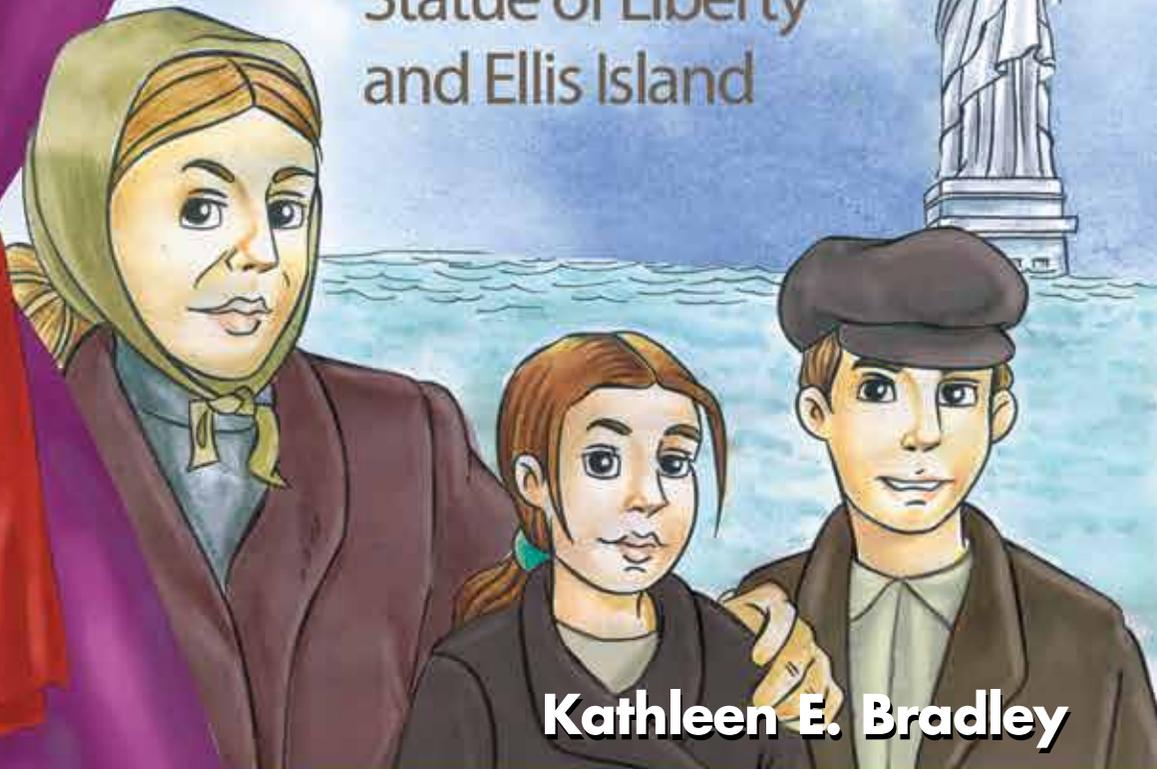


Building Fluency through Reader's Theater

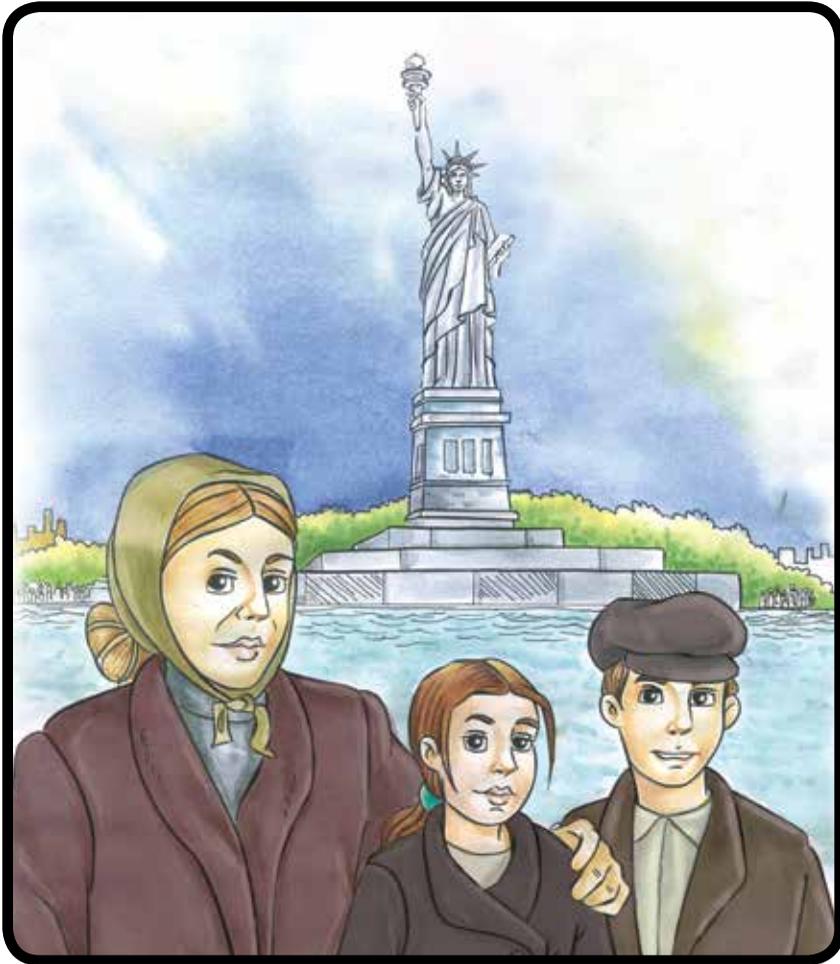
Coming to America

The Story of the
Statue of Liberty
and Ellis Island



Kathleen E. Bradley

Social Studies



Coming to America

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TIPS FOR REHEARSING READER'S THEATER

