

What Is Historical Fiction?

It's a story with a setting based on historical facts, but the details of the characters and plot are made up.

Historical Photo

This photo shows real immigrants from other countries arriving at Ellis Island in New York City.



Illustration

This painting is inspired by historical photos. It's in a fictional book about a girl who welcomes her cousin to America.



Historical Artifact

This Ellis Island ledger lists the people on a ship who immigrated to America.



Explore historical fiction through the American Girl Character series!



American Girl®

Chapter Book

This scene is from a historical fiction book. The story is made up, but it includes real details based on historical facts.

Rebecca squinted through the fog at the brick immigration building on Ellis Island. She was worried about her cousin Ana. Her uncle had sent a telegram weeks ago saying they had escaped Russia with great difficulty. Rebecca felt sure that if Ana arrived safely, the two of them would be like sisters.

Illustration and excerpt from *Rebecca and Ana* by Jacqueline Dembar Greene





EXPLORING

Historical Fiction

ELA and Social Studies Activities

GRADES 2-5

Look inside
for a chance to
**win American
Girl books!**

Get more materials at
scholastic.com/historicalfiction.



Understanding Historical Fiction

Bring historical fiction to life with creative activities that let students journey to the past.



Objective

Students will investigate image clues and primary sources to draw conclusions about historical fiction, then create their own historical fiction book cover and blurb.

Time

40 minutes

Materials

- What Is Historical Fiction? poster
- *Rebecca: The Sound of Applause* book excerpt
- Draw a Book Cover! activity sheet
- Optional: Resource pack of images from poster and historical book covers

CHANCE TO WIN!

Want a set of American Girl books for your classroom? Enter students' drawings of kids from the past for a chance to win. Learn more at [scholastic.com/historicalfiction/sweeps](https://www.scholastic.com/historicalfiction/sweeps).

1 Hook students by having them examine the Ellis Island photograph on the *What Is Historical Fiction?* poster. Ask what they notice (e.g., photo is in black and white, old-fashioned clothes, no rolling suitcases, etc.). If you'd like, reproduce and hand out the larger versions of the poster images from the resource pack, or use photos or documents from the time period you are currently teaching.

2 Ask students what they think historical fiction might be. Build on their answers to explain that it's a mix of fact and fiction—an imaginary story set in the past that shows what life was like then. Often the characters in the story are made up, but the setting and some aspects of the plot are based on historical facts. Some characters may also be real people who lived during the time period.

3 Have students work in pairs to brainstorm what they think the people on the poster are doing and thinking. Prompts to get them started: *What might be in their bundles? What can you imagine about how the adults and kids are feeling based on their facial expressions and how they are sitting?*

4 Have them share their ideas with the class. Explain that they just made their own historical fiction, blending history with their imaginations.

5 Read students the excerpt on the poster and excerpt sheet from *Rebecca: The Sound of Applause*. Discuss, comparing 1914 with today. Prompts: *How did people travel, play, shop, and live then? Now?*

6 Explain that students will draw their own historical fiction book cover. Hand out the Draw a Book Cover! activity sheet along with historical fiction books for reference (or book covers from the resource pack). After the activity, have students share their creations in groups.

Supporting All Learners

To add scaffolding or support ELLs

- Give sentence starters: *In 1914, people wore.... Now they wear....*
- Sort pictures of clothes and transportation from 1914 and 2019 on a Then and Now chart.

To increase the challenge

- Have students conduct research on a specific time period before making their book cover.

Extension

- Students investigate another era and make a Time Travel brochure with images and text to show what life was like then.

Name _____

Draw a Book Cover!

Illustrate your own historical fiction book cover. How will you show that the story happens in the past?

1. Prepare

Analyze the covers of historical fiction books.

You can look at...

