York City. I don’t think of it as home though anymore. I think of it as like...stomping grounds? I think home for me now is where I choose to be with my family. Where I can make choices for our home and function at a daily level comfortably, if that makes sense. It’s very clinical, in my head. I think it changes. It evolves. I use the word stomping grounds, but it’s almost like a breeding ground. It’s the place that formed you. It’s the place that built you up and shaped you. And actually because my parents are divorced, I have two different places that would be as close to my “breeding ground” as possible. And they are completely opposite. One is NYC. And one is Sedona, Arizona. It’s the red rocks and hiking and mountain biking and being outside in 300 days of sunshine and the smell of the junipine. I found myself in each of those places in different ways. The two of them together is what made me. We’ve been to all these places, but my roots were formed there, but they’ve now stretched outward. It’s interesting to think about. Is the tree your home or is it the roots?

DEEPER DIVE

AS: In an individual sense it's the people that you surround yourself with. For me, my home is my wife and my two kids. That is something that I worked my whole life to build. And so, wherever we went - and we've been to a lot of different places - it would still feel like home because we were together. On a communal level, I think it's the people that you associate with in a very close way. For example, my wife and I finished doing *Chita Rivera, The Dancers Life* in 2006. It closed prematurely and we were very broken-hearted, and we just had our first daughter. We were both burned out, so we moved to California. We were working and teaching there for three years. However, it still didn't feel like home. It didn't feel like home because we didn't have our peeps. What I mean by our peeps is the New York theater community. We associate ourselves with New York and we've made deep rooted friendships in New York. They're almost like comrades - those of us who worked together, who audition together, who have trials and tribulations together. We felt a little bit isolated and disconnected, so we ended up moving back to New York. New York was our home because of the bonds, the relationships, the people that we wanted to be with.

ML: Well, that's a good question. Because I still don't feel like I have a home yet. By the US government's category I'm not even an immigrant. I'm a non-immigrant and I'm working with my artist visa. It's complicated. I think that is why I feel like home to me personally is still a place back in China where I was born and raised. For me, home is like a place where you are very familiar with the culture around you. But I'm trying to establish a home here. It's in process. I've met a lot of people that I really love in New York, since I've moved here. A lot of lovely lovely people. They've come into my life and we've become friends. I think that's where I'm starting to feel like home and why I feel related to *Common Ground*. Because these characters found each other and they care for each other, and it's not about where they are, but who they're with.

What do you hope someone takes away from *Common Ground*?

LDS: For one thing, I hope that everybody understands that these young people are our future. It's up to us to repair the world as well as we can, because we're passing it along to them and it's so damaged. And the similarities between us are greater than the differences. In this country that treats them so differently, Ysabella and Emma can still forge a friendship. The whole group stands together at the end of the show and they say, "It's not here yet. But we're going to build it." America was founded on these ideals that we haven't fulfilled yet. And we continue to not fulfill them, but we still strive for them. I hope that anybody who sees the show is inspired to do whatever little bit they can do to help make that future come true. And I want people to see characters on stage that maybe they think they don't have anything in common with, have a glimpse into their stories, and why people come to this country. There's not a lot of empathy in our country right now towards immigrants. Anything that I can do to open that door even half an inch in people's minds, that's what I want to do.

DEEPER DIVE

JJK: I hope that people take away the very real fact that everyone is living in a different America. We're all here in America, but everyone's experiencing an entirely different version of what this country is. Some people are experiencing the best of it and they've never seen anything beyond that. The dream and the vision of America really inspired the world to try to find that. It inspired the world and it still does. So there is the best of America. And I'm not jaded like some people are. I believe in the potential of this place. But I also know that America isn't what it says it is and so different people experience different things. I began to notice this where I live in 2020 with the election, George Floyd, and everything going on. Every neighbor had a different experience. Our America during that time was very different from their America. I'm hoping that this story opens the window as to how the different Americas can coexist. That people can acknowledge the reality of that. There is beauty in the promise of this place. It does still act like a beacon. The problem is it just doesn't function as what it says it does.

AS: A few things. One and the most important is that they come away with an awareness. That there is an issue out there with these kids being separated from their families. That there is support they can offer. Whether it's in a donation or a sponsorship. It's really tough being a kid, then you add being a kid detained and separated from your family. That has to be tough on them. How can we help? How can we make their lives better? So, I want the audience to feel empathy for the situation as well as hopeful. To me, the bottom line of Common Ground is hope. Hope for a better future. Hope that we can learn from our mistakes. That you can make an impact with little pockets of change even if you can't make a grand gesture, like the characters do.

ML: I think what I hope that the audience could take away from Common Ground is the communal environment this show creates. I think my earlier experience of communities is more like communities are established and based on cultures. But what I love, and I hope the audience can take away from Common Ground, is that community does not necessarily need to be established from similarities in a culture. It could be something that's more based in humanity. We don't need to be the same to have a community. We are the same and we can build something not necessarily rooted in a culture, but maybe more in our differences.

TELL ME MORE...

THE HISTORY OF IMMIGRATION IN THE US

The United States has been long considered a country founded on immigrants, but over the years, the views on immigration have varied. It is a long and complex history. Between 1783 and 2019, more than 86 million people have immigrated to the United States of America. Here are some highlights of the history of immigration into the US.

INTRODUCTION

When thinking about the history of immigration to America, where do you begin? 1587 when the first European colonials came and built a home on the island of Roanoke? When the first English immigrants, later known as Pilgrims, arrived at Plymouth in 1620 and would begin to form what would be known as the New England colonies. What about 1776 when the Declaration of Independence was signed and America became its own country? What about earlier than any of those time? Like way earlier. Like 30,000 BP (before present) when it is thought that the first Amerindian Natives crossed a land bridge from the continent of Asia into what is now known as the continent of North America. Native American Tribes filled what is now known as North America, long before groups of “Pilgrims” called this land “Home.” Before Christopher Colomgus made landfall in 1492, research has shown that there are estimates of pre-contact Americans living in North America, reaching between 112 and 8 million people. When talking about immigration to the US, it is almost impossible to pinpoint when, or where, to begin talking about this story. Not to mention, when taking into account individuals who both willingly, and unwillingly as slaves or indentured servants, were brought to the US, it can be difficult to determine exact numbers. But, for the sake of this article, we will try our best to explore the history of immigration in the United States of America, starting at its origins...

1700s

In 1776, political propagandist and writer Thomas Paine published his pamphlet “Common Sense,” in which he argues for American independence. “Europe, and not England, is the parent country of America. This new world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from every part of Europe.” By then, the stirrings of the Revolutionary War had already begun and would rage until 1783 when the English army finally surrendered at Yorktown, Virginia, and the United States of America had won it’s independence. In the year 1790 Congress passed its first law regarding U.S. citizenship. The Naturalization Act of 1790 stated that any white person of “good character,” who had been residing in the US for two years or more, could apply for citizenship. This did not apply to nonwhite residents, who would be effectively denied citizenship and any constitutional rights including the right to vote, own property, or to testify in court.



