

New York City

Stories, structures, society



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Introduction

New York City and digital literacy

New York City is one of the most vibrant cities in the world. In this digitalized world, digital literacy ought to be an integral part of every curriculum.

In this book we seek to combine the two with a course which will open your eyes, teachers' and students' alike, to the City of New York as well as train students' ability to analyse, interpret and communicate in English using some of the most recent digital technology.

We have chosen topics such as geography and architecture, immigrants past and present, 9/11 and its aftermath and poetry, because of their importance when it comes to understanding New York and because we enjoy teaching these topics.

The course is aimed at A-level English (STX) in the Danish gymnasium (upper secondary / 16-19 years).

Having in mind the rapidly changing world of technology, new technology may indeed emerge tomorrow or soon after and this could soon outdate some of the present material. Nevertheless, we invite you pick and choose, to use all or just some of it or mix it your own ideas.

We would be delighted to hear from you if you have comments to the book, ideas to new digital programmes or exercises or anything else.

Kind regards,

Tina Jensen, John Mølgaard Sørensen, **Anders Stubkjær** (ed.)

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Chapter 1

What does New York mean to you?



What does New York mean to you?

USEFUL LINKS:

1. [Mindmeister](#)
2. [Freemind](#)
3. [Bubblus](#)
4. [Mindomo](#)
5. [Mindnode](#)
6. [Comapping](#)

Create a mind-map

Open any type of document you can write normal text in.

Let your mind drift and write down everything you come to think of when you hear these three words: 'New York City'.

To your left you see links to different free online mind-mapping services. Take a look at them and choose one.

In some cases, you may have to create a profile or download a programme.

Create a mind-map with the words and ideas you have just jotted down.

Chapter 2

The city's structure: Neighbourhoods





The Neighbourhoods

USEFUL LINKS

Wikipedia on the New York City neighbourhoods:

[Queens](#)

[Brooklyn](#)

[The Bronx](#)

[Manhattan](#)

[Staten Island](#)

[Demographics of New York City](#)

More general information about the neighbourhoods:

[NYCGOs page on neighborhoods](#)

The city's structure: Neighbourhoods

Divide the class into groups. Allocate one of New York's boroughs to each group:

1. Queens
2. Brooklyn
3. Manhattan
4. The Bronx
5. Staten Island

Each group has to make a presentation of "their" borough to the class and use e.g. Prezi, Power Point, or Screencast-o-matic.

Aspects which could be included in the presentation:

A brief historical overview, demography, governance, income, education, pictures or clips from documentaries or movies.

Take a stroll





SUGGESTED STREETS

Barclay Street, New York, NY, USA

Broadway, New York, NY, USA

Central Park West, New York, NY, USA

Times Square, New York, NY, USA

Madison Avenue, New York, NY, USA

Fulton Street, New York, NY, USA

Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd, New York, NY, USA

Google Street View

Take a stroll down the street using [Google Street View](#).

Describe at least five things in detail which they have in New York, but we don't have in Denmark.

You have to explain what the purpose of the item is, where it is located and why you have chosen it. Use as many details as possible.

Remember to save pictures of the things you find.

Once you are done with the assignment, upload the five pictures and their description to the Facebook group/wall.

Chapter 8

Immigrants



7460

COWIN LEVICK
NEW YORK



Ellis Island

USEFUL LINKS

Ellis Island

[Ellis Island Website](#)

[Ellis Island Website - History](#)

[National Park Service: Ellis Island - History and Culture - People](#)

[National Park Service: Ellis Island - History and Culture - Stories](#)

[National Park Service: Ellis Island - History and Culture - Oral history](#)

Translator

[Google](#)

[Bing Translator](#)

[Translate.reference.com](#)

Immigration

Go to the Ellis Island website (see left) and spend a few moments familiarising yourself with the website and what Ellis Island is.

Exercise a: Translation

Go to the history section of Ellis Island website. Run the five first lines through Google Translator, Bing Translator and Translate.reference.com.

If you can find one more online translator, try that one as well.

Then correct the suggested translations into proper Danish and discuss it in class.

Exercise b: Dear Diary

Go to the Ellis Island page of the National Park Service website. In the 'History and Culture' section you find a link to 'People'.

Read about the various people who kept Ellis Island running. Based upon what you have read write the 'diary' of one the persons covering a 'typical' working week in that person's life.

Or: In the 'History and Culture' section find a link to 'Stories' and go there. Based upon what you read, write the history of one of the families who came to New York.