- Clothes and objects
- How people traveled
- How buildings looked

2. Pick your setting

- **1770**—people traveled by horse-drawn carriage or boat
- **1870**—people traveled by steam train or boat
- **1970**—people traveled by car, train, or airplane
- **Another time** in the past

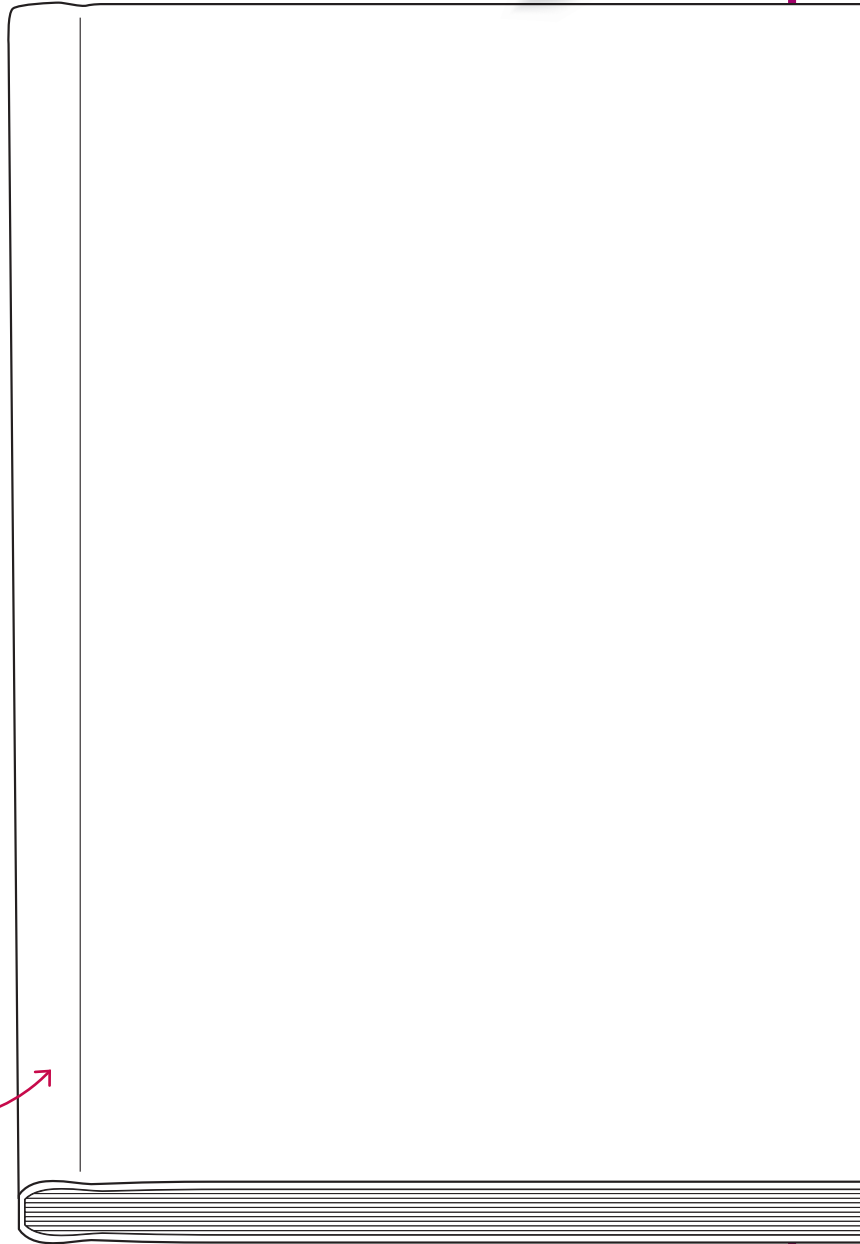
3. Pick your plotline

- Moving to a new home
- Getting lost
- Making a new best friend
- Your own idea

4. Draw your cover

Include clues that show both the **historical** and **fictional**.

Create a book blurb about your story on the back of this page. What is your character's challenge? How do you combine history and your imagination?



Discovering Family History

Help your child build family connections while learning about history.

- Have them **interview** a parent, grandparent, or other special family member.
- Let them use your phone to **video-record the interview**.
- Have them **write down notes** below or on a separate sheet of paper.
- Help them **trim the video** into a short "news report" to share with the whole family.



1. What year was it when you were my age? _____

2. What major news event happened when you were a kid? _____

3. Where did you go to school? What was it like? _____

4. What music did you listen to? _____

5. How did you keep in touch with your friends? _____

6. What is your favorite memory of being my age? Least favorite? _____



CHANCE TO WIN!