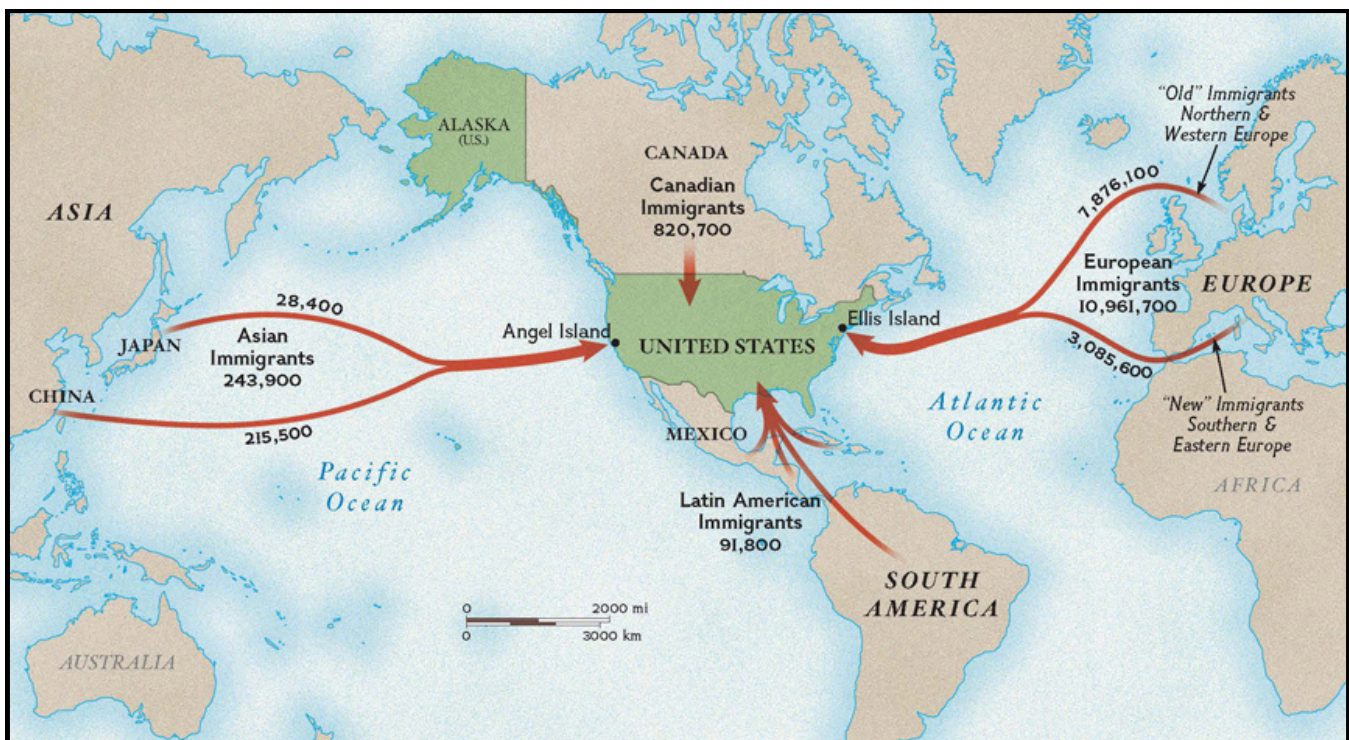
Surrender of Lord Cornwallis by John Trumbull

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THE HISTORY OF IMMIGRATION IN THE US

1800s

1815 saw the United States and Britain re-forming peace in the aftermath of the War of 1812. This kicks off a massive wave of immigration into the US that would last until the Civil War. From 1820 to 1860, nearly 1 million people immigrated from Ireland to the US for a variety of reasons - pursuing religious freedom, escaping the Great Famine of 1845-1852, or seeking better work opportunities. At the same time, nearly 5 million Germans move to the US and flock to the midwest to try and establish themselves in growing cities. This wave of immigration caused a shift in the country's dynamic. As a reaction to this, in 1849, America's first anti-immigration political party forms - the Know-Nothing Party. Also, the 1850s would see the start of a wave of Chinese individuals immigrating to the US. In 1882, the first piece of anti-immigration law in US history passes with the Chinese Exclusion Act. This law targeted Chinese individuals who had hoped to immigrate to the US for work from entering the country. This would begin a long steady flow of amendments and acts that would make it difficult for Chinese people to immigrate to the US, until the 1950s when the McCarran-Walter Act formally overturns any legislation regarding Chinese immigration. By the 1880s, the US was seeing an industrial boom, which came with technological advancements and a new wave of immigrants to the US coming from all over Europe. Between 1880 and 1920, more than 20 million immigrants would arrive and settle in major cities, many hoping to find work in the growing industrial workforce. In January of 1892, the first United States Immigration station opens in New York Harbor - Ellis Island. More than 12 million immigrants would pass through Ellis Island on their way to the United States before it closed in November 1954.



MAP BY NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

This map displays immigrations paths in the late 1800s as millions begin their journey to start a new life

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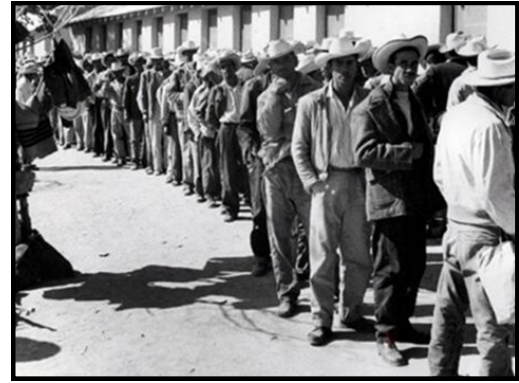
THE HISTORY OF IMMIGRATION IN THE US

1900s

In 1907 - immigration hits its first all time high, with 1.3 million people passing through Ellis Island alone. With America joining the efforts of World War I and an influx of immigration, xenophobia rages throughout the country. The Immigration Act of 1917 was passed and established a literacy requirement for immigrants hoping to enter the country, as well as continuing to make immigration from Asian countries difficult. A few years later, the Immigration Act of 1924 would pass and put a limit on the number of immigrants allowed into the US - the first national immigration quota in the nation's history. This new law heavily favored immigrants from Northern and Western European countries, and almost entirely excluded immigrants from Asia. The Great Depression, which began in 1929, would only add to the already growing number of restrictions. The 1930s would see a growing number of German immigrants, the majority of whom identified as Jewish, struggle to be granted visas into the US as they hoped to escape the growing tensions in Europe. WWII would cause a turning point as when the US joined the Allied Party in December 1941, the waiting list of over 300,000 visa applications were canceled by the State Department - leaving them stranded in Europe. Labor shortages due to the war causes the US and Mexico to form the Bracero Program in 1942, which allowed Mexican agricultural workers to enter the US on a temporary basis (which would last until 1964). In 1948, as the world scrambled to rebuild in the aftermath of WWII,



Families awaiting processing on Ellis Island



"Braceros" awaiting processing at the Rio Vista Reception Center, El Paso, Texas.

President Truman would pass the Displaced Persons Act which was geared to support the resettlement and relocation of the thousands of displaced European refugees. Despite offering aid to them, there were still strict limits placed on who would be granted visas, a lot of which were steeped in anti-semitic legislation, which President Truman would argue against throughout his presidency. The remainder of the 1900s would see a variety of immigration waves and legislation passed. In the mid 1950s the US would admit over 3 million refugees fleeing the Soviet Union during the Cold War. 1954, Ellis Island would process its last immigrant as President Truman announced its closure due to a variety of reasons including the expenses of up-keeping it, the dwindling number of immigrants actually in need of processing there, and stories of terrible conditions which were causing public outcry. In 1960-1962, approximately 14,000 unaccompanied children fled Fidel Castro's Cuba with assistance from the US. The Immigration and Nationality Act passes in 1965 and completely changes the legislative landscape immigration in the US. The Act overturns a lot of the national quotas from the 1920s that favored certain racial and ethnic groups over others. This system is replaced with a seven category system that puts an emphasis on family reunification and skilled immigrants. In 1986, President Ronald Reagan would sign the Simpson-Mazzoli Act, which would grant citizenship to over 3 million illegal immigrants living in the United States.

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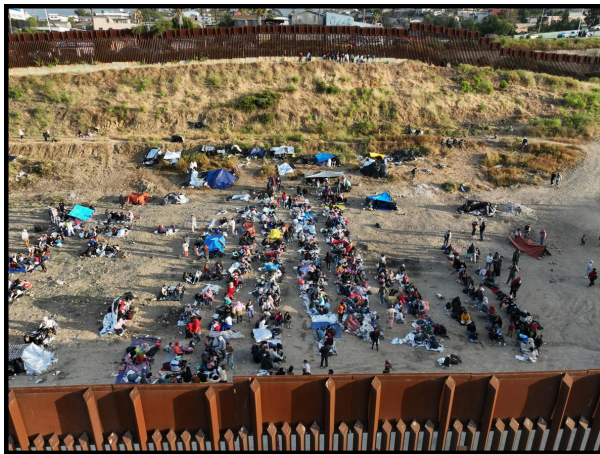
THE HISTORY OF IMMIGRATION IN THE US

2000 - 2024

In the year 2012, President Barack Obama would sign the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). This act would provide temporary protection from deportation to Dreamers, the term assigned to young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the US, often outside of their control. This act would be overturned by President Donald Trump in 2018, which meant that going forward, 800,000 young adults would become eligible for deportation. Also in 2017, President Trump issued two executive orders that was designed to restrict immigration from six predominantly Muslim countries (Chad, Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia) in addition to North Korea and Venezuela. Both of these travel bans were challenged in several state and federal courts.