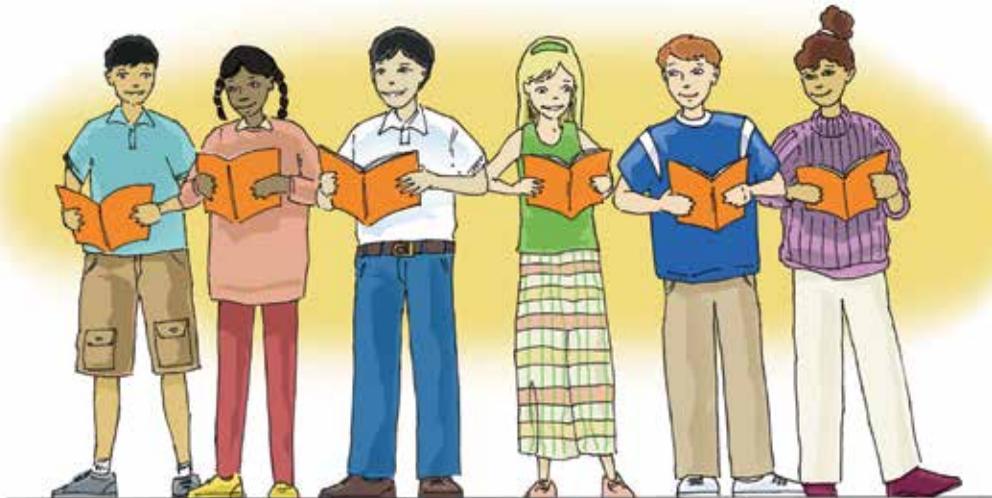
BY AARON SHEPARD

- Make sure your script doesn't hide your face. If there is anyone in the audience you can't see, your script is too high.
- While you speak, try to look up often. Don't just look at your script. When you do look at the script, move just your eyes and keep your head up.
- Talk slowly. Speak each syllable clearly.
- Talk loudly! You have to be heard by every person in the room.
- Talk with feeling. Your voice has to tell the story.
- Stand or sit up straight. Keep your hands and feet still if they're doing nothing useful.
- If you're moving around, face the audience as much as you can. When rehearsing, always think about where the audience will be.
- Characters, remember to be your character even when you're not speaking.
- Narrators, make sure you give the characters enough time for their actions.

TIPS FOR PERFORMING READER'S THEATER

BY AARON SHEPARD

- If the audience laughs, stop speaking until they can hear you again.
- If someone talks in the audience, don't pay attention.
- If someone walks into the room, don't look at him or her.
- If you make a mistake, pretend it was right.
- If you drop something, try to leave it where it is until the audience is looking somewhere else.
- If a reader forgets to read his or her part, see if you can read the part instead, make something up, or just skip over it. Don't whisper to the reader!
- If a reader falls down during the performance, pretend it didn't happen.



COMING TO AMERICA: THE STORY OF THE STATUE OF LIBERTY AND ELLIS ISLAND



Characters

Narrator

Captain

Sophia

Francis

Mama

Captain's Son

Setting

This reader's theater takes place in 1906 aboard a transport ferry, which is taking immigrants from a large ship to Ellis Island. This story is based on actual events.



Francis



**Captain's
Son**



Sophia



Mama

Act 1

Narrator:

A ferry sails through New York Harbor. The Statue of Liberty can be seen briefly through gaps in the morning fog.

Captain: Look closely now. There! Did you see her?

Narrator: Mama and Sophia gasp.

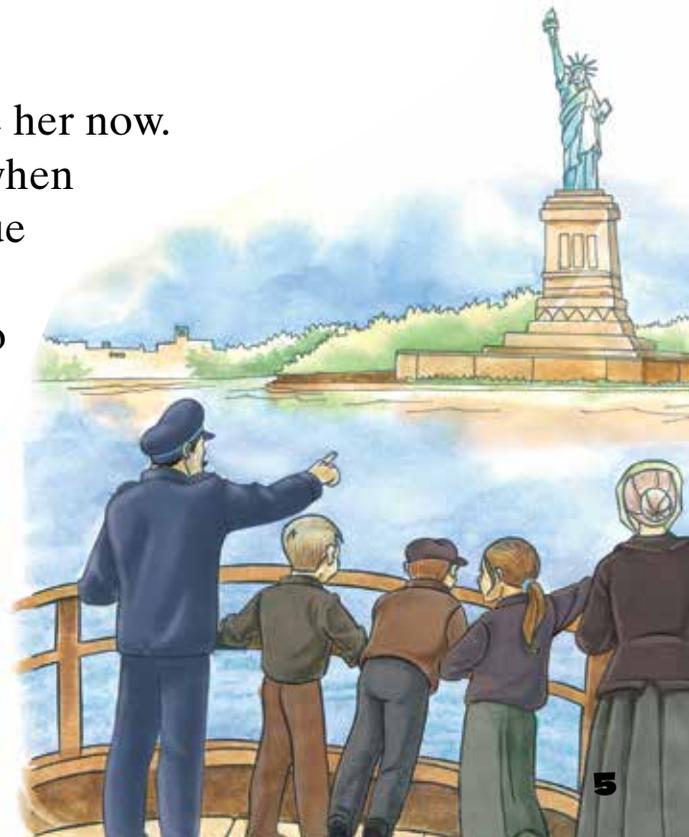
Sophia: Oh, Mama. She's beautiful—a princess! Did you see her crown?

Francis: I didn't see anything. What am I looking for?

Narrator: Mama doesn't turn to look at her son. She keeps her eyes looking forward. Her hands cover her mouth.

Captain: Hope. That's what you're looking for. And that's what your Mama sees.
Now don't take your eyes off . . . There!
Do you see?

Francis: Wow! Yes, I see her now.
Papa said that when
we see the Statue
of Liberty,
we've made it to
America.



- Narrator:** Mama pulls her children close. They giggle with joy.
- Mama:** That's true. It won't be long before we see Papa, too.
- Sophia:** I miss Papa. It's been so long. I want to be a whole family again—instead of in pieces.
- Captain:** The statue knows how that feels. Lady Liberty also came to America in pieces. She was packed up in wooden crates.
- Captain's Son:** Two hundred fourteen crates to be exact. She was brought here on a ship called the *Iseré*. My father saw it with his own eyes.

Act 2

- Mama:** Miss Liberty is a work of art. They say she was a gift from France.
- Captain:** That is true. I was but a young lad myself back in 1886. I was one of thousands who gathered to see the statue arrive aboard a grand white ship. French and American flags were waving from every hand.

Captain's Son: It took almost a year for America to build her pedestal. People donated money to help build it. Some of that money was tossed into the mortar when the pedestal was built. The coins can still be seen in it today!

Captain: Yes, she was a great effort by two countries. Nearly 600,000 rivets hold her copper sheeting together. It was the sweat of hundreds and money of thousands that placed her in New York Harbor.

Sophia: Francis and I read all about the Statue of Liberty on posters while we waited to board the ship in France.

Francis: There wasn't much else to do while we waited in the long lines. Everything about the statue means something. She's dressed in ancient Greek robes because Greece was the birthplace of democracy long ago.