Kids can win American Girl character books when a parent, legal guardian, or teacher submits their drawing of a moment in history: [scholastic.com/historicalfiction/sweeps](https://www.scholastic.com/historicalfiction/sweeps).

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Eligibility: students in grades 2–5, 50 US & DC. Entries may be submitted only by the student's teacher or parent, 18+. To enter, a student's parent, legal guardian, or teacher must download 1 of the 3 student entry forms from [scholastic.com/historicalfiction/sweeps](https://www.scholastic.com/historicalfiction/sweeps). Entry period: 8/19/19 to 9/30/19 (11:59 p.m. ET) (mail-in entries, postmarked by 9/30/19 and received by 10/7/19). Void where prohibited. Rules and prizeing: [scholastic.com/historicalfiction/sweeps/rules](https://www.scholastic.com/historicalfiction/sweeps/rules).

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(10) PASSENGERS' LIST.
"The Passenger Act, 1882."

District of the City of New York, Port of New York.

I, John A. P. Phelan Master of the S.S. "Canada" do solemnly, sincerely and truly declare that the following List or Manifest, subscribed by me, and now delivered by me to the Collector of the Customs of the Collection District of the City of New York, is a full and perfect list of all the passengers taken on board the said vessel at Liverpool from which port said vessel has now arrived; and that on said list is truly designated the age, the sex, and the calling of each of said passengers, the location of the compartment or space occupied by each during the passage, the country of citizenship of each, and also the destination or location intended by each; and that said List or Manifest truly sets forth the number of said passengers who have died on said voyage, and the dates and causes of death, and the names and ages of those who died; also of the pieces of baggage of each; also a true statement, so far as it can be ascertained, with reference to the intention of each alien passenger as to a protracted sojourn in this country. So help me God.

Signed to this 2 January 1892 at Liverpool England before me, John A. P. Phelan is Master, from Great Britain burthen 2356 tons

No.	NAMES.	AGE Years. Mths.	SEX.	CALLING.	The country of which they are citizens.	Intended destination or location.	Date and cause of death.	Location of compartment or space occupied.	Number of pieces of baggage.	Transient, or in transit, or intending protracted sojourn.
<u>Embarked at Liverpool</u>										
1	Ellis King	21	F	Spinster	Ireland	New York		Upper Stowage Deck	1	Pro long
2	Annie Moore	13	"	"	"	New York		"	"	"
3	Anthony	11	M	Child	"	"		"	"	"
4	Phillips	7	"	"	"	"		"	"	"
5	John Ryan	24	"	Labourer	"	Minnesota		4-3 Forward	"	"
6	Mary	30	F	Wife	"	"		"	2	"
7	Michael Connell	20	M	Labourer	"	Connecticut		After " Port	1	"
<u>Embarked at Liverpool</u>										
8	Patrick Wingo	50	M	Smith	Russia	New York		After Stowage Port	1	Pro long
9	Morris Wingo	20	"	Machinist	England	"		"	1	"
10	Charles Kelly	45	"	Tailor	U. States	New York		"	1	"
1	Isabel Meldeire	32	"	Polish/Russian	Russia	New York		"	1	"
2	Paula Dignam	31	"	"	"	"		"	1	"
3	Esther Dignam	30	F	Wife	"	"		"	1	"
4	Sarah	11	M	Child	"	"		"	"	"
5	Isaac	7	"	"	"	"		"	2	"
6	Golda	4	F	"	"	"		"	"	"
7	Miriam	5	"	Infant	"	"		"	"	"
8	Mrs. G. Spruce	24	"	Wife	England	Pittsburg		"	"	"
9	Annie	4	"	Child	"	"		"	"	"
20	Mollie	2	"	"	"	"		"	2	"
1	Leonard	5	M	Infant	"	"		"	"	"
2	David Woodhead	21	"	Labourer	Russia	Pittsburg		"	1	"
3	Isabella P. Styer	20	"	Labourer	"	New York		"	1	"
4	Abraham Poles	40	"	Labourer	"	"		"	1	"
5	M. S. Schmalzer	19	F	Spinster	"	"		"	1	"
6	Moshe Hirschberg	36	"	Wife	"	"		"	"	"
7	Isabel	4	M	Child	"	"		"	1	"
8	Isabel Poles	30	F	Wife	"	"		"	"	"
9	Leah	7	M	Child	"	"		"	"	"
30	Moses	6	"	"	"	"		"	4	"
1	Isaac	4	"	"	"	"		"	"	"
2	Sara Schmalzer	26	F	Wife	"	"		"	1	"
33	Leah Anteping	30	"	Spinster	"	"		"	1	"