Exercise c: Listening to history

Return to the Ellis Island page of the National Park Service website. In the 'For Teachers' section, scroll down and find the 'Primary sources in your classroom'.

Listen to one or more of the stories and let them inspire you to record your diary or family history using a recording device such as podcast. Everybody in your group has to contribute on the recording.

Based upon what you have heard make a Twitter or Facebook account for an immigrant coming to Ellis Island.

Tweet your character's experience on Ellis Island and the letting into the USA, or use the Facebook account for the same purpose.

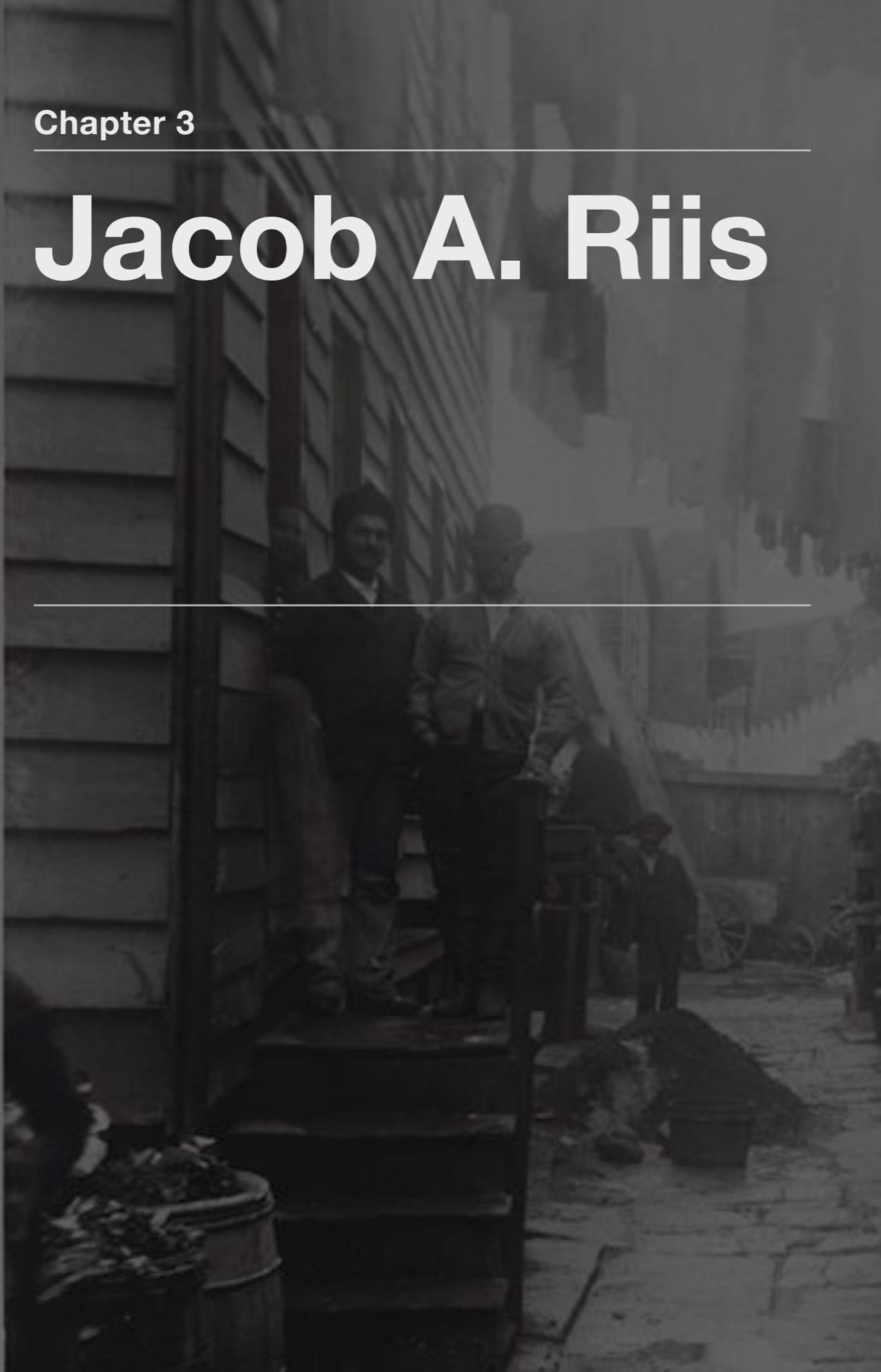
Find pictures on the Internet to attach to the account (Twitter or Facebook).