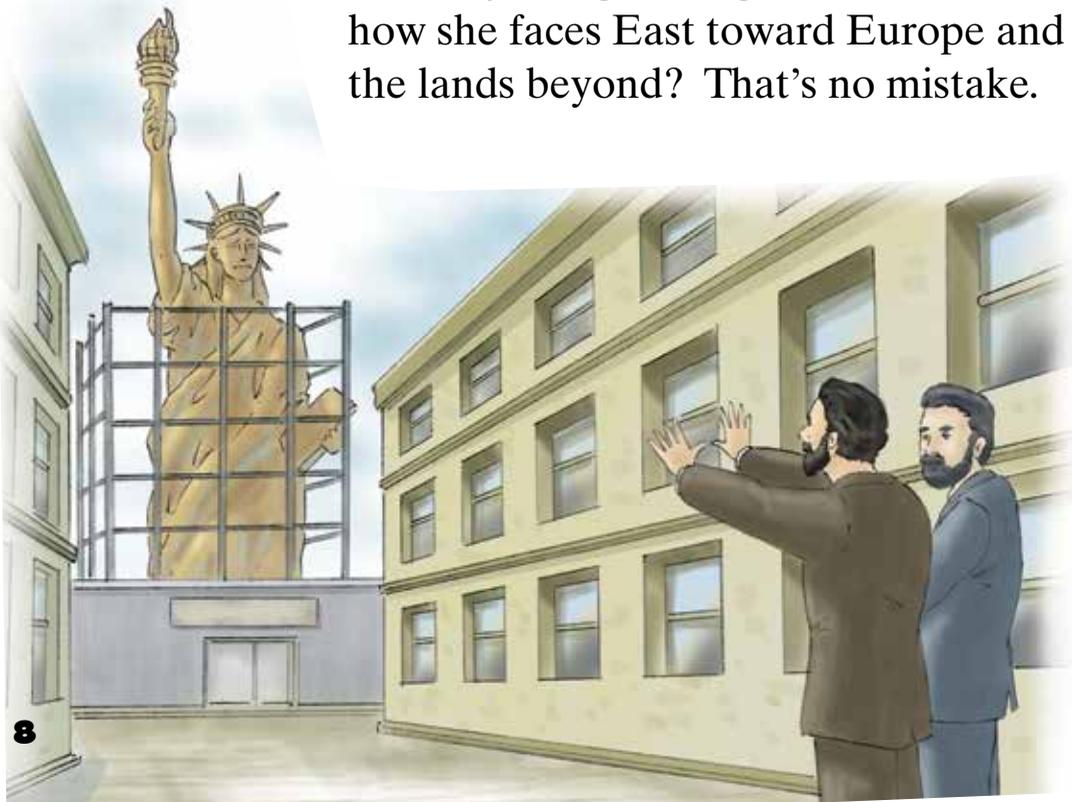
Sophia: The seven points on her crown stand for the seven continents and seven seas.

Francis: They say there's a length of broken chain at her feet showing that oppression won't be allowed in America.

Sophia: In America, there are no kings or czars—just people like Francis, Mama, and me. We don't have to be afraid anymore. We can do what we want, say what we want, and pray how we wish.

Act 3

Captain: Look at our Lady Liberty. Her real name is “Liberty Enlightening the World.” Notice how she faces East toward Europe and all the lands beyond? That's no mistake.



Francis: So her hope is that countries all around this world will someday enjoy freedom—like America?

Captain: Right you are, son. The French admired America's democracy, so they hired a French sculptor. His name was Auguste Bartholdi. They asked him to create a statue as a gift to America for her 100th birthday. It took ten years to complete the statue, but she was worth the wait.

Captain's Son: Father, don't forget Gustave Eiffel. He designed the iron framework inside the statue so that she would stand strong for a long, long time. I want to be just like Mr. Eiffel when I grow up.

Captain: You will, Son. Each of our dreams can be different in America. My dream is to sail this ferry each day.

Captain's Son: My dream is to build an iron bridge across this harbor. Father, I will build it tall enough so that you will be able to ferry under it.



**Song: America Is Going
To Be My Home**

Act 4

Sophia: Papa came here a year ago. He went to work with his brother. My uncle owns a bakery.

Francis: Papa says there are lines of customers waiting every morning before they even open the doors.

Narrator: The captain smiles at Mama.

Captain: Is that so? Well, that's what America is all about. It is the land of opportunity.

Francis: Papa says we will all need to work. I'm 12, almost 13—so I'll do the heavy work. Mama will bake. Sophia will probably just eat the cakes!



- Sophia:** Stop teasing me, Francis! Papa says I must work at the bakery, too. I will ice the cakes. Then, I'll eat them!
- Mama:** To think there will be eggs, milk, and butter—every day.
- Captain:** Imagine that and more. Each American's imagination is just one half of his or her ticket to opportunity.
- Francis:** What do you mean?
- Captain's Son:** If you can imagine something, then it is a possibility.
- Captain:** As long as . . .
- Captain's Son:** You nurture your dream with plenty of hard work.
- Narrator:** The captain winks at his son.
- Sophia:** Mama, does that mean that I can become a seamstress one day?
- Mama:** Maybe so, Sophia. Maybe so.

Sophia: I'll make the most beautiful dresses!

Francis: And I'll become a jeweler. Mama, with Sophia's dresses and my jewels, you'll look like a queen.

Narrator: Mama blushes and looks at her woolen coat and knitted scarf.

Mama: I think the jewels and dresses can wait. Besides, I'm not sure your Papa would recognize me in jewels and fine dresses.

Sophia: Papa says he will meet us once we clear through Ellis Island. Will it be long now, Captain?



Captain: Ellis Island is right behind Liberty Island. There it is now—Ellis Island, “The Golden Door.”

Captain’s Son: Some people call it the “Island of Tears.”

Act 5

Francis: Why do some people call Ellis Island the “Island of Tears”?

Captain’s Son: Because of the questions. Not everyone gives the right answers. If they don’t, they are not allowed to pass through. Some of the questions can be confusing.

Narrator: Francis bites his lower lip.

Francis: Mama doesn’t read or write as well as Sophia and I. What if she can’t answer the questions?

Captain’s Son: You must stay close to your mama and help her.

Francis: My papa makes me worry. He says because I’m 12, I could be sent back to my country alone if I fail to answer the questions.

Sophia: They won’t send Francis back, will they?

Captain:

You and your family will do fine. You are all healthy. That is what matters most to the officials. The sick ones are often turned away and sent back to their countries—heartbroken.