President Obama and Vice President Biden meeting with Dreamers in May 2013.



At the overturning of Title 42, thousands of migrants and asylum seekers gathered at the southern U.S. border, hoping to gain entry.

In 2020, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Trump Administration would implement a new rule, commonly referred to as Title 42, which would allow for asylum seekers at the borders of the US to be turned away prior to pleading their case for asylum. Between March 2020 and May 2023, when Title 42 was formally overturned by the Biden Administration, this ruling was used to overturn nearly 3 million applications to enter the US. Since its inception, public health officials have agreed that Title 42 did not protect people from COVID-19. This ruling, paired with the Migrant Protection Protocols (unofficially named Remain in Mexico policy) which the Trump Administration established in 2019, has led to thousands of Latin American citizens who were fleeing violence in their native countries unable to obtain entry to the US. Upon the expiration of Title 42, the US immigration law has reverted back to Title 8, the previous conglomerate of federal laws dealing with immigration and nationality status. Many view this policy as a double edged sword, as it allows for quicker deportations, but also more asylum requests for those seeking to enter the US. This is the current presiding immigration legislation in the US.

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A BRIEF SNAPSHOT OF IMMIGRATION TODAY

At this point it goes without saying, the topic of Immigration is incredibly complex and surrounded with a lot of ever changing information. Here is some information regarding current terminology, the status of immigration policy in the United States of America, and a list of resources for those seeking immigration aid and additional information.

TERMINOLOGY

What is the difference between a Immigrant, a Migrant, a Refugee, and an Asylum Seeker? It is important to understand the differences in the ranging titles of individuals seeking to gain entry into the United States. They are often used interchangeably, but in reality, each term is very different and can provide deeper context to an individual's situation. Be sure to pay attention to the intention of each individual, as you will see, it is a crucial part of helping us define the status of someone entering a new country.

#1. Immigrant - Probably the most commonly used term for someone entering the United States, or any new country, for that matter. An immigrant is defined as someone who has made a conscious decision to leave their home country and move to a new one, with the intention of creating a new home there. There is often a long process for someone to emigrate from their country to a new country. These individuals often move with the intention of becoming permanent residents and overtime, become citizens of their new country of residence.

But what is a “nonimmigrant” you might ask. Nonimmigrant visas are issued out to individuals who wish to come to the US on a temporary basis, be it for school, work, tourism, or any other reasons!

#2. Migrant – Another very common term used to describe individuals seeking to enter a new country. Similar to “immigrants,” these individuals are deliberately choosing to enter a new country - oftentimes for reasons such as seeking better work opportunities or educational experiences. Migrants are not technically considered official citizens of the country they are residing in, and are often operating through temporary visas for work, education, extended vacations, or other reasons. By definition, a migrant might be seeking permanent residence, but have the ability to return to their country of origin.



Migrants walking along a highway in Arriaga, Chiapas a state in southern Mexico, on Monday, Jan. 8, 2024,

#3. Refugee - A refugee is defined as someone who has been essentially forced to flee their country of origin because of threat to their wellbeing, due to a variety of reasons including war and persecution. Oftentimes refugees are forced to relocate on short notice and without warning. They are unable to return to their native country due to a lack of safety. Official entities such as individual governments or the United Nations Refugee Agency help to govern an individual's status as a refugee by determining their claim based on “well-founded fear” of their home country’s status. People who are granted the refugee status are provided with protections under international law, conventions, and lifesaving measures from aid agencies. Refugees have the ability to become permanent residents and citizens in their new country if they choose to apply for citizenship.

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A BRIEF SNAPSHOT OF IMMIGRATION TODAY

#4. Asylum Seeker - An individual who is defined as an asylum seeker is similar to that of a refugee. They are people who are seeking protection and often fleeing violence and danger from their country of origin. However, “asylum seekers” have not been granted refugee status. They are applying for protection and refugee status at the country they are attempting to enter, usually at the border of said country. It is incredibly important to note - there is often discourse that describes individuals arriving at U.S. borders as “illegal immigrants.” But seeking asylum in a new country is not illegal. Especially in regards to the U.S. Every individual who comes to the U.S. border has the right to plead their case to be granted asylum and refugee status.

Green Cards Allotted Pursuant to Each Immigrant Category with Caps			
Category	Description of Category	Number	Share
Family	Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens (spouses, children under 21, and parents).	254,000 (but no numerical limit if surpassed)	37.5%
	Family-sponsored preference (unmarried children of U.S. citizens 21 and older; spouses and unmarried children under 21 of LPRs; married children of U.S. citizens; siblings of U.S. citizens and their families).	226,000	33.5%
Employment	Those coming to work for an employer in the United States or have invested enough money in the country to have created sufficient jobs.	140,000	21%
Diversity	Lottery system for nationals from countries that sent few immigrants to the U.S.	55,000	8%

Percentages and numbers of green cards allotted on an annual basis into the U.S. as per 1990 legislation.

with congress and set a number of refugees to be allowed entry to the United States through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. At the moment, with the expiration of Title 42 in May 2023, the current legislative governance on immigration is Title 8, which is a reference to a section of U.S. code that categorizes a group of federal laws. Where Title 42 included laws about “The Public Health And Welfare,” Title 8 has a number of laws surrounding “Aliens and Nationality.” The return to Title 8 saw significant policy changes to immigration law. Title 42 did not place criminal consequences on those who were expelled from the country and continued to attempt to cross the border. Under Title 8, individuals who are deported are banned from the U.S. for at least five years, and could face criminal charges and jail time if they reenter the U.S. unlawfully.

The Biden Administration has been incredibly active in immigration related policies and actions. As of January 2024, there had been 535 immigration actions taken by the Biden Administration, which already has surpassed the 472 executive actions taken during the entirety of the Trump Administration. This is somewhat to be expected as the Biden Administration was elected into office with ambitious and activist focused immigration plans. While they have found success in being able to provide protections to hundreds of thousands of migrants already in the United States, they have been criticized and struggle to manage growing problems at the borders. Especially as thousands of hopeful migrants and asylum seekers have flocked to borders in the south, north, west, and east.

CURRENT U.S. IMMIGRATION STATUS AND CULTURE - NATIONAL

The U.S. immigration system is built to operate on principles including: family reunification, economic contribution, refugee protection, and diversity promotion. The governing body of this being the Immigration and Nationality Act, which allows for individuals to obtain a permanent visa, which is capped at 675,000 annually – 480,000 for family-reunification visas and 140,000 for employment visas. This number is reflective of legislation that passed in 1990, which was originally intended to promote Western European migration, which was the group at the time with the least amount immigrants, but has over time become utilized by individuals from other nationalities. This cap does not include immediate relatives including spouses, parents, and children under 21, of which there is no limit of admissions. In addition to this, each year the president of the United States is required to consult

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A BRIEF SNAPSHOT OF IMMIGRATION TODAY

According to data from the Office of Homeland Security Statistics, since Biden took office in January 2021, the U.S. southern border has seen a record of nearly 6.3 million migrant encounters both at and between ports of entry. This has resulted in over 2.4 million migrants granted access into the country. One of the actions taken by the Biden Administration to help control the flow of individuals seeking entry to the U.S. is by instating the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol Mobile One app, where individuals have to schedule their arrival at a port of entry. Documents obtained by CBS showed that as of February 2024, a full year after people could start making appointments on the app, that migrants in Mexico have made more than 64.3 million requests. This number does not represent the number of individuals attempting to enter, as multiple requests can be made. But this number does present the increasingly high demand among migrants to enter the U.S. The documents showed that nearly 450,000 migrants have been allowed to enter the U.S. under this process. This is done in an attempt to control the flow of migrants and asylum seekers into the U.S., and not overwhelm entry ports and adjacent cities. Those not granted access into the U.S. are often left waiting - either for an opportunity to make an appointment or for a chance to enter and plea their case in a different city.