Exercise d: Creating a Documentary

Make a [Prezi](#) presentation about Ellis Island. Use photos from the net and / or You Tube videos.

Chapter 3

Jacob A. Riis





'How the Other Half Lives' - The Story of Jacob A. Riis and New York

USEFUL LINKS

[The Museum of New York City writes about Jacob A. Riis](#)

[The Ribe Municipality in Denmark writes about Jacob A. Riis](#)

[Jacob August Riis: 'How the Other Half Lives' \(full text\)](#)

[Wallwisher](#)

[Screencast-o-matic](#)

Firstly, find out more about the life of Jacob Riis and how his work highlighted poverty in the US and in New York in particular. Secondly, find and print five photos by Jacob A. Riis. These you are to analyse:

Now, imagine yourself as an immigrant in New York during the 19th century. During your first years in the US you lived in the tenement halls on Mulberry Street. Over the years you have done extraordinarily well and have been able to return home to visit your family in your country of birth.

In order to tell your family about your life you have brought with you pictures which describe life in the tenement halls on Lower East Side and thus also your life in the early years in New York.

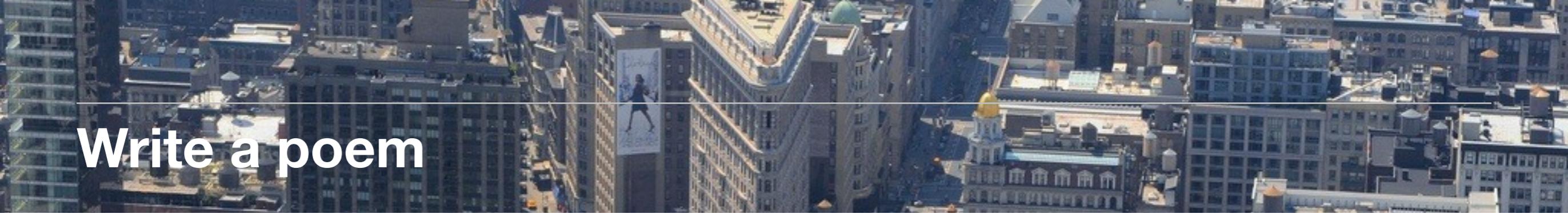
Use the memo function on your mobile phone to record a podcast where you describe the pictures and explain how they relate to your life in New York City. You can then

- a) Place the sound file on the web. Place the photos on Wallwisher and link to the correct audio file, or
- b) Place the photos in a sceencast-o-matic and describe what you see / tell the story the pictures tell.

Chapter 6

Guessing games





Write a poem

SUGGESTED BUILDINGS

1. World Trade Center
2. Empire State Building
3. St. Patrick's Cathedral
4. Grand Central Terminal
5. The MET – Metropolitan Museum of Art
6. St. John The Divine
7. Hearst Magazine Building
8. Waldorf-Astoria Hotel
9. Flatiron Building
10. Solomon R Guggenheim Museum

Pair work: Write a poem

On the left side of this page is a list of ten famous buildings in New York City.

You have to find information about five of the buildings of your own choosing. Then you have to write five poems about the buildings. Based on your poems your partner has to guess which you've used for your poems.

In other words, the task is:

1. Write down your five poems. They have to be at least four lines each.
2. Create a chat room for you and your partner using [Todaysmeet](#).
3. Present the first poem to your partner in the chat room.

Your partner then has to guess, which building your poem describes. Once your building has been guessed, it is your turn to guess one of your partner's poems.

Remember that the poems should not make it too obvious to guess. The harder it is – the better.

Chapter 4

9/11 and beyond



USEFUL LINKS

From 9/11-2001 (videos)

[The first plane hits the World Trade Center](#)

[The second plane hits the World Trade Center](#)

[The building of One World Trade Center](#)

[A time-lapse video shows the construction of the new World Trade Center](#)

[The top is located in its proper position on the new World Trade Center \(video\)](#)

[The New World Trade website](#)

Articles

[Ryan Devereaux: 'One World Trade Center climbs to become crown of New York skyline', theguardian.com, Monday April 30, 2012](#)

[Erica Ho: 'World Trade Center Becomes New York's Tallest Skyscraper, Again, April 30, 2012, Time](#)

As most know, September 2001 the world famous twin towers in New York City, known as the World Trade Center, were subjects to a terrorist attack.

Using commercial airplanes terrorists bombarded the two skyscrapers, which consequently collapsed. Almost 3000 people lost their lives in the attack.