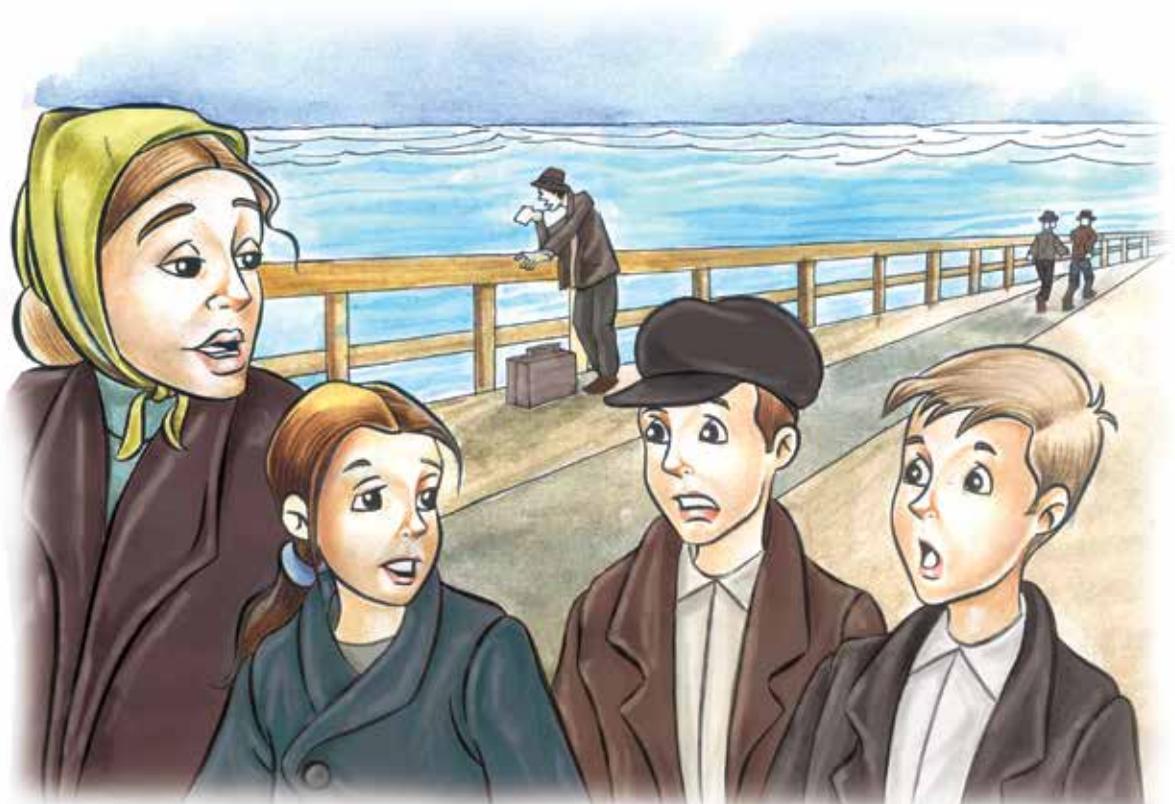
Narrator:

The sound of a man coughing can be heard in the distance.

Captain's Son: Do you see that man over there? If he has a serious disease, he could make more people sick.

Captain:

He will be spotted quickly and tagged. He is sure to be sent back.



Francis: Do you know the questions they will ask us on Ellis Island?

Captain's Son: The questions are simple. What is your name?

Francis: My name is Francis.

Captain's Son: Do you have family meeting you?

Sophia: Yes, my papa!

Mama: Hush, Sophia! Let Francis do the speaking.

Francis: My father, Samuel, will be meeting us.

Captain's Son: Who paid for your passage to America?

Francis: My father paid nine dollars for each of us. He saved for over a year.

Captain's Son: Do you have any money with you?

Narrator: Francis turns to his mother. He bites his lip. She nods to her son.

Mama: Yes, we have a modest amount.

Sophia: Sewn into the hem of our coats!

Mama: Sophia! Shush!

Captain's Son: Where will you stay in America?

Francis: We will stay with my uncle's family in their home above the bakery.

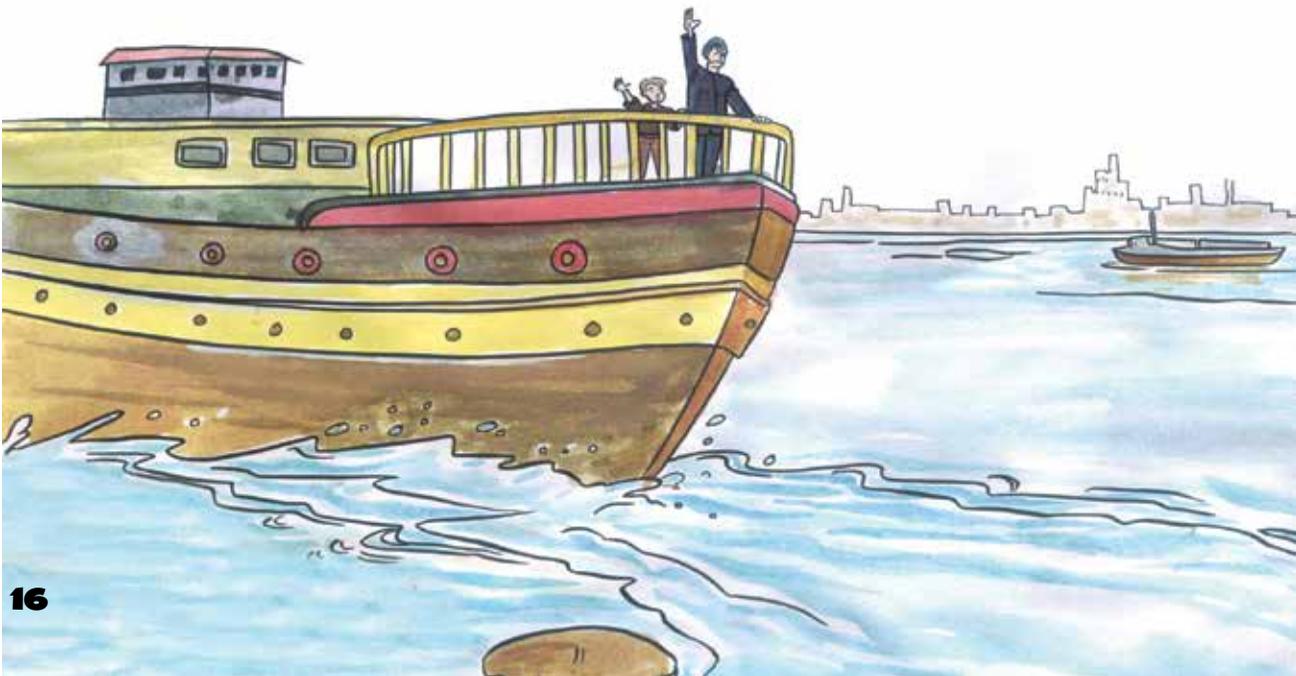
Captain's Son: Do you have a job?

Narrator: Francis looks at his mother and smiles.

