



A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR LOUDMOUTH



ABOUT THE BOOK

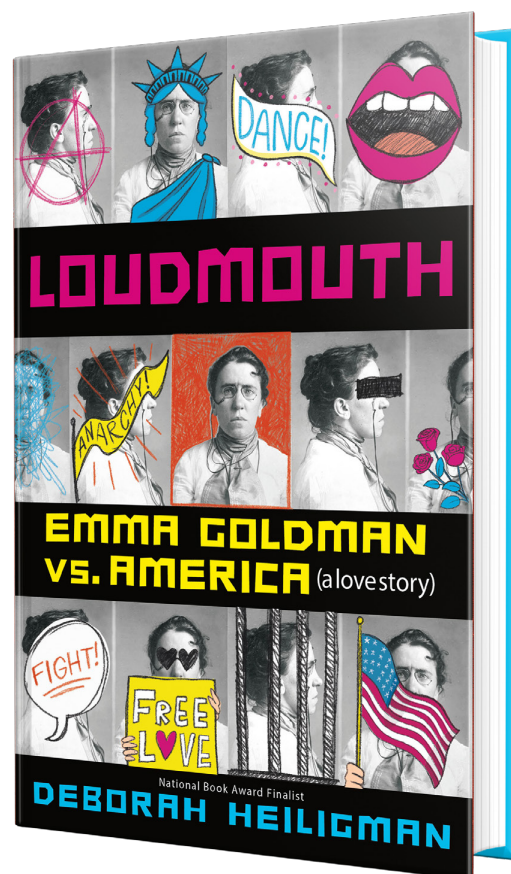
Emma Goldman made trouble her whole life. The first time was by accident. Her birth (in Lithuania, in 1869) angered her father. He had wanted a dutiful son, not a headstrong daughter. The other times were on purpose.

When she arrived in America as a young woman, she loved its democratic ideals but was appalled by its hypocrisy. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness seemed to be only for those at the top. Something had to be done for everyone else. Someone had to speak up. Soon Emma was delivering rousing speeches on topics like workers' rights, feminism, and the atrocities of capitalism.

This is the story of Emma's complex love affair with America. It's also the story of her many romances with the men she met while trying to change America. Emma believed marriage was disempowering to women and lived her life according to the principles of free love.

Emma called herself an anarchist and a freethinker. Her critics called her a troublemaker, a "loudmouth." But sometimes you need to be loud, if you want your voice to be heard.

Deborah Heiligman is a National Book Award finalist, a YALSA Nonfiction Award winner, and a Printz Honor winner. In *Loudmouth* she tells the extraordinary true story of a woman who was a fearsome fighter for change in her complicated new country—and a complicated human being in her own right. This is an essential read for young people, or for anyone who wants to use their voice to make the world a better place.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



DEBORAH HEILIGMAN has written many books for children and young adults, including *Torpedoed: The True Story of the World War II Sinking of "The Children's Ship,"* a YALSA Excellence in Nonfiction Award finalist and Golden Kite winner; *Vincent and Theo: The Van Gogh Brothers*, a Michael L. Printz Honor winner, YALSA Excellence in Nonfiction Award winner, Boston Globe–Horn Book Award winner, and Golden Kite winner; *Charles and Emma: The Darwins' Leap of Faith*, a National Book Award finalist, Michael L. Printz Honor winner, and YALSA Excellence in Nonfiction Award winner; and *Loudmouth: Emma Goldman vs. America (A Love Story)*. She lives with her husband and dog in New York City.



PREPARING YOURSELF AS AN EDUCATOR

It has been said that well-behaved women seldom make history. *Loudmouth* presents the epic story of Emma Goldman, a woman with a heart determined to find joy in even the most dire of circumstances, and with a mouth that sparked with fire set to burn inequality from the top down. Emma faced extreme abuse and neglect throughout her childhood and was sexually assaulted as a teenager; these topics can be triggering for students as well as educators. Handle one another with care through these chapters. The book also addresses several assassination and suicide attempts, prostitution, and abuses within the prison system, and reflects on other mature themes, especially around sexuality, race, and religion. Allow ample time for written reflection while engaging with the text, and prepare students to use Socratic seminars to maintain open dialogue and meaningful discussion of sensitive topics. Offer students the option to signal when a time-out is needed while reading, and educators can collaborate with students to decide when a small group discussion and/or private journal reflection may be more beneficial than a large group discussion.

VOCABULARY & HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Understanding historical context before diving into any book supports reading comprehension and helps students make self-to-text and world-to-text connections, both of which motivate learning and increase student engagement. Consider using the following activities when exploring and researching the listed vocabulary from *Loudmouth*.