Now, at the moment of writing, nearly eleven years later, a new skyscraper has been built at the location of the attack. The new skyscraper, called One WTC, is regarded as a symbol of the United States' and the New Yorkers' refusal to bend to terrorists.

In the article "One World Trade Center climbs to become crown of New York Skyline" by Ryan Devereaux, two positive opinions about the building project and the significance of the tower are stated.

For the students, here are six questions to 'One World Trade Center climbs to become crown of New York Skyline' by Ryan Devereaux:

1. What does WTC mean to you?
2. Why do you think it is important to the New Yorkers and to USA to rebuild the tower?

3. Why is it important to be the tallest building New York? Why can't it just be enough to build a beautiful and useful building?
4. David M Childs, the architect of the tower, mentions that it has “added significance to the construction of a building at the site of the September 11 attacks,” why is that?
5. The new World Trade Center will undoubtedly become a land mark/monument of great importance to New Yorkers. Do we have any such land marks in Denmark?
6. Why are such land marks/monuments important and can you think of other monuments in New York?

Show the process (non-fiction)

Instead of doing a traditional analysis and interpretation of the text, an alternative is to find and use a picture of a rhetoric pentagram.

Place it in a Prezi presentation and create presentation where you show the process of analysing a non-fiction text and how you have reached your conclusions.

A such presentation can be shown and discussed in class.

Write a short story or a poem

Write a short story or a poem about one of the following monuments and its importance and / or meaning to the New Yorkers and the world:

World Trade Center (Ground Zero, 20 Vesey Street, New York, NY, USA)

Memorial Site (WTC Memorial Foundation, New York, NY, USA)

You can use Google Street view to see the places and this may serve as further inspiration.

Afterwards, share your work on Wallwisher or a Wikidoc.

Chapter 7

New York poetry and songs



Poetry and songs

SUGGESTED LINKS

Poetry

[Academy of American Poets](#)

[Poets from New York](#)

Songs

[Wikipedia's list of songs about New York](#)

Interview the poet (Work in pairs)

You each have to find and analyse and interpret a poem which somehow deals with New York. Focus in particular on the how the city is portrayed in the poem, i.e. the setting. Assist each other with the analysis and interpretation.

Afterwards, one of you has to play a journalist, the other the writer of the poem. You have to interview the poet about his poem for three minutes only.

Use your mobile phone (or another electronic device) to record the interview. Make sure you both prepare interesting and original questions.

Then, you have to switch roles and do the interview the other way around. Listen to both interviews before you hand them in.

Movie - recitation

Find a New York poet and choose one of his / her poems.

Find at least a handful of pictures on the web - or take some yourself - which relate to the meaning of the poem. Make a movie where your main task is to recite the poem.

New York songs

Find a song about New York, e.g. from the Wikipedia list. Choose a song where it is possible to find a music video. Analyse the video (you can usually find it on YouTube).

Create a Wallwisher which should contain the following elements:

- Background information on the band / the songwriter
- Analysis of video
- Analysis of lyrics
- Comment on New York as setting
- Insert pictures if possible to illustrate the movie, lyrics.
- Insert links to the various items