November 18, 2021 - Migrants coming to the U.S. border in Tapachula, Mexico



May 21, 2022 - U.S. Border patrol agent checks immigrants identification on the U.S. border

After the end of Title 42, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) saw a significant increase in removals and returns, totaling over 470,000 from May to December 2023, usually involving unauthorized border crossings. Returns to Mexico, including for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans, contributed to this surge. Upon being returned, most are left with very few options on how to proceed - cross and face potential criminal charges, or return to their country of origin. ICE's detention capacity also rose, with average daily detentions increasing from 23,000 to 28,000 from FY 2022 to FY 2023. However, operational challenges continue to cause problems, with ICE facing a growing docket of 6.2 million cases for non-detained migrants in FY 2023, which is up from 4.8 million in FY 2022. To address the influx of families at the border, which have to be processed differently than individuals attempting to cross the border, DHS established the Family Expedited Removal Management (FERM) program, but its impact has been limited due to resource constraints, with only around 1,600 families enrolled as of September.

To expedite work permits for recent arrivals, the administration has granted temporary statuses such as parole and Temporary Protected Status (TPS), accelerated processing, and extended validity periods for work permits for asylum seekers. Other programs providing temporary protection include Uniting for Ukraine and Operation Allies Welcome (now Operation Enduring Welcome) for Afghan refugees, along with deferred action programs for vulnerable populations awaiting visas. These initiatives have granted approximately 2.3 million people temporary statuses, contributing to a surge in asylum cases. However, these designations do not offer a path to permanent U.S. residence, leading many immigrants to pursue asylum.

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A BRIEF SNAPSHOT OF IMMIGRATION TODAY

NEW YORK CITY MIGRANT CRISIS

Starting in 2022, New York City began facing its own unprecedented migrant situation, that is shrouded in deep bureaucratic complexities. While migrants have come to NYC for centuries, this particular surge started around the time that Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas began to send busses of migrants and asylum seekers to major cities in the U.S., including NYC. As of March 2024, more than 180,000 migrants have come to NYC since spring of 2022, sometimes arriving in groups of thousands each week. Many came to NYC because at the time, the Right to Shelter act stated that the government had a legal obligation to provide a bed from anyone who asks. Many came because of the cultural symbol that NYC has become for migrants - a land of opportunity.

The city has been scrambling to figure out how to house and aid migrants arriving in New York City. It has created housing in emergency tent shelters, school gymnasiums, office buildings, hospitals, hotels. An idea was tossed around and seriously considered by Mayor Adams that migrants could be housed on cruise ships. Some groups are relocated to different counties within New York State, which has been met by scrutiny from state officials. In total, New York City has opened more than 214 locations including shelter sites and humanitarian relief centers for asylum seekers as of September 2023.

It has been estimated that the city will spend approximately \$5 billion this fiscal year trying to provide aid and shelter for the growing asylum seeking population. The Adams administration in recent months has openly discouraged migrants from coming to NYC, even going as far as to distribute flyers at southern borders saying that there would be “no guarantee” they would be able to receive shelter and that housing in NYC is very expensive. As of March 2024, after fierce legal negotiations, the Right to Shelter act saw significant legislative changes. Now with the new amendments, adult migrants ages 18-23 would have 60 days in the shelter system before they had to be moved out. There are a number of exceptions to this, with migrant families with children being excluded. But there still remains a still large population of migrants who will be affected by this change It has been estimated that the city will spend approximately \$5 billion this fiscal year trying to provide aid and shelter for the growing



A homeless shelter caseworker assists a migrant family who recently arrived in New York - New York Times

asylum seeking population. The Adams administration in recent months has openly discouraged migrants from coming to NYC, even going as far as to distribute flyers at southern borders saying that there would be “no guarantee” they would be able to receive shelter and that housing in NYC is very expensive. As of March 2024, after fierce legal negotiations, the Right to Shelter act saw significant legislative changes. Now with the new amendments, adult migrants ages 18-23 would have 60 days in the shelter system before they had to be moved out. There are a number of exceptions to this, with migrant families with children being excluded.

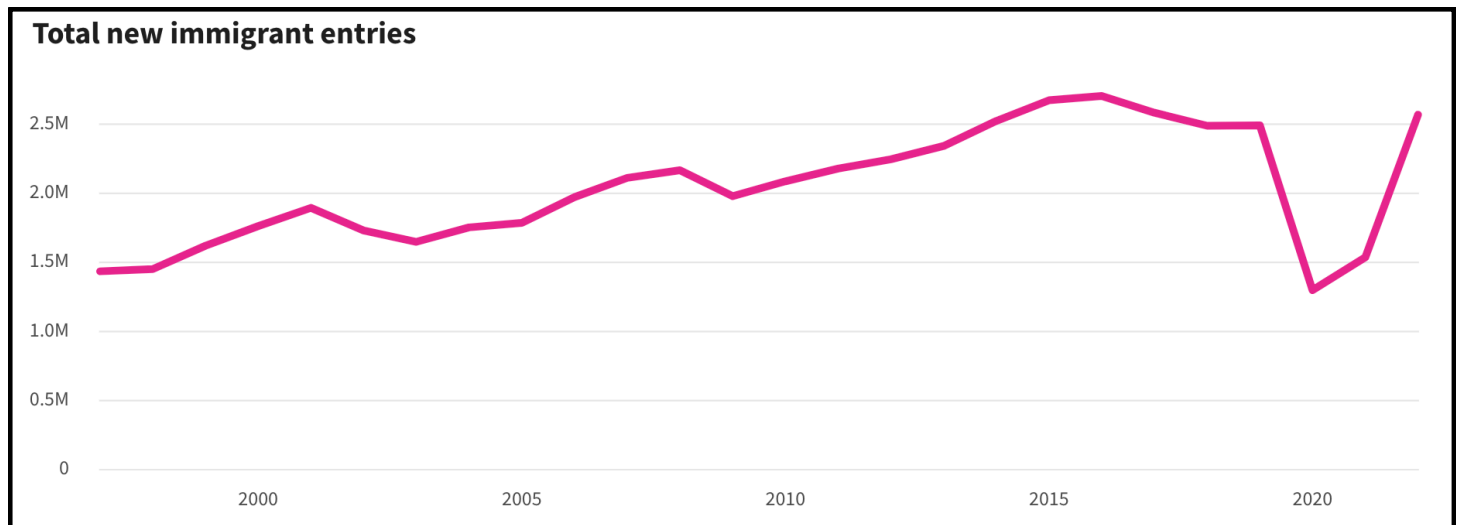
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A BRIEF SNAPSHOT OF IMMIGRATION TODAY

But there still remains a still large population of migrants who will be affected by this change. There is a growing strain on New York City officials as the number of applicants for asylum or immigration status increases. Many hope to achieve citizenship, but it is a difficult process that can sometimes take years to process. In the meantime, the number of migrants coming to NYC continues to grow and New York City officials continue to feel the mounting pressure of how to best aid them and service current residents.

CONCLUSION

Immigration continues to be a hot button issue that government leaders, both within the U.S. and internationally, continue to grapple with. Global factors including war, violence, human-rights abuses, natural disasters, economic crisis, and post-pandemic struggles continue to contribute to unprecedented numbers of immigration worldwide. Domestically, there is an ongoing debate regarding how things should be handled. Research released by the Pew Research Center following the 2024 State of the Union address shows that six-in-ten Americans (57%) say that dealing with immigration should be a priority for President Biden and Congress this year. Research also showed that eight-in-ten U.S. adults say that the federal government is doing a bad job of dealing with the growing number of migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border (45% even indicated that they think the government is doing a “very bad” job). U.S. laws and enforcement resources are widely regarded as being developed for a different era and not fit to deal with the current situation. In a government rife with disagreements on how to deal with it, passing legislation is very restricted. With an election year upon us, immigration will no doubt be a hot topic of discussion and continue to feed into an ever changing narrative.



A graph showing the total number of new immigrant entries into the U.S. as provided by the Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, and the Refugee Processing Center.

TELL ME MORE...