Historical Fiction Text Excerpts

Rebecca squinted through the fog at the brick immigration building on Ellis Island. She was worried about her cousin Ana. Her uncle had sent a telegram weeks ago saying they had escaped Russia with great difficulty. Rebecca felt sure that if Ana arrived safely, the two of them would be like sisters.

Excerpt from *Rebecca and Ana* by Jacqueline Dembar Greene

Poppa had moved to Detroit and opened his flower shop—where Yvonne now had a summer job. Now Mommy made the best cake ever, and Dwayne was determined to succeed in a music career so that he would be treated fairly. None of them had ever given up hope. Melody felt inspired.

Dr. King was chanting, “Free at last! Free at last!” The applause was like thunder in the sunshine.

On the walk back to the car, Melody made an announcement. “For Youth Day, I’m going to do ‘Lift Every Voice and Sing.’”

“That’s a big song for you, Little One!” Poppa said with a smile. She saw Mommy nodding her approval.

“Yes, it is,” Melody said to him. “But when I hear it, I feel the way I did listening to Dr. King. That’s how I want the audience to feel when I sing at Youth Day. Dwayne says when the words mean something special to a singer, amazing things happen.”

Big Momma gave Melody’s hand a squeeze. “Your brother is right. And I believe my chick can do anything she sets her mind to.”