Francis: Yes! We will work at my uncle's bakery.

Mama: Francis, don't worry. We can answer all those questions. We will pass the test.

Poem: Passing the Test



Act 6

Narrator: The captain docks the ferry at Ellis Island.

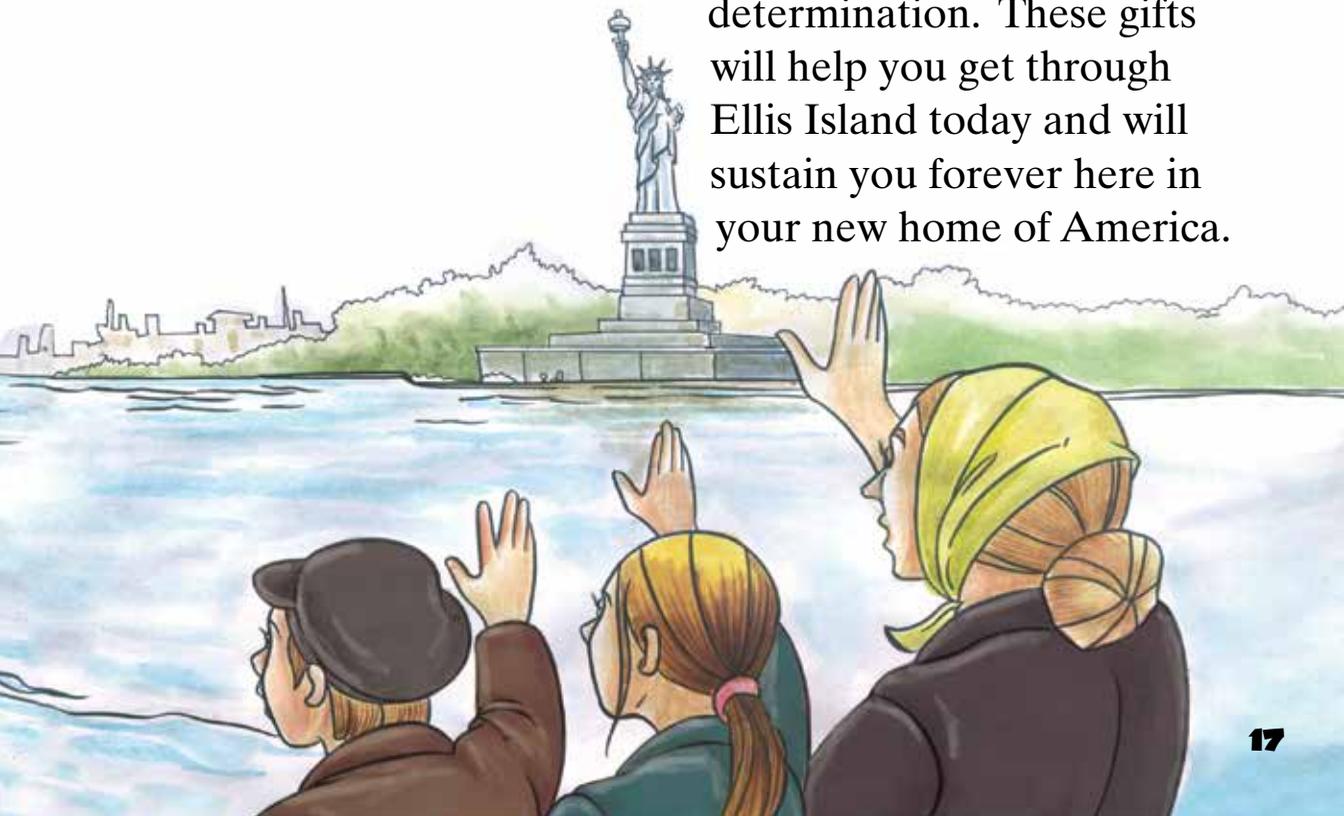
Captain: Now, here we are at the Golden Door.

Mama: Thank you, Captain. You and your son have been so kind to us.

Captain: My son and I wish your family all the best. But first, promise me one thing?

Mama: Yes, of course. What is it?

Captain: Before you go inside, turn and take one more look at our Lady Liberty. She will send you back two gifts—hope and determination. These gifts will help you get through Ellis Island today and will sustain you forever here in your new home of America.





AMERICA IS GOING TO BE MY HOME

Oh, I've got hope
And a ticket to opportunity
I've got hope
And a ticket to opportunity
Oh, I've got hope
And a ticket to opportunity
America is going to be my home

Oh, I've got dreams
And a ticket to opportunity
I've got dreams
And a ticket to opportunity

I've got dreams
And a ticket to opportunity
America is going to be my home

I've got plans
And a ticket to opportunity
I've got plans
And a ticket to opportunity
I've got plans
And a ticket to opportunity
America is going to be my home



PASSING THE TEST

What is your name?
Where are you from?
You will need money.
Do you have some?
Do you have family?
Where are they now?
Who paid your way
To come anyhow?
Are you quite healthy?
What are your plans?
Where will you work?
Where will you land?
Answer these questions
Answer with pride.
America's open—
Come on inside!

GLOSSARY

czars—the rulers of Russia until the 1917 revolution

democracy—a government run by the people

ferry—a boat used to carry passengers, vehicles, or goods from one place to another

mortar—building material made of lime and cement mixed with sand and water that is spread between bricks or stones

oppression—cruel or unjust use of power

pedestal—the base of something upright (as a vase, lamp, or statue)

rivets—a metal bolt used for uniting two or more pieces of metal, wood, plastic, or other material



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“Thank you for helping us
create a world in which
children love to learn!”



Coming to America

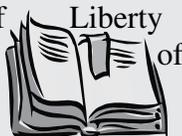
Statue of Liberty Lesson Plan

Objectives

- **Fluency:** Students will read passages fluently after practicing and monitoring fluency with repeated readings.
- **Content Area:** Students will learn about the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, as well as what both symbolize for those coming to the United States. They will also learn about the problems and challenges that the immigrants encountered after arriving in America.

Summary

Coming to America is the story of a family of immigrants who are eager to come to America. After traveling from their homeland and arriving in America, they find that they cannot keep their eyes off the Statue of Liberty with its promises and hopes for the future. Certain that they will have a better life in America, the family finds the Statue of Liberty to be a symbol of their dreams.