RESOURCES ON IMMIGRATION

The topic of immigration into the U.S. is a vast subject with a lot of information swirling around it. I hope the articles above did not make your head swim too much. Down below are some additional articles for those seeking additional information on the immigration situation with the U.S., as well as resources for migrants hoping to enter the country. There are plenty more available outside the boundaries of this resource guide, this was simply the tip of the iceberg I found during my research.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE IMMIGRATION SITUATION IN THE U.S.



The New York Times - "What to Know About the Migrant Crisis in New York City"



Pew Research Center - "Immigration and Migration"



Migration Policy Institute - Breakdown of Immigration Policy in the Biden Administration



American Immigration Council - "How the United States Immigration System Works"



International Rescue Center - "Migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants: What's the difference?"



International Rescue Center - "Is it legal to cross the U.S. border to seek asylum?"

TELL ME MORE...

RESOURCES ON IMMIGRATION

SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS IN THE U.S. RIGHT NOW



*International Rescue Committee
Additional information on how to
support migrants.*



*NYC Office of Asylum Seekers
Operations*



*NYC how to support Asylum
Seekers*



*Volunteer to support asylum
seekers in NYC right now*

RESOURCES FOR IMMIGRANTS



*NYC resources for asylum
seekers*



*Immigration Advocates
Network - "National
Immigration Legal Services
Directory"*



*Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project -
Immigration Lawyers by State*

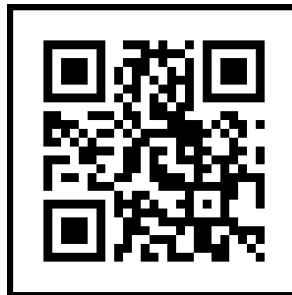


*Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project -
Other Help to Seek Out*

RESOURCES FOR IMMIGRANTS - UNACCOMPANIED MINORS



*Office of Refugee Resettlement
National Call Center*



KIND - Kids In Need of Defense



*ImportaMi - Resources to
empower unaccompanied
children in the U.S.*

TELL ME MORE...

RESOURCES ON IMMIGRATION

[NYC City Council Committee on Immigration](#)

The Committee on Immigration has jurisdiction over New York City matters affecting immigration, including the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. The following Council Members serve on this committee:

Alexa Avilés (Chair)

212-788-7372

District38@council.nyc.gov

Erik Bottcher

212-788-6979

District3@council.nyc.gov

Gale A. Brewer

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Shekar Krishnan

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District25@council.nyc.gov

Shahana Hanif

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District39@council.nyc.gov

Rita Joseph

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District40@council.nyc.gov

Contact these offices and ask about volunteer opportunities. Join their weekly newsletters and watch for updates. As legislation is passed, voice your concerns to them.

ACTIVITIES

STAGE DIRECTION GAME

Left is right and right is left?!? Stage directions in theater can be confusing, especially for someone new. Back in the day, stages used to be raked, or slanted, away from the audience. So when you were walking “Upstage,” you were literally walking up! And vice versa. Left and right on stage is always meant to be from the actors perspective as they face the audience... but what happens if they’re facing Upstage? It can be a lot! Don’t worry. This simple game will help anyone understand how to navigate the stage, even as a complete novice!

WHAT YOU NEED

- An open space
- The diagram on the following page that shows the different stage locations.
- Common Ground floor plan on the page after the stage direction diagram
- 1 Director
- A group of Actors
- Tape

HOW TO PLAY

1. Look at the diagram that shows where the different stage locations are. Decide where in your open space the “audience” will be.
2. Decide who is going to be the Director. This individual is going to be standing in the “Audience,” facing the “Stage.” Everyone who is not the Director will be an Actor.
3. Have the Actors start at Center Stage.
4. The Director will call out stage directions by saying “Everyone move to _____.” For example: “Everyone move to Stage Right” or “Go to Upstage Right.” Have everyone quickly move to where they believe that position is.
5. If anyone moves to the wrong location, show them where they should actually go.
6. Do this until everyone feels like they understand stage directions.

HOW TO MAKE IT MORE EXCITING

1. If you want to add a little more flavor: give your Actors some “character” directions. Instead of saying “Everyone move to Downstage Left,” say “Everyone walk like you’re super old to Downstage Left.” Or say something like “Walk like a dog to Upstage Right” and allow your actors to move accordingly.
2. If you want to play elimination style: have everyone move as quickly as they can to the location the Director calls out. If they move to the wrong location, or are the last person there, they are eliminated until the final Actor is standing!

MAKE A SET

1. Using tape and the Common Ground set plan, draw out and label different locations with your actors.
2. Now when calling out specific stage directions, use specific locations. Such as “Move to the scaffolding.” Try to encourage object permanence and remind the actors where certain walls might be.
3. Feel free to start adding in some of the more exciting components from steps 7 and 8!

ACTIVITIES

STAGE DIRECTION GAME - DIAGRAM

THE STAGE

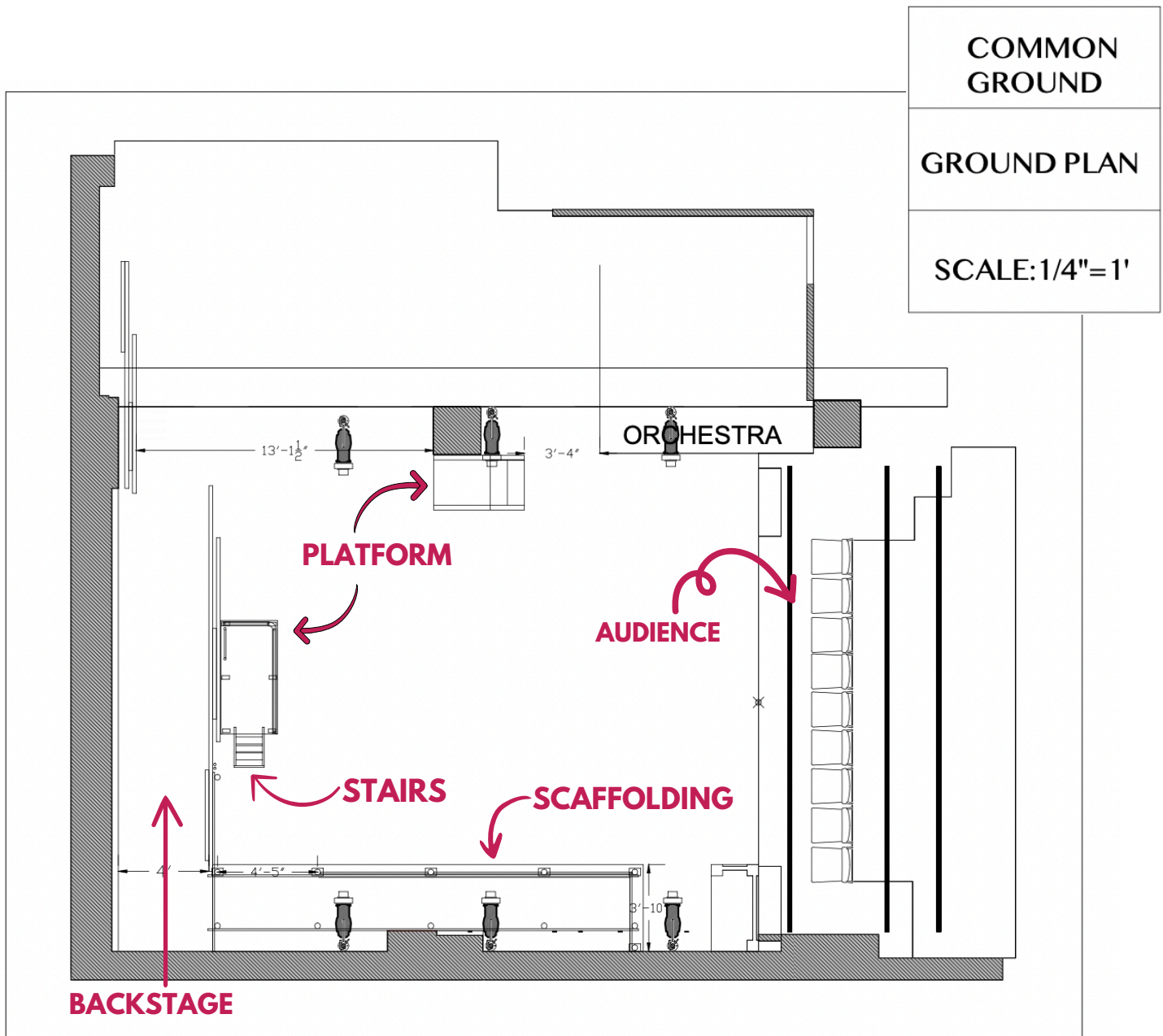
UPSTAGE RIGHT	UPSTAGE	UPSTAGE LEFT
STAGE RIGHT	CENTER STAGE	STAGE LEFT
DOWNSTAGE RIGHT	DOWNSTAGE	DOWNSTAGE LEFT