Excerpt from *Melody No Ordinary Sound* by Denise Lewis Patrick

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THE JOURNEY BEGINS



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SMOKE ON THE WIND

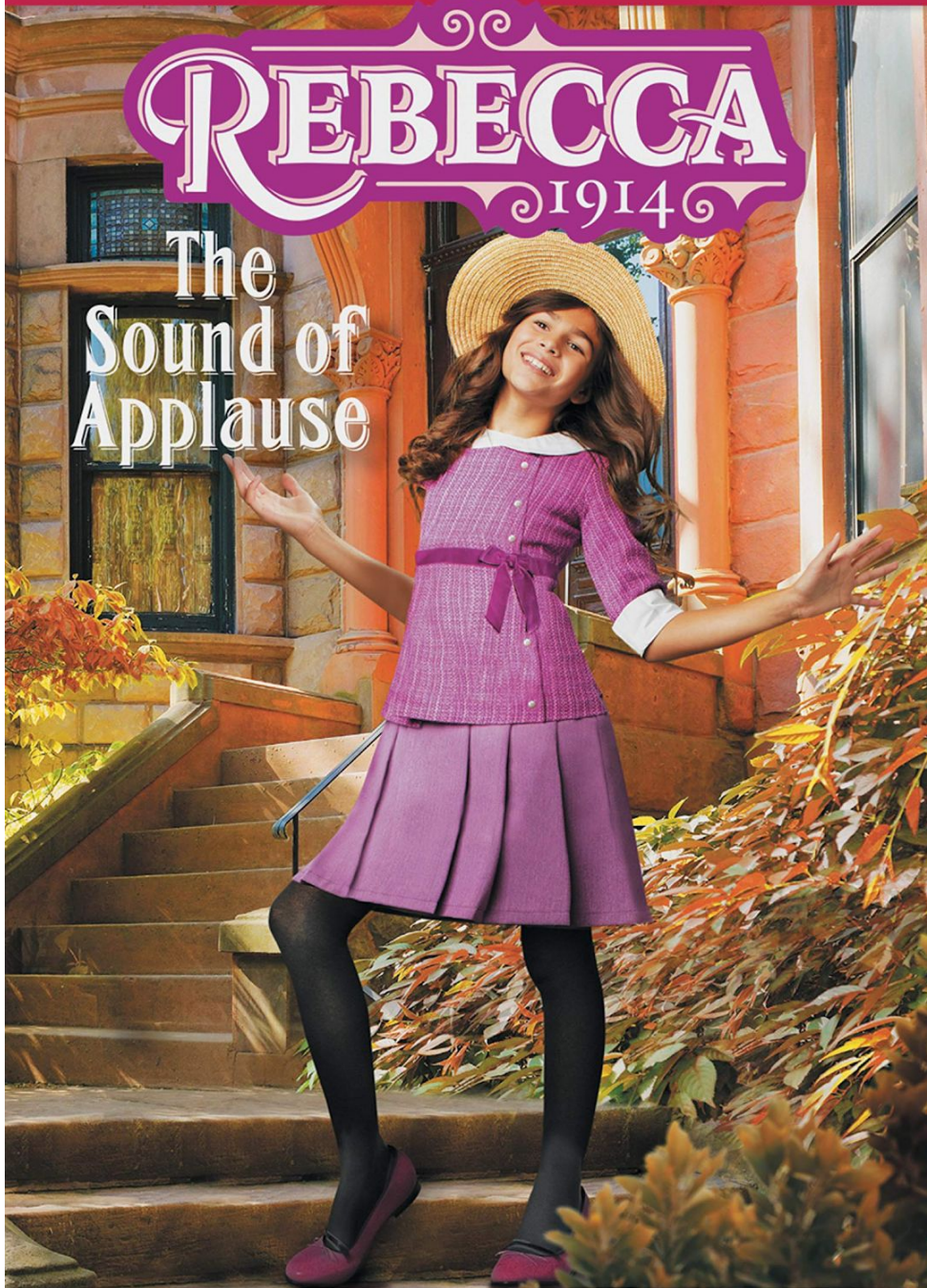


★ American Girl®

REBECCA

1914

The
Sound of
Applause



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REBECCA

1914

Lights,
Camera,
Rebecca!