GUESS THE WORD

Divide students into small groups and give each group several vocabulary words. Have students research four historical examples (such as, people, time periods, descriptions, word origin, root words) related to their words. Ask each group to read aloud a historic example of a vocabulary term without revealing their word. Take turns having the groups guess the vocabulary words. Use your favorite vocabulary squares to facilitate further understanding.

FOUR TRUTHS AND A LIE

Have the groups research their specific vocabulary words and write four facts and one false statement about each word. Groups can then create a Four Truths and a Lie list to try to stump their classmates.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Alien Enemies Act | 12. Great Migration | 23. Selective Service Act |
| 2. Anarchism | 13. Henry Clay Frick | 24. Socialism |
| 3. Anti-Semitism | 14. Homestead Steel Works | 25. Speakers' Corner |
| 4. Capitalism | 15. Immigrants | 26. Suffrage |
| 5. Chinese Exclusion Act | 16. Industrial Revolution | 27. Sweatshops |
| 6. Communism | 17. J. Edgar Hoover | 28. Tenements |
| 7. Fascism | 18. Naturalization Act | 29. Tsar |
| 8. Feminism | 19. Populism | 30. Tuberculosis |
| 9. Financial Depression | 20. President William McKinley | 31. Unions |
| 10. First Amendment | 21. Revolutionaries | 32. Xenophobia |
| 11. Free love | 22. Russian Empire | |

RESOURCES FOR HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Haymarket Riot

<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/lesson-plan/haymarket-riot>

Life Story: Emma Goldman (1869–1940)

<https://wams.nyhistory.org/modernizing-america/activism-and-the-progressive-era/emma-goldman/>

American History, Race, and Prison

<https://www.vera.org/reimagining-prison-web-report/american-history-race-and-prison>

Alexander (Sasha) Berkman

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/goldman-alexander-sasha-berkman-1870-1936/>

Emma Goldman

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/goldman-1869-1940/>

She Fought the Law

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/goldman-she-fought-law/>

Mother Earth (Volume One) | Text Transcripts

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/goldman-mother-earth-first-volume/>

PRE-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your idea of a troublemaker? In your journal, sketch a picture of what this troublemaker may look like based solely on this description: “an evil disposed and pernicious person and of turbulent disposition”; “unlawfully, wickedly and maliciously intending and contriving to disturb the public peace, and to excite the citizens of this State to hatred and contempt of its government and laws, and to raise and make riots.” Which words in the description stand out to you? Why? Write a brief statement expressing what you think this troublemaker did.
2. Former congressman and legendary civil rights leader John Lewis said, “Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America.” What does this quote mean to you? Is “good trouble” possible?
3. Research significant protests in America, including contemporary protests. Create a list of reasons Americans have had to protest throughout the country’s history. Have the reasons for past protests led to significant changes for America as a whole? Explain. Create a list of reasons Americans have had to protest since the turn of this century. What are the similarities and differences in past and present protests in America? Who are some specific figures who have acted as or who have been seen as leaders of these protests? What impact have they had on the anarchist labor and class-rights movement?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are three basic rights that everyone should have no matter what? Explain the distinction between equality and equity. Define wealthy. Define poor. What is the relationship between the two? Why are there two groups? Do the wealthy have a responsibility to the poor, especially if the poor are working to help the wealthy stay wealthy? Explain.
2. Emma's early mentor, Johann Most, explains childhood psychology: "Early environment and conditions are powerful factors in moulding one's life." Is this a true statement? How does Emma's childhood shape the person she becomes? Have you had to overcome adversity? Where did you find motivation and encouragement when times were difficult?
3. In chapter 4, when Emma and her sister Helena arrive in America on December 29, 1885, how were immigrants perceived? How have America's views on immigration changed or remained the same since then? What societal factors might play a role in a country's views toward immigration?
4. Describe the series of protests that took place in the spring of 1886. What happened on May 4, 1886? Compare the Haymarket Square protests to any protests currently taking place or any recent protests. Are there similarities? What are the differences? What is the role of the media in how these events are covered? Consider why the media would have conflicting perspectives on such events.
5. How would Emma define "anarchy"? She explains that in an anarchistic society people would do the work they want to do, not the work they are forced to do. Do you think an anarchistic society could work in America? Why or why not?
6. Emma was twenty and Sasha nineteen when they met. They would go on to be lifelong friends. Discuss the many ups and downs they endured over the course of their lives. What stands out to you the most? Additionally, identify four different types of relationships (that is, familial, teacher/mentor, lover, friend, colleague) Emma had throughout her life. Explain how or if they changed or evolved over time.
7. How did Emma's activism effect change for us today? Think in terms of the following statement: Because Emma (did/said) _____, it is possible for us to _____. How do we benefit from her activism?