THE AUDIENCE

ACTIVITIES

STAGE DIRECTION GAME - FLOOR PLAN



Set Design: Mengyi Liu

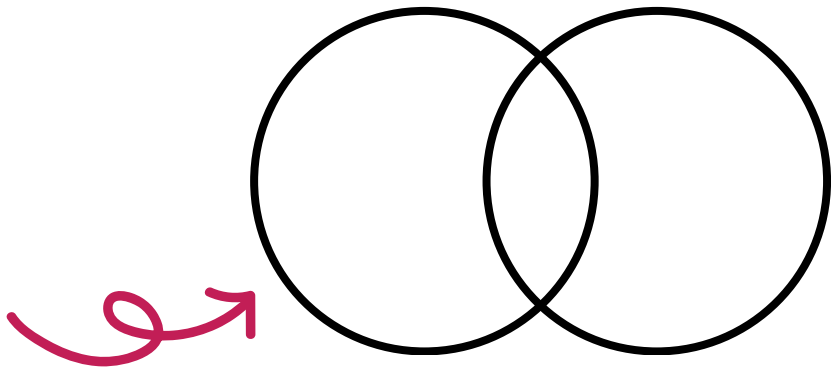
ACTIVITIES

FIND YOUR COMMON GROUND - VENN DIAGRAM

In Common Ground, characters come together in an after school club from all over the world. Each of the characters are vastly different, with things that make them unique. One of the things that makes Common Ground so special as a show is the audience gets to watch these characters come together and find their commonalities to form a community. They come together over their own Common Ground. How can we do that with the people around us?

WHAT YOU NEED

- Paper
- A writing device (pen, pencil, colorful marker, etc.)
- A group of participants.
- The Venn Diagram Example



HOW TO PLAY

1. Bring your group of participants together and split them into duos. If they're a group who is already familiar with each other, try to encourage them to partner with someone who they don't know as well. Have them set up their writing materials.
2. Take 2 minutes, and on a piece of paper have each participant write out as many things that they believe make them unique! Could be anything from fashion style to hobbies to fun facts about themselves.
3. On a new piece of paper, have each duo draw out the Venn diagram like the example above. Label each circle after one of the participants, and then label the center one "Common Ground."
4. Have each participant take turns filling up one circle about the facts about themselves that make them unique.
5. Take 2 minutes, and in the center section, have the duos talk and write about the things that they have in common. Maybe some of it is already written in their individual sections - that's okay! Add it to the middle.
6. As a group, discuss the idea of finding Common Ground. What surprised them? What did they learn about their partner? What did they learn about themselves?

ACTIVITIES

CONSTRUCT YOUR TOWER

One of the key moments in *Common Ground* is the face off in Act 1 between Emma and Ysabella, where they see who can construct the tallest structure out of the materials in the classroom they are in. It's a lot trickier than you might think. Do you think you can build one as tall as them? Let's find out!

WHAT YOU NEED

- A group of participants
- A competitive spirit
- Miscellaneous supplies! Whatever you have lying around or are able to get. This might include things like: glue, coffee sticks, construction paper, scissors, straws, duct tape, cups, cans, cards, bottles, sticky foods, clay/moldable dough, empty boxes...anything!

HOW TO PLAY

1. Determine the size of groups you want to play in. This can be done in pretty much any size: singles, duos, trios, or more!
2. Show all the groups the supplies you have gathered together. Tell them they'll have 30 seconds to gather as many of them as they want, but at the end of those 30 seconds, they will not be able to get any more supplies (if you want to be extra competitive, and are in an environment where this is allowed, tell them they are welcome to grab supplies from the surrounding area if they feel like something was left out). Explain that at the end of this, they will have 2 minutes - 120 seconds - to build the tallest structure that must stand up on it's own for 10 seconds.
3. Give them 60 seconds to strategize - either with themselves or their teams. Then give them 30 seconds to gather their supplies.
4. Set a timer for 2 minutes and let them build! If structures collapse (as they inevitably might), encourage them to start over and keep building. Remember. It just has to stand for 10 seconds!
5. At the end of the 2 minutes, have a countdown for 10 seconds. Encourage everyone to keep their hands up and away from their structures (especially their opponents - we don't want anyone pulling an Isai right?).
6. After the 10 seconds, measure which structure is the tallest and crown your winners!
7. Try again! Everyone can do the exact same teams and materials, or mix things up. Change teams or tell them they have to use new supplies and can't do any repeats! Whatever best fits the competitive spirit of your group of participants!

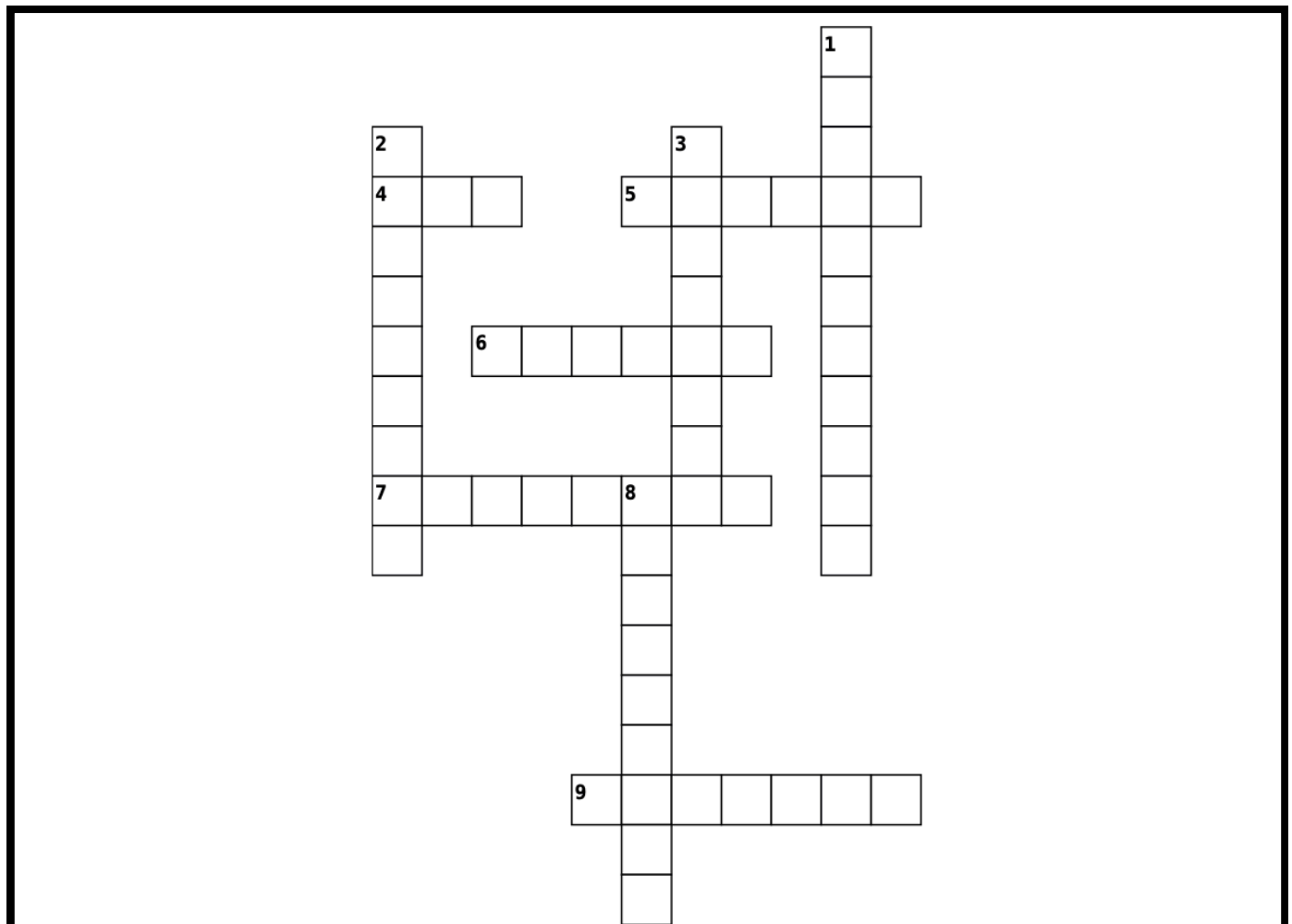
MAKE YOUR CITY

1. After the towers have been constructed, and if you have the space to do so, ask your participants: why stop there? Using the same crafts, see what other buildings you can assemble.
2. Discuss as a group what kind of buildings and structures you might need and why? Educational? Medical? Arts and cultural? Residential? There are a lot of things to consider!
3. Like the characters in *Common Ground*, work to build your ideal city. As pieces are added, encourage your participants why they feel adding that building should be added to make their ideal city.
4. Discuss why someone would want to come to your city and what makes it special!