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NAWEA

1941

Hula
for the
Home
Front

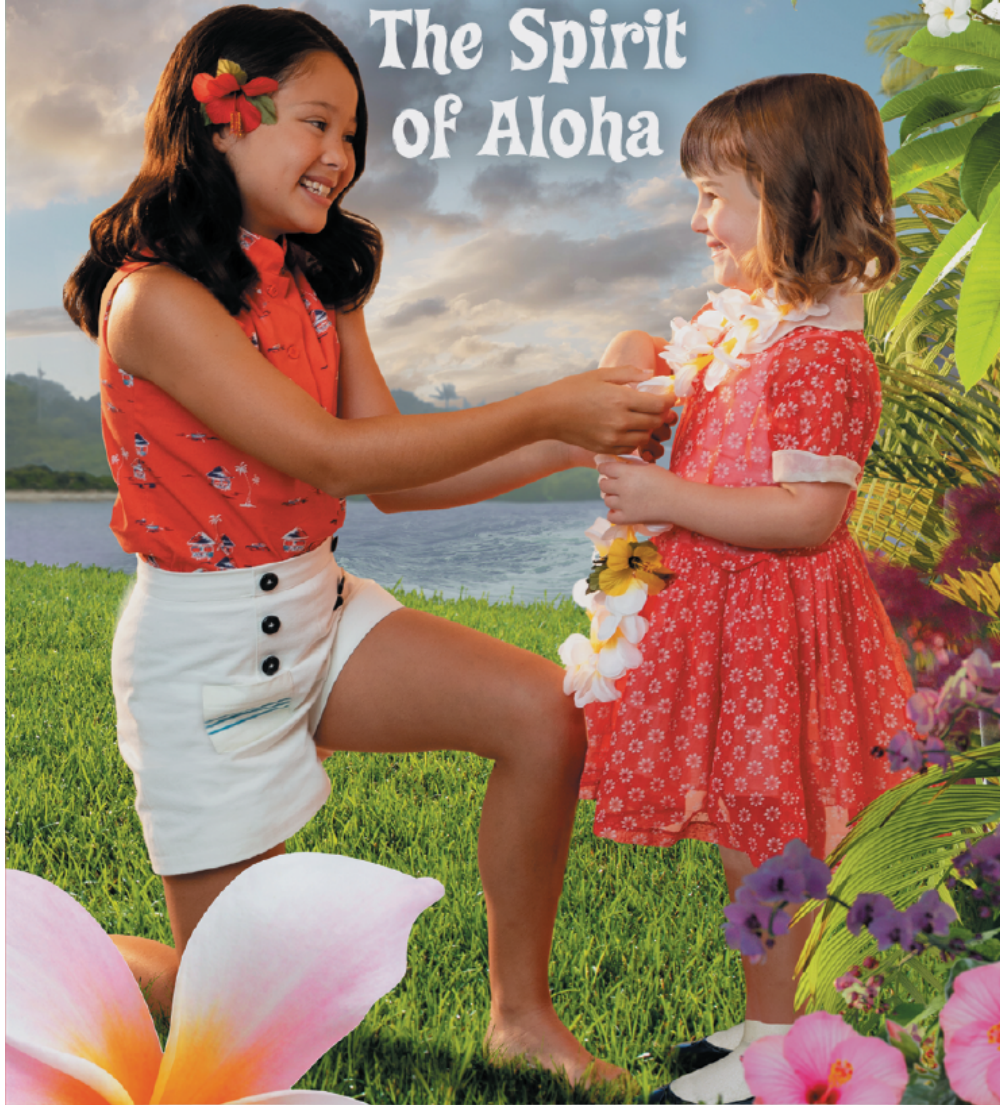


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NAWEA

1941

The Spirit
of Aloha