Materials

- *Coming to America: The Story of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island* script booklets
- *Statue of Liberty Character Masks* (pages 38–43 or Teacher Resource CD), copied on cardstock
- copies of *Take-Home Script: Coming to America: The Story of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island* (Teacher Resource CD)
- PowerPoint® slide show (Teacher Resource CD)
- overhead transparencies of the poem and song (Teacher Resource CD)
- Performance CD and CD player or computer with a CD drive and speakers

Introduce the Literature

Read aloud *The Story of the Statue of Liberty* by Betsy Maestro. Explain what sequential or chronological order means. Tell students that it took several steps to create the Statue of Liberty. Give each student a piece of white paper. Tell students to draw five squares on their papers and then label the squares one through five. Tell them that they should now pick out the five most important steps in creating the Statue of Liberty. Have them use the ideas from the book to draw pictures of the steps, as well as write one to two sentences under each picture. Allow them to share their pictures in small groups or with the class.



ELL Support

Give ELL students five sentences about building the Statue of Liberty. Tell them to put those five sentences in chronological order and to draw pictures to go with each sentence.

Involving All the Students

This script has only six roles, but there are many ways to involve all students. For this reader's theater experience, assign the main roles to six students. Ask the other students to read the song or the poem. Allow them to practice reading the song and poem together as a group several times, while the other students practice their roles. You might also divide the remaining students in half and assign the poem to one group and the song to the other.

Coming to America

Statue of Liberty Lesson Plan

Reading the Script



1. Before reading the script, show the students pictures of the Statue of Liberty. Ask them what the statue means to them. What do they know about the statue? Write down their thoughts on the board. Ask if anyone has ever moved to a new area or a new school. How did they feel? Were they excited? Scared? Allow them to share their feelings with the class.
2. Provide each student with a copy of the script. Give the script booklets to small groups or print copies of the *Take-Home Script: Statue of Liberty*. Explain that the students will read a script about a family that moves to America to fulfill their hopes and dreams. The first thing they see as they arrive in America is the Statue of Liberty. What might the immigrants feel when seeing the statue for the first time? What might their thoughts be? Allow students to make predictions before reading the script.
3. Tell the students to pretend to be immigrants coming to America for the first time. What are their thoughts and feelings? Have them write diary entries to their families back home, explaining their feelings as they see the Statue of Liberty for the first time. Ask them to use at least three of the new glossary words in their diary entries and then share their entries with the class.
4. Play the recording of the script as students follow along. Call on students to help read the script. Read the whole script using different students every few pages.
5. Make a list on the board of the six characters from the script. Tell each student to choose a character from the script. Have them use note cards to make identification cards of the characters they chose. Their identification cards should include the following: the character's picture, name, gender, age, reason for coming to America, and two interesting facts about that character. Students can use information from the script, as well as their own imaginations, to create the identification cards.
6. Assign students parts in the script. Allow them to read their parts silently to become familiar with the parts before the practice readings and the actual performance. Explain that they should do repeated readings to improve their fluency.



ELL Support

Some ELL students may have interesting stories about their first trips to America. Allow

them to share these stories of coming to the United States for the first time, or stories about when their families arrived for the first time. How did they feel? Were they questioned? Were they tested? Were they excited or scared?



Coming to America

Statue of Liberty Lesson Plan



Assigning Roles

Assign roles to students based on their reading proficiency. It is important to remember that when students practice fluency, they should read materials at or below their reading level. This helps them to focus on their accuracy, expression, and reading rate. If a student is reading text that is too difficult, his or her attention will focus on sounding out words and comprehension rather than on fluency. These are approximate reading levels for the roles in this script:

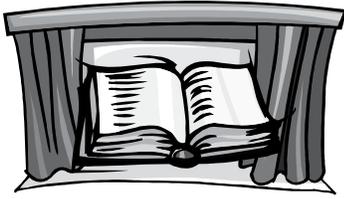
- ❖ Sophia: high 1st grade
- ❖ Narrator: low 2nd grade
- ❖ Francis: high 2nd grade
- ❖ Mama: high 1st grade
- ❖ Captain's Son: low 2nd grade
- ❖ Captain: high 2nd grade

Meeting the Fluency Objective

1. The fluency objective for this script focuses on the use of repeated readings to increase reading fluency. Explain that to make the script fun and enjoyable for the audience, it is important for students to practice reading the lines over and over again to ensure smooth reading.
2. Divide the class into groups of six. Assign a speaking part to each student in the group. If a group has less than six students, select one or more students to assume two speaking parts.
3. Have each group review the script and determine where to place emphasis on words or add expression. If using copies of the script, have the students write reminder notes or draw pictures of faces that show the types of expressions to use as they read the script.
4. Offer helpful suggestions to students to improve their fluency and expression. Remind them to slow down as they read and to read unknown words several times so that they do not stumble over them during the performance.
5. Allow the students to do several repeated readings in their small groups for practice. You might also ask them to practice reading along with the professional recording of the script. Remind the class to practice the song and poem as well.
6. After students have practiced repeated readings of the script, song, and poem, allow them to perform the script for other classes. All of the groups can perform, one group per classroom can perform, or the assigned readers can perform with the rest of the class performing the song and poem.

Coming to America

Statue of Liberty Lesson Plan



Social Studies Connection

1. The content-area focus of this script is for students to learn the symbolism of the Statue of Liberty and to understand what both the statue and Ellis

Island mean to the immigrants who come to America. This activity will take students on a journey from the boat to Ellis Island, where they will experience what immigrants might have seen and felt as they encountered America for the first time.

2. Give students blank sheets of paper. Tell them to pretend to be immigrants arriving in America for the first time. What do they see as they approach Ellis Island? Based on the script and other books they have read, have them draw pictures of what they might see as they approach the Statue of Liberty. Allow them to share their pictures.
3. Tell students that they have now arrived at Ellis Island. Give each student an index card that says either “Pass” or “Fail.” Have students read their cards out loud to the class. Some students will be allowed into the country, while others will be asked to return to their homelands.
4. Ask students who were allowed to enter the country or those who were asked to go back to their original countries how they feel. How might the immigrants have felt, especially after the long journeys they endured to reach America?
5. Then, discuss the reasons why the Statue of Liberty is a symbol of hope for those coming to America. Reread the script to the class, if necessary.
6. Ask students to create their own symbols of liberty and hope for the country. Give student enough time to plan out and then draw their symbols. Display the symbols around the classroom.



ELL Support

Allow ELL students to work with partners when completing their graphic organizers, so they can get help with spelling and grammar to complete their answers.