GAMES

CROSSWORD

Can you solve the crossword by figuring out all the words related to *Common Ground*?



Across

- 4. – where Common Ground takes place, abbreviated
- 5. – horror monster of a reanimated body
- 6. – what someone might seek fleeing a violent country of origin
- 7. – act of campaigning or calling for a social change
- 9. – also the pound symbol, used on social media to track trends

Down

- 1. – NYC immigration port that opened in 1982 and closed 1954
- 2. – the social media platform that the teens use to find Ysabella's aunt
- 3. – Central American country where two sisters in Common Ground are from.
- 8. – the conscious decision to move to a new country

GAMES

MAP GAME

The Characters in Common Ground come from places all over the world. How closely were you paying attention? Are you able to draw lines to each character's home country or city?

LEXI

SAJITA

EMMA

ABDOULAYE



MARINA

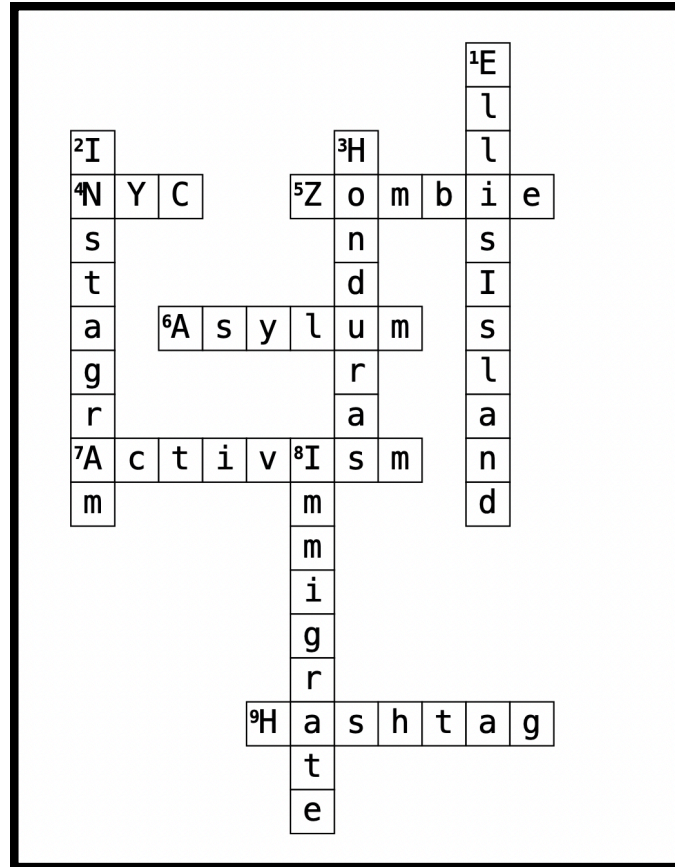
YSABELLA

LIANNA

ISAI

GAME ANSWERS

Were you able to solve the crossword puzzle?



Did you remember where each Common Ground character was from?

GLOSSARY

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Common Ground has a lot of words, phrases, or references that might be unfamiliar or entirely unknown to some people. Here is a list to help you out!

A.P. Class: Advanced Placement is a program in the United States and Canada created by the College Board. AP offers undergraduate college-level lessons and examinations to high school students. There are a wide range of academic studies.

Artist Visa: also known as the O1B visa, is a non-immigrant visa category for people with an extraordinary ability in the arts.

Boba Tea: a tea-based drink that originated in Taiwan in the early 1980s. Taiwanese immigrants brought it to the United States in the 1990s. Boba tea is made of tea, milk, water, sugar and tapioca pearls.

Citizen Journalism: the process of the general public gathers and spreads the analysis of news and information, nowadays usually through the internet and social media.

Dark Souls: a dark fantasy action role-playing video game series with three games available to play. It is well known for its difficulty and is known as one of the greatest video games ever.

Detention (as it pertains to immigration): the practice of holding individuals in government custody for immigration violations, such as illegal entry or visa overstay, during their removal proceedings.

DM: short for “direct message.” The means of sending messages directly to individuals through social media as opposed to posting on a public account.

“Everyone just tripped:” slang for everyone “freaked out.”



Boba Tea from Xing Fu Tang in Flushing, NY, which online news publication The Infatuation calls one of the best in NYC.

GLOSSARY

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Elder Scrolls: a series of fantasy action-role playing games. The series has a focus on free-form and open gameplay in the world of Tamriel.

Ellis Island: from 1892 to 1954, Ellis Island was America's largest and most active immigration station, where over 12 million immigrants were processed. It is now a museum that can be toured.



Ellis Island around the time it opened in 1892.



Ellis Island and Statue of Liberty Island today.

Emoji: a small image or icon, frequently used in text messages, that can be used to express an idea or emotion, usually in replacement or in tandem with words.

Etsy: an online marketplace where individuals have the ability to set up and sell their own crafts to people seeking to purchase. Goods include vintage, handmade, or custom-made jewelry, clothing, home décor, art, toys, and more.

Fortnite: a battle royale video game that was released in 2017. It features a player dropping into a map, either solo or with a squadron, along 99 other players. There are defensive and offensive items scattered throughout the map that can be collected. Last player or team standing wins the round.

Greta Thunberg: Greta Tintin Eleonora Ernman Thunberg is a Swedish environmental activist known for challenging world leaders to take immediate action for climate change mitigation. She is well known for founding the movement Fridays for Future aka School Strike for Climate in 2018.

GLOSSARY

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Hashtag: the hash or pound symbol #, that is used to precede a word or phrase on the internet to help group together similar topics of interest and facilitate searches.

Humanitarian: an individual who subscribes to an ideology that centers value on human life, and works to speak out against mistreatment of humans on any scale and try to provide aid that reduces human suffering.

I.C.E.: the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is a federal law enforcement agency. The stated mission of ICE is to protect the US from “the cross-border crime and illegal immigration that threaten national security and public safety.”



March on Washington, August 28, 1963, where Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his iconic 'I Have a Dream' speech

March / Rally (as it pertains to activism): an organized act where a group of people come together to show solidarity for social justice or other activities based subjects.

Mortal Enemy: a sworn opponent or antagonistic force that usually supersedes any other villain or entity in an individual's life.

Orcs: a race of evil humanoid, goblin like creatures that often serve as villains in fantasy based stories. They are best known from being in Lord of the Rings.

Paypal: an online payment system where users can transfer money digitally to other users.

Regents: In New York State, Regents Examinations are statewide standardized examinations in core high school subjects. Students are required to pass these exams to earn a Regents Diploma.

GLOSSARY

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Revolution: a quick and fundamental transformation of a society's state, class, ethnic or religious structures.

Shoplifting: the criminal action of stealing goods from a store while pretending to be a customer.

Slacktivism: the act of participating in a social justice movement (such as posting on social media or hanging a flag / sign), but without actually taking any real steps to effect change.