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ACTIVITIES

REFLECTIVE TIMELINE

Emma walked and talked as if she knew history was watching her. Create a reflective timeline of her life while you read *Loudmouth*. Emma's words stirred crowds and worried politicians. Use your own words to reflect on the events in her life. Next to each event on your timeline, write a two-word response to that event. Using only two words will be challenging, so choose your words wisely.

Consider including the following in your timeline:

- A major historical event that occurs shortly prior to Emma's birth
- Her birthdate
- Education
- Work
- Immigration to America
- Marriage
- Divorce
- Meeting important people in her life (at least three to five people)
- Major speeches
- Arrests
- Imprisonment
- Release from prison
- Deportation
- A major historical event during her life
- Her date of death
- A major historical event that occurred shortly after her death

TIMELINE EXTENSION

It has been said that history doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes. Create a timeline of your own lifetime and compare the events of your life to those from Emma's time. Do any of the events of your life rhyme with the events of her life?

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A MEMORIAL GATHERING FOR EMMA GOLDMAN

After reading *Loudmouth*, students may feel as if they have lost a complicated, yet close friend. Invite them to hold a memorial gathering in honor of Emma. She encountered so many people, some fascinating, some selfish and unkind, and others who were devoted to her for a lifetime. Ask students to choose someone from the guest list to research and determine how they were connected to Emma. Students should embody the historical person during the memorial gathering. Ask them to dress as if they are attending a memorial or to dress like their assigned person.

Option 1 | Students come prepared to stand and say a few words as their assigned person. Would the person have loving words or harsh words to say about Emma? Instruct students to use their research and words to show how well their person really knew her. Encourage them to include details and/or one anecdote.

Option 2 | Allow students to mingle and introduce themselves to one another as their assigned historical figure. After meeting someone, students will introduce the person they met to someone new and continue until everyone has met or been introduced to as many people as time will allow.

Wrap Up: Come together as a class to discuss what you've learned about Emma's life through the memorial activity. How do you think the author feels about Emma? What evidence in the text supports this view? How do your own feelings about her compare with those of your assigned person and the author?

SUGGESTED MEMORIAL GUEST LIST

1. Abraham Goldman (Emma's father)
2. Alexander "Sasha" Berkman (Emma's friend, lover, and partner)
3. Andrew Carnegie (American industrialist)
4. Emma's aunt
5. Emma's maternal grandmother
6. Emma's uncle
7. Emma's younger aunt
8. Geography teacher
9. German teacher
10. Helena Zodokoff (Emma's sister)
11. Helene Minkin (Johann Most's wife)
12. Herman Goldman (Emma's brother)
13. Ida B. Wells (journalist)
14. Jacob Kersner (Emma's husband)
15. Johann Most (Emma's mentor and lover)
16. Lena Zodokoff (Emma's sister)
17. Louis Goldman (Emma's brother; died at six years of age)
18. Modest Aronstam (artist, Emma's friend and lover)
19. Morris Goldman (Emma's brother)
20. Moses Garson (factory owner)
21. Nellie Bly (journalist)
22. Nikolay Chernyshevsky (author of *What Is to Be Done?*)
23. Religion teacher
24. Sigmund Freud (medical doctor, psychologist)
25. Taube Goldman (Emma's mother)
26. Haymaker Square Eight
27. Two Elderly Sisters (lived downstairs from Emma's grandmother's apartment)
28. Henry Clay Frick (American industrialist)
29. Ed Brady (Emma's lover and close companion)
30. Ed Brady's wife
31. Charles Jacobs (detective)
32. Willa Cather (Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist)
33. Helen Keller (author and activist)
34. Paul Robeson (singer, actor, civil rights activist)
35. Ben Reitman (Emma's lover and friend)
36. Stella (Emma's niece)
37. Leon Czolgosz (assassinated William McKinley)
38. Head matron (strict prison guard)
39. Night matron (kind prison guard)
40. Prison doctor (Emma worked as his nurse)
41. William McKinley (twenty-fifth president of the United States)
42. Woodrow Wilson (twenty-eighth president of the United States)

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LETTER WRITING | EXTENSION ACTIVITY

As a society we have gotten away from writing letters, instead relying on email or a quick text message. Letter writing requires a slower pace, a little more thought and effort, the perfect pen or pencil, and stationery. Ask students to take a step away from their technology and go back in time to the era when communicating with friends and family took much more patience than waiting for three dots to turn into words.

OPTION #1 | LOVE LETTERS TO AMERICA

Emma was an activist. Her goal was to effect change for all people, particularly those living in poverty and those oppressed by their employers. She believed that poor people should have enough food to eat, a suitable place to live, and be able to rest and find happiness in their lives, not just work themselves to death in dangerous conditions. As much as Emma loved America, she believed America could be better for all of its citizens, not just the wealthy ones. Think about what America means to you. What do you love about America? In what way could America be better and for whom? Consider writing a love letter to America to express how you feel. You may want to submit your letter to the editor of your local newspaper or publish it on Substack. Emma used her words and her voice to activate change in her beloved America. What will your words activate?