Fine Arts Connection

1. The *Coming to America* script contains a song and a poem. The song and poem relate to the reader's theater, but are not limited to use only with the Statue of Liberty script.
2. Ask students to do repeated readings of the poem. Based on the ideas in the poem, ask them to create simple costumes to wear or props to use during the performance of the poem. For example, they might wear nametags that state an immigrant's name and whether or not the immigrant passed or failed the test to enter the country. They might also create large "pass" or "fail" tickets to display as they read the poem.
3. Have students listen to the professional recording of the song. Ask them to create their own songs or poems to accompany the reader's theater script. Their poems or songs should be about hopes and dreams, but they can be about their own personal hopes and dreams rather than those of an immigrant.
4. Cut out rectangle "tickets" from blank sheets of paper. Give each student a ticket. Have them draw pictures illustrating the hopes and dreams that they discussed in both the script song, "America Is Going to Be My Home," and their own songs. Allow them to share their tickets with the class.



ELL Support

Break down the steps for writing a poem or a song to make it easier for ELL students. Have them first create lists of their hopes and dreams. Then, have them turn each hope and dream into one verse for their songs.

Coming to America

Statue of Liberty Lesson Plan

Performance CD

Description	Track
Script Reading, pages 4–9	Volume I, Track 08
Song: “America Is Going to Be My Home”	Volume I, Track 09
Script Reading (cont.), pages 10–16	Volume I, Track 10
Poem: “Passing the Test”	Volume I, Track 11
Script Reading (cont.), page 17	Volume I, Track 12



Teacher Resource CD

Description	File Name
Statue of Liberty Character Masks	masks_ComingtoAmerica.pdf
Take-Home Script: Coming to America	THS_ComingtoAmerica.pdf
<i>PowerPoint</i> ®: Coming to America	PP_ComingtoAmerica.ppt
Poem Transparency: “Passing the Test”	poem_ComingtoAmerica.pdf
Song Transparency: “America Is Going to Be My Home”	song_ComingtoAmerica.pdf