★ American Girl®

Maryellen

1954

Taking
Off



★ American Girl®

Maryellen

1954

The One
and Only

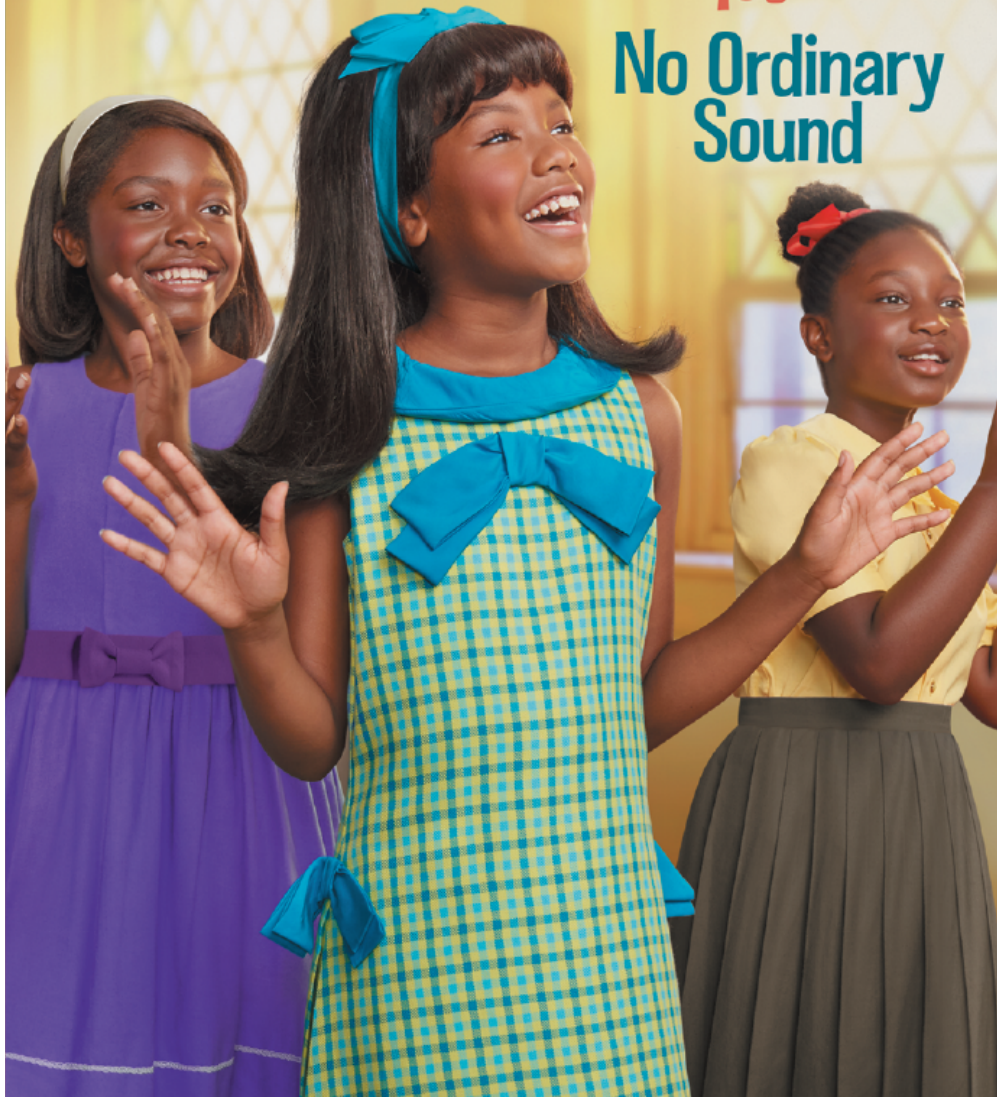


★ American Girl®

MELODY

1964

No Ordinary
Sound