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OPTION #2 | PRISON CULTURE AND CONDITIONS: THEN AND NOW

Emma and Sasha both write memoirs that reveal details about their treatment and the conditions during their time spent in the prison system. Research prison culture for the Western State Penitentiary in Pittsburgh and for the New York Penitentiary on Blackwell's Island during the late 1800s and the early 1900s. Consider researching prison systems currently operating within your state. Students may want to brainstorm a list of questions to direct their research. For example: 1. Are prisoners allowed to have books? 2. Are they allowed to exercise? 3. What are the visitation policies? 4. What kind of food options are available? 5. How and why is solitary confinement used? 6. How will you use the results of your research to effect change? 7. How could you use a letter you've written to make a difference?

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OPTION #3 | EPISTLE POETRY

An epistle poem is free verse written in the form of a letter. The poem may vary from a short note to a long letter written in the form of a poem. Ask students to write an epistle poem to, or in honor of, a historical figure they encountered while reading *Loudmouth* and other nonfiction texts. For example, you might write your epistle poem to Henry Clay Frick, President McKinley, President Wilson, or even Emma herself.

An Epistle Poem Example | Dear Mr. Lincoln | By Tracei Willis

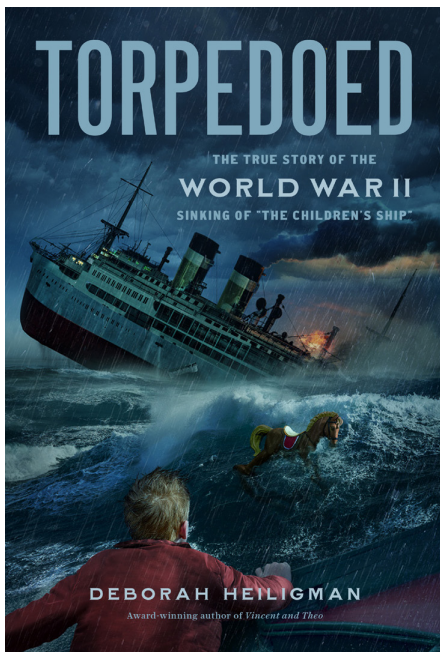
Dear Sir,

*History deems you the honest one,
Yet I question your proposed integrity.
You signed the Emancipation Proclamation
On January 1, 1863, declaring all enslaved men
Living in Confederate States
Be made free, while only six days prior,
You signed the order for the largest mass execution in
The history of our country.
38 Dakota men would hang at your order.
I ask you sir, did your pen bleed in red, white, and blue?
One order signed with invisible ink,
The other signed with the blood of thirty-eight men
Simply trying to feed their families.
History colors you a hero,
I sincerely have my doubts.*

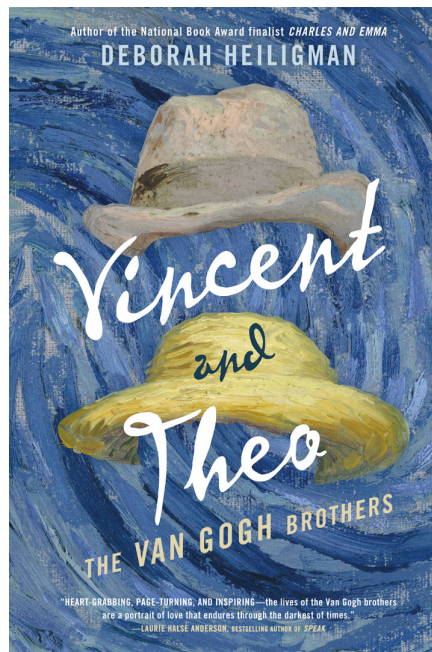
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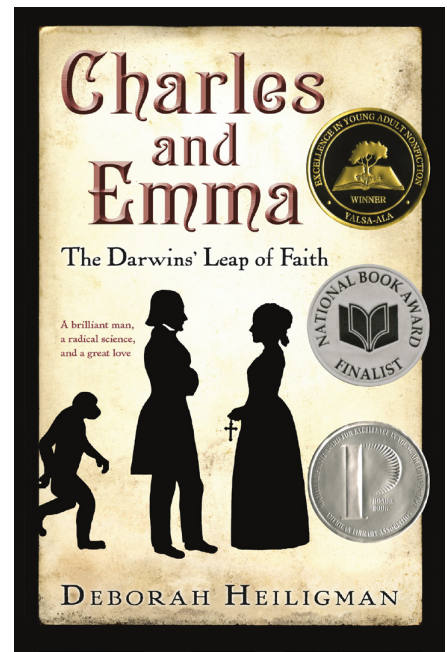
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