Sound of Music: a 1965 movie musical starring Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer (adapted from the 1959 Rodgers and Hammerstein II musical) about Maria, who becomes a governess for the Von Trapp family, ultimately bringing joy, music, and love into their lives amidst the backdrop of pre-World War II Austria.

Tinder: an online dating app where individuals swipe left or right on profiles if they are interested in pursuing them.

Tutoring: the act of being a private instructor, usually working with an individual or group around a certain subject or purpose.

Two Birds: usually associated with the phrase “killing two birds with one stone,” and means attempting to accomplish two or more things with a single act.

Visa: a visa is a conditional authorization granted by a government to a foreigner that allows them to enter, remain within, or leave its territory. There are many different types of visas.

Zombie: a mythological undead creature created through the reanimation of a corpse, usually by magical means. In modern popular culture, zombies are most commonly found in horror and fantasy genre works.

GLOSSARY

SPANISH TO ENGLISH

Some of the characters in Common Ground speak Spanish to each other. Did this confuse you at any point? Or were you able to gather the meaning of what was being said based on the context of the scene they were in? Regardless, here is a list of all the Spanish spoken lines in the show to help you out (in order of when they were spoken).

Spanish: Que idiota!

English: You're an idiot!

Spanish: Que grado te dieron Miss Perfecta?

English: What grade did Miss Perfection get on her test?

Spanish: Da me lo! No te metas!

English: Give it back! Don't get in my business!

Spanish: Que quieres?

English: What do you want?

Spanish: Da me lo!

English: Give me that!

Spanish: Y tu lo cres?

English: You believe that?

Spanish: Juego basketball los Lunas.

English: I play basketball on Mondays.

Spanish: No quiero hir a ningun programa after school son aburrido.

English: I don't want to go to some boring after school thing.

GLOSSARY

SPANISH TO ENGLISH

Spanish: Si, todo lo que tu quieres, son mas followers!

English: Yes, you do, all you want is more followers!

Spanish: La Perfecta! La Reina del YouTube!

English: Miss Perfection! Miss YouTube Queen!

Spanish: Estas lista para irnos?

English: You ready to go yet?

Spanish: No va a ser nada.

English: You're not gonna be anything.

Spanish: Los zombies llegan!

English: The zombies are here!

Spanish: Porque hiciste eso?

English: What'd you do that for?

Spanish: A ti no te interesa nada, pero a otros si! Pero siempre tienes que arruinar todo!

English: Just because you don't care about anything doesn't mean other people don't! But no, you always have to ruin everything!

Spanish: Por favor!

English: Please!

Spanish: Que es esto?

English: What is this?

THEATER TERMS

WHAT DOES THAT THEATER TERM MEAN?

The Theater Arts have so many terms and phrases that it can be so hard to keep track of them all! Here is a quick guide to help you out.

Actor: The individual(s) who inhabit the characters on stage! They are the ones who are performing for the audience.

Blocking: The instructions that the Director gives to the Actors on where to move on stage during their scene.

Book and Lyrics: the individual who writes out all of the scenes and the words for the musical numbers.



Three RYET members performing choreography in TADA!'s production of B.O.T.C.H. (2024)

“Break a leg”: theater slang for “good luck!”

Choreographer: The person who comes up with all of the dance moves for the musical numbers.

Choreography: the dance movements taught to the actors for musical numbers.

Composer: the individual who creates the music, tunes, or score for the show.

Costume: Anything that an actor wears on stage is referred to as a costume. The Wardrobe department provides clothes, shoes, hats, & any personal accessories such as umbrellas, purses & eyeglasses.

Designer: The people who work with the director to decide what the production will look like. There are several areas that need to have designers: costumes, set, lighting and sound. The designers work very closely with the director to create the environment,

Director: The individual responsible for envisioning the presentation of a show, collaborating with actors on their characters, creating the blocking, and overseeing rehearsals.

THEATER TERMS

House Manager: The person responsible for managing the theater auditorium and handling everything related to the audience.

House: A term used to describe the space where the audience sits.

Monologue: a long line of dialogue given by one actor.

Platform: In theater, a platform is a stationary, flat walking surface for actors to perform on. They are usually built and assembled in varying levels, which provides depth to the show as well as allows for different locations to be portrayed simultaneously on stage.

Props: A property or “prop” is anything that the audience sees that is not worn by an actor & is not a structural part of the set such as: food eaten during a play, dishes, briefcases, books, pens, telephones, curtains & anything else you can imagine.

Props Master: The person who buys items that will be used or adapted to become props. Props masters also purchase the raw material used to build props.

Props: A property or “prop” is anything that the audience sees that is not worn by an actor & is not a structural part of the set such as: food eaten during a play, dishes, briefcases, books, pens, telephones, curtains & anything else you can imagine.

Props Master: The person who buys items that will be used or adapted to become props. Props masters also purchase the raw material used to build props.

Score: another word for the music on the show.

Set: The physical elements and setting on stage that the actors inhabit when performing the show.

Stage Manager: The individual who oversees the entire production from the beginning of the performance to the end, managing everything both on and behind the stage.

Stage: Where the actors perform and all the action of the story happens.

Transition: The process of moving from one scene or set to the next. These can happen in blackouts (when the stage is dark) or seamlessly.



A RYET member holding several props in TADA!'s production of Everything About Camp (almost) (2023)

THEATER ETIQUETTE

WHAT IS GOING TO THE THEATER LIKE?

Going to see a live theater performance isn't quite like going to the movies. There's a couple of things you'll want to keep in mind to make the most of your experience at TADA!'s theater.

- 1. Be sure to arrive on time to the theater.** All of our performances of Common Ground. are at 7:00 PM on Thursday, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, or 2:00 PM on weekends. We've all seen someone do the awkward shuffle to their seats after the show has already started. Don't be that person!
- 2. Don't go into the theater until the "house opens."** In theater we call the audience the "house." The house doesn't open until all the cast and crew are done with all of their pre-show preparations. Until then, feel free to hang out in the lobby and get a snack! Once the House Manager says "the house is open," you can go find your seat.
- 3. When you're in the theater, be sure to listen to the ushers!** They can help you find where your seat is, and also have important information about where to go if there's ever an emergency. So be sure to be nice to them!
- 4. Snacks are for the lobby, not the theater!** Make sure you leave all juices, sodas, gum, crumbly chips, sticky desserts, and ALL messy foods in the lobby. Munching on a super loud snack or unwrapping a candy wrapper can be really disruptive for your audience neighbor. We also have to make sure that we keep the theater clean for the next show!
- 5. Turn off your cell phones.** Science has proven that there's no sound louder than someone's cell phone that goes off during the middle of a theater performance (it's true, no need to look it up). Don't disrupt the show, especially when it's so easy to prevent!
- 6. When the lights go dark, it's time to focus on the stage.** Before then, feel free to chat with your neighbor and the people around you (ask them what their favorite TADA! show is, or if it's their first one, talk about what you're most excited to see). But once the house lights (remember what the "house" is?) start to dim, it's time to quiet our voices and focus on the stage.
- 7. During the show - laugh, cry, applaud.** The actors love it! It lets them know what you're enjoying. Any reaction you have supports the performers on stage.
- 8. During the show - do not record or take photos of the performance.** This is strictly prohibited, and can be very distracting for actors and audience members alike.
- 9. After the show - be sure to be respectful of the space as you leave!** Pick up any trash or programs you brought in with you. If you see your favorite actor in the lobby, be sure to tell them how good they did.
- 10. Tell a friend about TADA!** Did you like the show? Then be sure to tell a friend about us and know that you are welcome back anytime. In fact, we hope to see you at our next show - *History Mystery* in Fall of 2024

THANKS FOR COMING!

WANT TO HELP TADA! YOUTH THEATER?

There are so many ways you can help TADA! Youth Theater. You can...

- Support us financially by donating online or with one of the ushers in the lobby.
- If you're able to volunteer your time during our shows or during one of our events, please feel free to reach out to us via email (info@tadatheater.com).
- TADA! has a long list of items we're always looking for, such as dance shoes, musical equipment, tech equipment, building supplies, and more!

If you want to help TADA! but aren't sure how you can, just reach out to us! We love to hear from folks who are looking to help out.



DONATE NOW!

ABOUT TADA!



STREAM "PING"

HOW TO SUPPORT