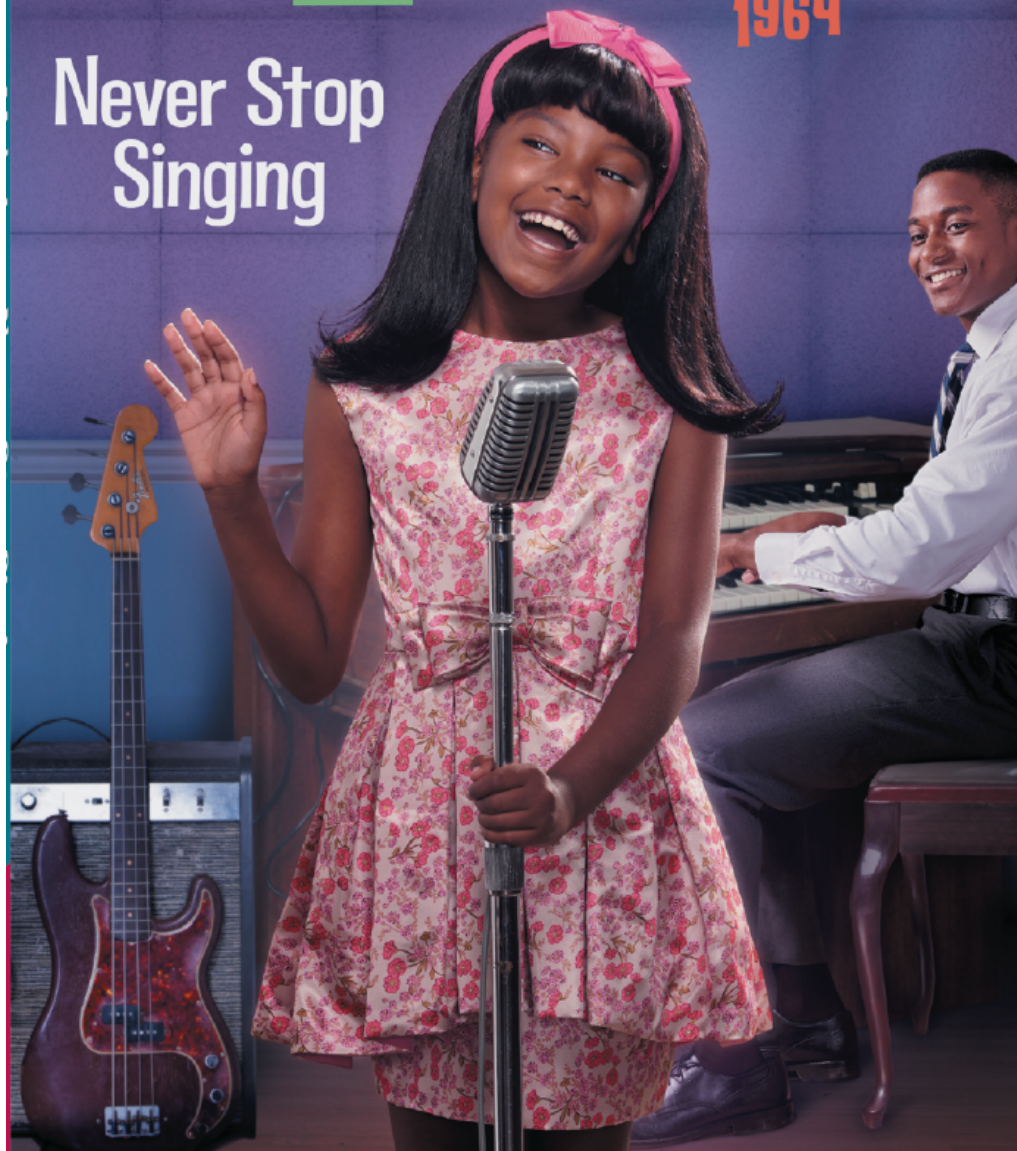


★ American Girl®

MELODY

1964

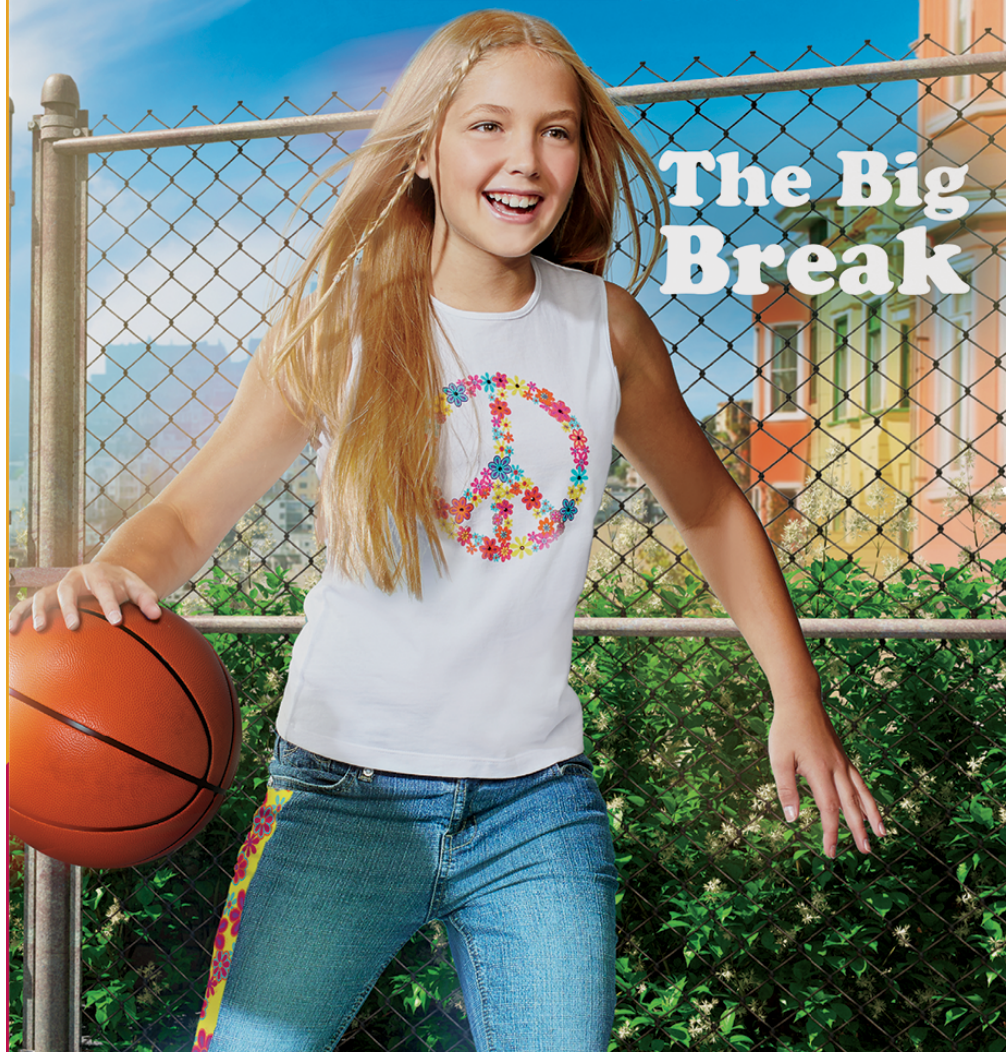
Never Stop
Singing



★ American Girl®

Julie
1974

The Big
Break



★ American Girl®

Julie 1974

**Takes a
Stand**

