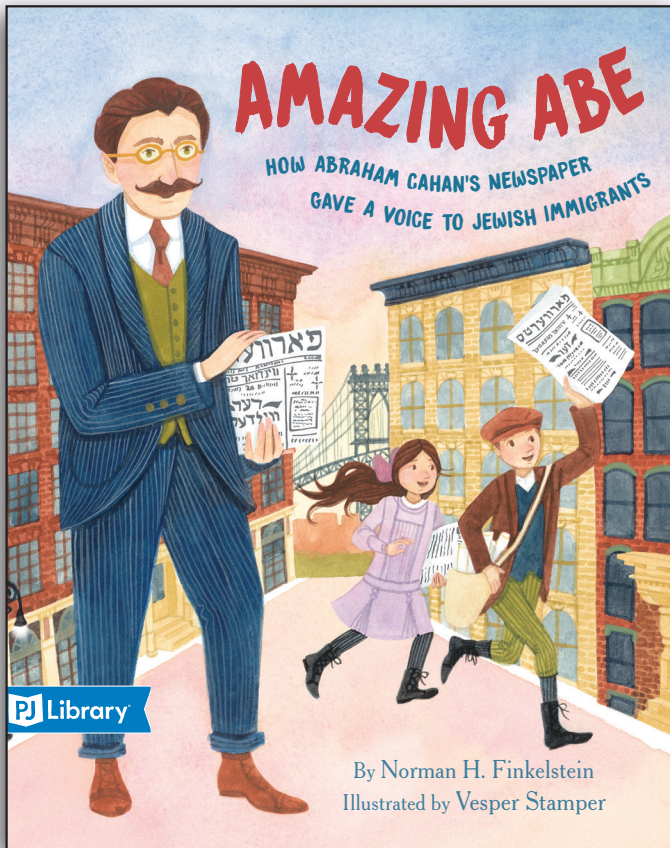


# HOLIDAY HOUSE

## EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



HC: 9780823451647 · e-book: 9780823457724

### *Amazing Abe*

*How Abraham Cahan's Newspaper Gave a Voice to Jewish Immigrants*

by Norman H. Finkelstein

illustrated by Vesper Stamper

“A commendable addition to library collections focused on immigration, little-known historical figures, and the pivotal role of language and the written word in shaping the immigrant experience.”

—*School Library Journal*, Starred Review

**A Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection**

### ABOUT THE BOOK

**A loving tribute to a towering figure in Jewish American history from two award-winning creators.**

Two-time National Jewish Book Award winner Norman H. Finkelstein and Sydney Taylor Award winner Vesper Stamper have teamed up to tell the story of Abraham Cahan, the founder and longtime editor of the Yiddish language newspaper the *Forverts* (*the Forward*), which, in its heyday, was one of the largest newspapers in the United States. As the saying went: “What’s a home without the Forverts?”

From explaining voting rights to teaching the importance of public health measures to answering everyday questions like how to play baseball, Cahan improved the lives of countless newly arrived Jewish immigrants who wanted to feel at home in a new, strange land. He also published celebrated writers such as Isaac Bashevis Singer and created the iconic advice column the Bintel Brief for homesick readers.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Point out Abe in the first double-page spread. Note the white bird that he sees from the window. How does this bird give Abe an idea? What does the text on the first page reveal about him?
- Describe life in the Pale of Settlement. How do the illustrations reveal who the people are and how they live? Discuss how Abe enjoyed opportunities that others in the Pale didn't have.
- Define activist. How does Abraham Cahan become an activist? What is his cause? Why does he have to leave his country? How does he get to America? Explain how he prepares for life in America on his voyage across the Atlantic. How does he use his language skills when he gets to the United States?
- Study the illustration on pages 28 and 29. How do the signs the people are holding reflect their concerns? Explain how these people may be considered activists. Why are they the people Abe Cahan cares about?
- The *Forverts* is the Yiddish newspaper Cahan founded. Why is it important to Abe that the newspaper be written in Yiddish? What is his role as editor? Explain the mission or goal of the *Forverts*. In what ways does the newspaper help immigrant readers adjust to life in America? What is the purpose of Abe's advice column? Discuss the questions his readers ask.
- Abe eventually built a ten-story building with an electric sign on top. How is this building seen as a "beacon of hope"? Explain the slogan "What is a home without the *Forverts*?" (p. 33).

Guide created by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.

## ABOUT THE CREATORS



**Norman H. Finkelstein** (1941-2024) was a retired school librarian and a celebrated children's book author. A two-time winner of the National Jewish Book Award as well as a winner of the Golden Kite Honor Award, Norman wrote many nonfiction books for young readers, including *Schools of Hope*, *Union Made*, *Heeding the Call*, and *Forged in Freedom*. Norman's *Amazing Abe: How Abraham Cahan's Newspaper Gave a Voice to Jewish Immigrants* was published posthumously. Norman taught at Hebrew College and lived in Massachusetts.



**Vesper Stamper** is an award-winning author-illustrator of YA historical fiction and picture books. Her debut novel, *What the Night Sings*, was a Sydney Taylor Book Award winner, a National Book Award nominee, and a National Jewish Book Award finalist. Raised in New York City, Vesper's dreams of one day illustrating the Lower East Side at the turn of the century were fulfilled when she was asked to illustrate *Amazing Abe: How Abraham Cahan's Newspaper Gave a Voice to Jewish Immigrants* by Norman H. Finkelstein. Vesper teaches illustration at School of Visual Arts and lives with her family in the Northeast. You can find her at [VesperIllustration.com](http://VesperIllustration.com).



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#AmazingAbe