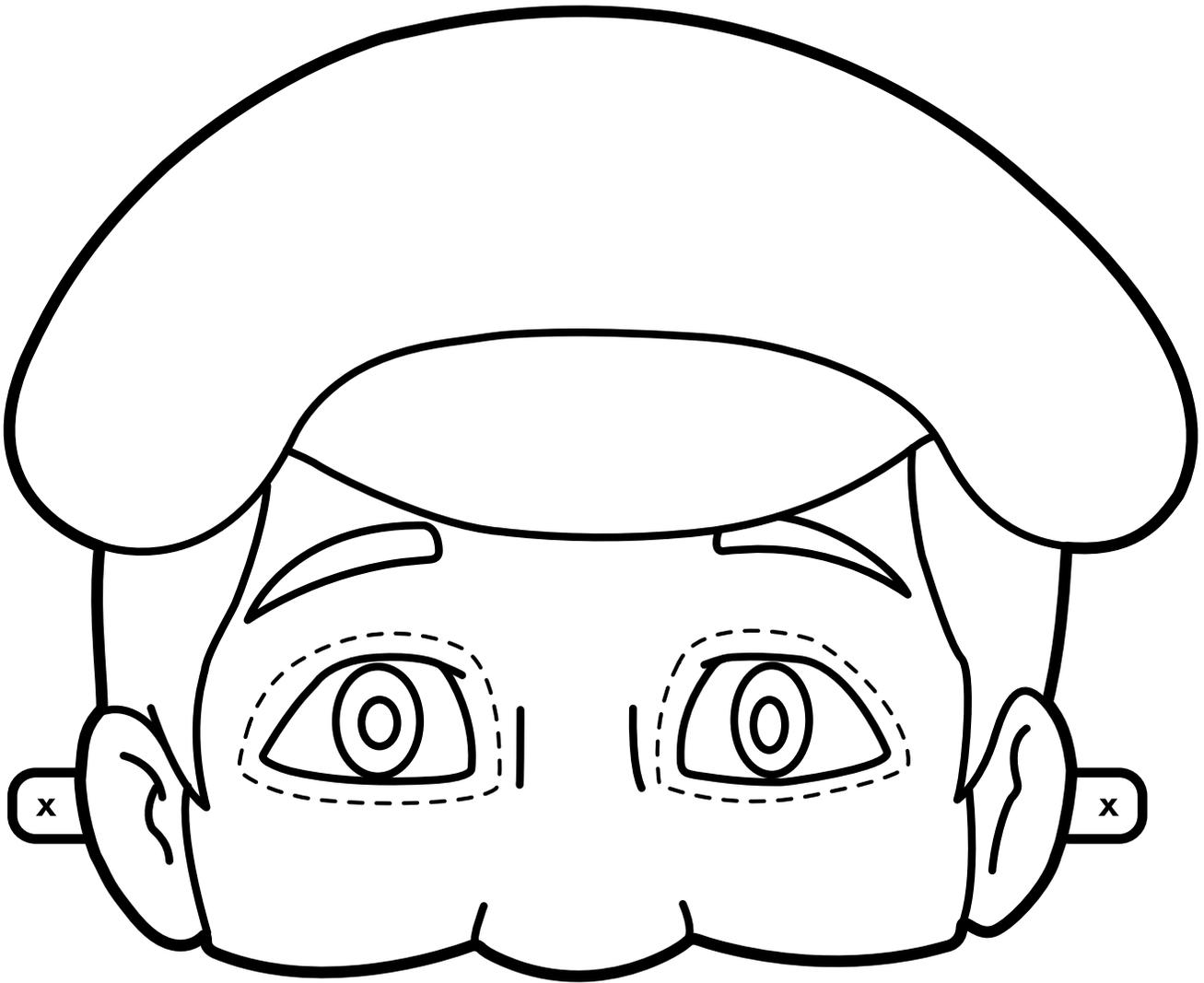
Captain



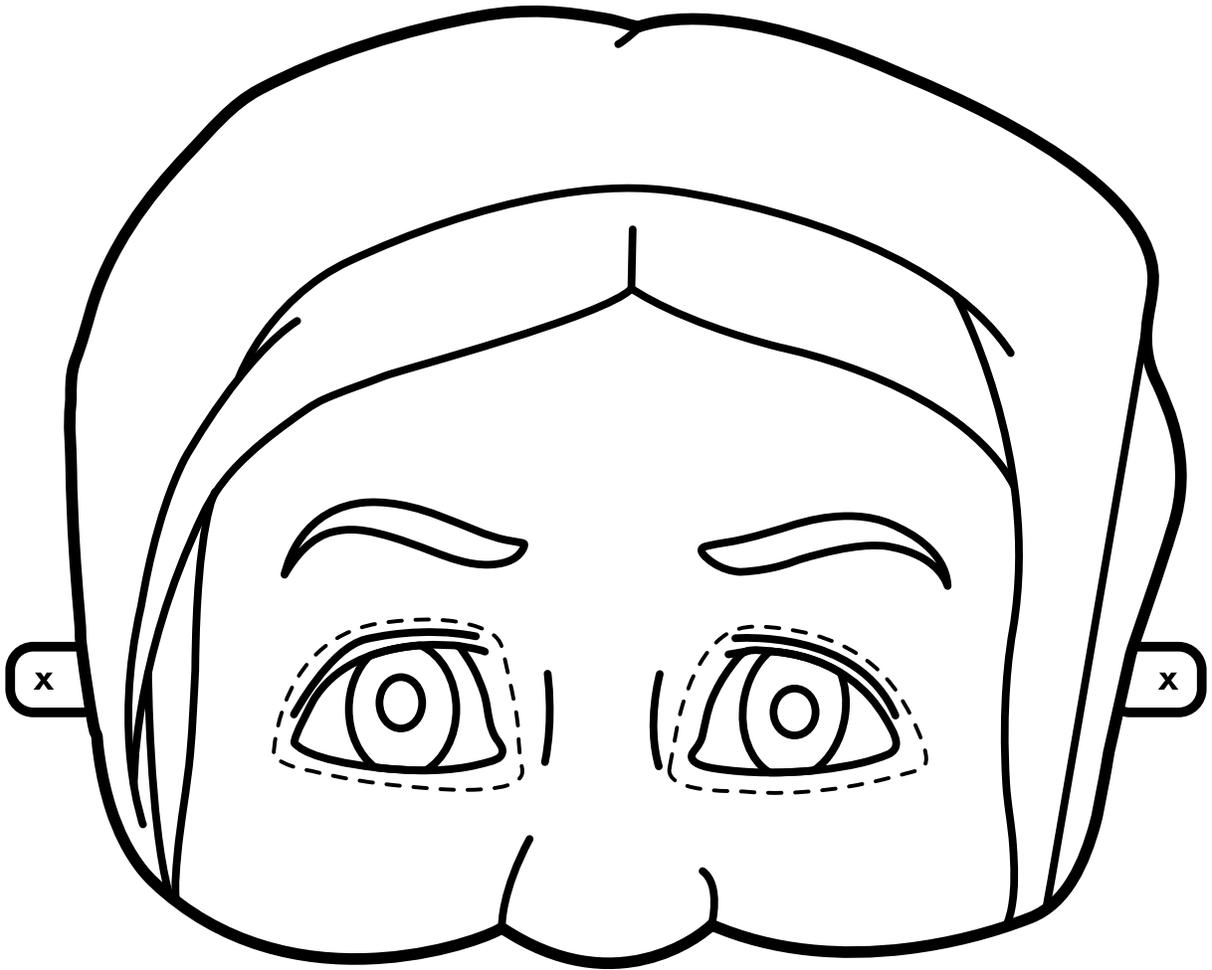
Captain's Son



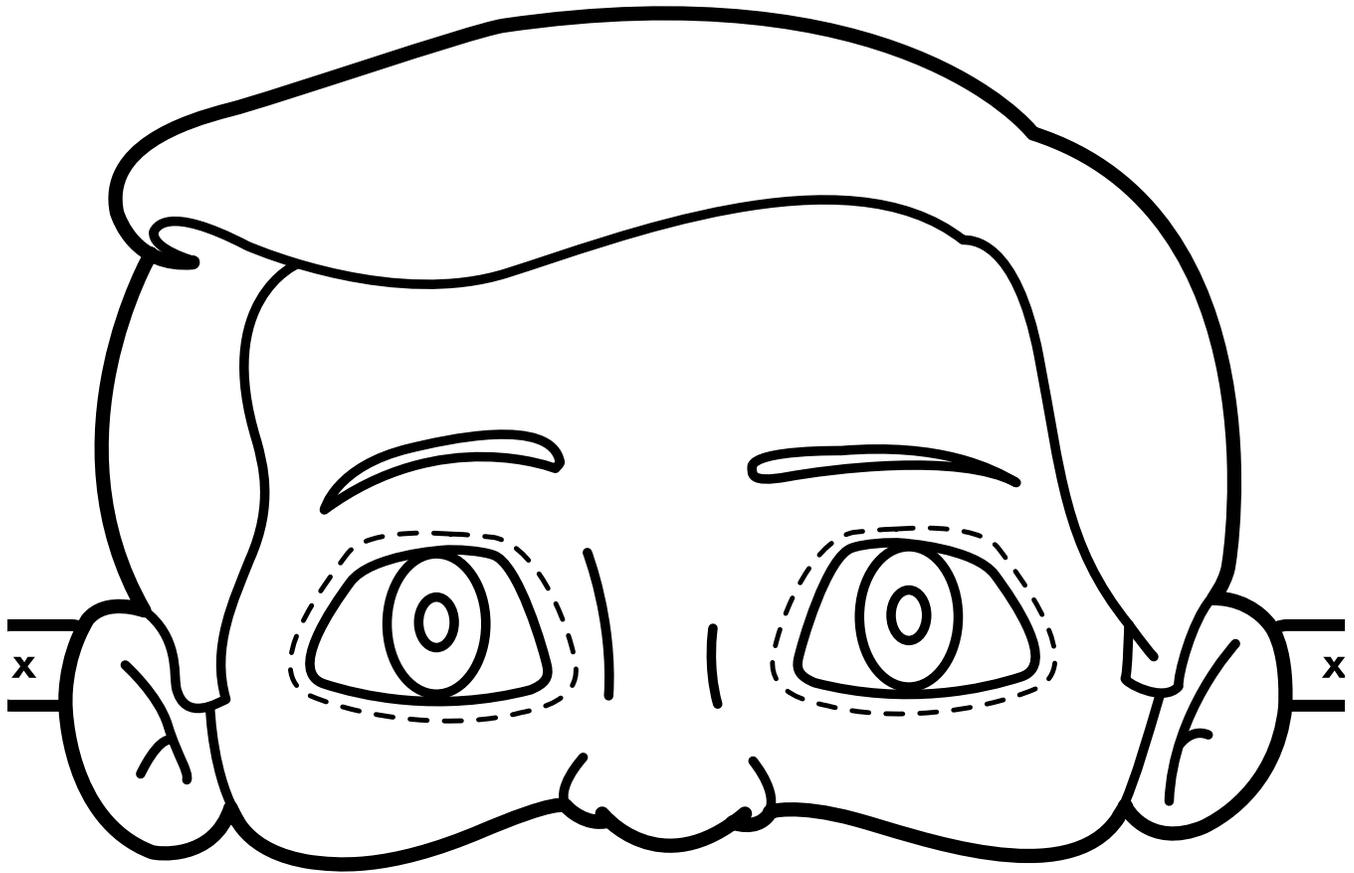
Francis



Mama



Narrator



Sophia