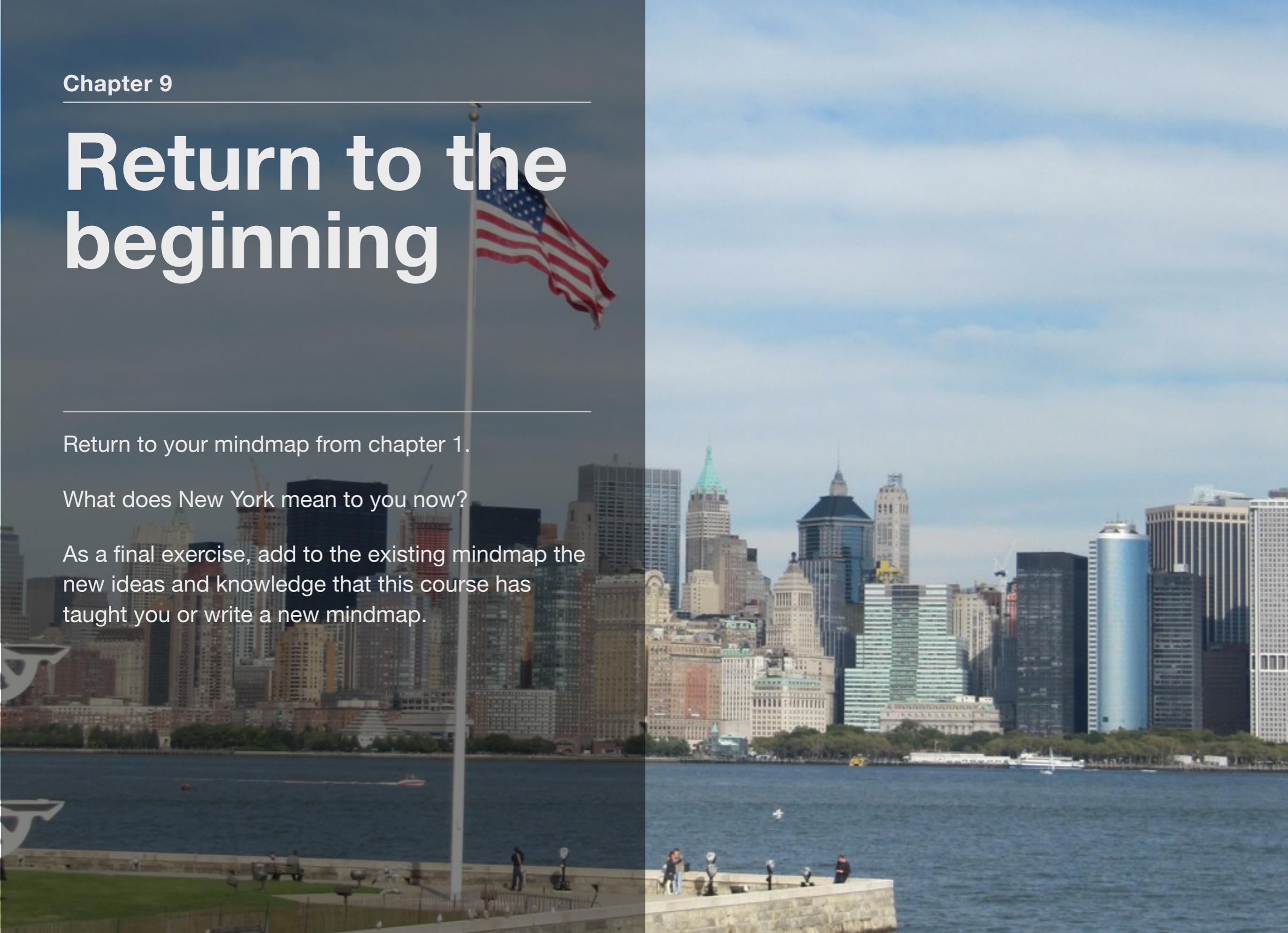
Chapter 9

Return to the beginning

Return to your mindmap from chapter 1.

What does New York mean to you now?

As a final exercise, add to the existing mindmap the new ideas and knowledge that this course has taught you or write a new mindmap.



Credits



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Should you as a photographer have any problems with the use of the photographs, please contact the editor.

Where nothing is indicated, the pictures have been taken by **Anders Stubkjær**.

Chris Chabot: Manhattan (front page)
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/chrischabot/8370757295/>

Jonathan Auch: 7-Train to Queens - Queens, NYC, chapter 1
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/31186655@N00/6154318062/>

Andrew Bacha: Willets Point, Queens NYC, chapter 2
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/andrewbacha/6149163316/>

Stewart Morris: Staten Island Ferry, p. 5
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/stewartmorris/879555222/>

Edwin Levick: Immigrant Station, Ellis Island, with ferry docked at adjaace <http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/dgkeysearchdetail.cfm?struclD=242912&imaged=416752>

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Jacob A Riis: Bandit's Roost, chapter 3
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jacob_Riis_-_Bandits'_Roost.jpg

Jacob A. Riis: Mulberry Bend, p. 7
http://collections.mcny.org/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult_VPage&VBID=24UP1GTRY395&SMLS=1&RW=1202&RH=743
Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

Asim Bharwani: Grand Central Station, chapter 6
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/94588149@N00/6009955649/in/photolist-aa5AqZ-aa8qNG>

Son of Groucho: Flatiron Building, p. 14
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/23401669@N00/4621988141/in/photolist-83qU3H-81Cqtr>

Harsh Vardhan: 9/11/2011, chapter 4
http://www.flickr.com/photos/harsh_vardhan/6138014717/

9/11 photos: 9/11-2001, p. 16
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/911pics/7835970458/>

Tatyana_727: Poem, chapter 8
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/64520211@N04/8399481385/in/pool-80833517@N00/>

Julie Jordan Scott: Poetry starts here now, p. 19
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/juliejordanscott/9211187820/>