



RED STAR LINE MUSEUM

MILLIONS OF PEOPLE,
— ONE DREAM —



INTRODUCTION

Dear

These teaching materials are a supplement to the "A journey for life" tour. This tour was developed for students in the fifth and sixth year of secondary education. This material will provide you with some inspiration for preparing your visit and working on the theme with your students after your visit.

The Red Star Line Museum

The Red Star Line Museum invites you to take an emotional journey, following in the migrants' footsteps.

Get to know the passengers and accompany them on their journey from their native village to the port city of Antwerp. The Red Star Line's ocean steamers are waiting alongside the quay, bound for the new world. Enjoy fascinating and personal stories during the crossing. Say goodbye to people you have gotten to know well upon arrival.

As of 1800, millions of people packed up their entire life in a few suitcases, taking the boat from Europe to America. The United States and Canada were the Promised Land for fortune seekers and anyone in search of a better life. For many people the journey to the new world started in a port warehouse in Antwerp. From 1873 until 1934, the Red Star Line's ocean steamers paved the way to a new life for about 2 million men, women and children.

Today the Red Star Line occupies the historical sheds of the legendary shipping company with the red star on its flag. The museum tells the story of the millions of Europeans who were brave or desperate enough to leave their old life behind, in search of a better life. They chased a dream that in some cases became reality, on an emotional rollercoaster of high expectations and deep disappointments, with adrenaline pulsing through their veins and sleepless nights. In some cases the dream stopped here.

The former warehouses of the Red Star Line are the perfect place for making the stories of the many passengers tangible and visible. Here in this inspiring environment their dreams and concerns are brought to life.

The Red Star Line is a journey into the past and an encounter with the present. While the face of migration may have changed since then, the human aspect of migration is a timeless and universal story.

A journey for life

The students are asked to reflect on the fundamental choices involved in migration during the tour. On decisions which are sometimes final and on the impact of these decisions for the entire family. These themes are still relevant today. After their visit, they can study this further by searching for stories in their own surroundings and recording them.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 1: PREPARATION

Summary

Introduce the visit to the Red Star Line Museum with photos and a historical and contemporary story.

Material

Photos

<http://redstarline.be/sites/redstarline/files/beeldmateriaal.pdf>

Class

Show the students the historical photos and ask them what they see. Tell them this about the photo:

From 1873 until 1934, more than two million migrants left to America on the Red Star Line's ships. Many of the migrants who travelled in steerage passed through the buildings of the Red Star Line, near Rijnkaai. The ships left from this quay. The buildings have been preserved and transformed into a museum. The Red Star Line Museum tells stories about people on the move, from the past and present. We will be visiting this museum together. To give you a better idea of what's to come we will introduce you to the Moel family and Anna. In the museum itself you will find out much more about them.

Briefly tell them the story of the Moel family.

The Moel family consisted of a father, mother and four children. One daughter and three sons. They lived in what is now known as Ukraine. The father left to the United States before World War I. He hoped to find a job there and earn money. He left his wife and children behind. Many years passed and one day he finally had earned the money he needed to buy tickets for the rest of the family. He sent tickets and some money to his wife. He hoped that he would be able to see them again soon. But the journey did not quite go as planned... He would have to wait many more years before he could hold his daughters in his arms again. You can find out why in the museum.

Share Anna's story briefly.

In November 2000, eight-year old Anna left Belarus together with her parents, travelling to Antwerp. Her mother and father feared for their daughter's future. The political and economic situation did not bode very well. She arrived in a country where she knew nobody or nothing. Anna did not speak the language and was completely at a loss. She gradually became used to her new life. You can find out how in the Red Star Line Museum.

- Ask the students whether they know a migration story or if they know any relatives or friends who migrated. It can be a historical or contemporary story.
- Then ask the students about the importance of collecting and preserving objects and stories.

Which story from your life or that of your family is told again and again?

Which story from your life or that of your family should never be forgotten?

How can you make certain that it is never forgotten?

What do you think should be preserved for the future?

What place do you think should be preserved for the future?

What story do you think should be preserved for the future?

Share the following information about the Red Star Line Museum:

It is important to preserve objects and stories so they are not forgotten. The Red Star Line's story had almost been forgotten. In this museum you can take a closer look at objects like ship models, postcards, posters... and listen to many stories. This is called a museum's collection. However, because the Red Star Line Museum is still collecting stories, this museum's collection is slightly different from that of most other museums, whose collection mainly consists of objects.

The Red Star Line Museum asks visitors to contribute to the collection of stories. After our visit, we may be able to help them.

THE MUSEUM VISIT

Book your visit by sending an e-mail to rsl_balie@stad.antwerpen.be

The museum offers a brochure that will help you in preparing the visit.

Do you prefer a guided tour? Our colleagues in the tourist office will gladly assist you. Call them at + 32 3 232 01 03.

LESSON ACTIVITY 2: AFTER THE VISIT

Summary

After the visit to the Red Star Line Museum the students go in search of migration stories in their own lives.

Material

Copy sheets for the students, available on our website

Class

Discuss the museum visit with the students. What did they like, what not, what was interesting, what less interesting.

Remind them that the Red Star Line Museum is still collecting stories. Visitors can share their story online at <http://www.redstarline-museum.be/shareyourstory/?l=en>. This can be a Red Star Line story as well as a contemporary migration story. It can be written by someone who migrated or by his or her children.

Let the students have a look at the PDFs which are uploaded to the museum's website. Explain that these stories end up in the Red Star Line Museum's depot. They are all given a place in the museum.

Tell the students that they must go in search of a story on the theme of migration, being on the move, or travel. Students can complete the entire process in one go or can follow a phased approach. Agree whether students can write their own story or whether they must interview each other.

Distribute the copy sheets. Review the phased approach with the students. Agree with them what is expected from them, how much time they will have for each assignment or for each part of the assignment.

Discuss the assignments during a classroom discussion.

Extra

Challenge the students to present the stories to a bigger audience: other classes or those who were interviewed.

Some options include:

- a storybook
- a (mini) exhibition
- a digital photo album
- a storytelling evening
- a book of letters
- ...