

Centropa's video projects: an overview for teachers and students

Introduction

Since video is the natural language of today's teenagers, Centropa would like to combine students' talent for making videos with their keen desire to compete, along with our desire to help them learn. The result can be a project they will be very proud of. This guide is for students and teachers alike.

There are many video projects students in European schools can make, and we would like to see schools throughout Europe create 5-10 minute videos on "Our Town's Jewish History". The films should be historically accurate, and tell us an interesting story. Most of all, these stories should be innovative and creative.

All the stories need to be told in English—by the students—and this group project can involve many students:

- some can do the research
- others can scan the photos and then work with photoshop to make them look better
- others can write the script
- still others can narrate, and even play background music for the film, if they wish.

The film can be comprised only of old photos, with your voice over in the soundtrack, or you can make use video to show us the synagogues and cemeteries. Or you can use both.

This will be a competition in each country for the best story. Primarily, we will award digital equipment to the winning schools and students will also receive small prizes. The winners will be showcased at Centropa seminars for teachers around the world and will be available on the Centropa website..



Our Town's Jewish History

When students make this film, they are learning research skills, history, English, video and digital technology—all in one course!



This video should tell us *an entire story*, and let us create some guidelines.

Step 1. Students first need to begin by doing their research, so they know the following:

- a. When did Jews first come to our city?
- b. How many synagogues were there at the peak of the Jewish population?
- c. What was the peak Jewish population and when was that?
- d. Who were the most famous Jews who came from here, or from around here?
- e. How many Jews live here now and which Jewish sites, like cemeteries, are here now?
- f. What were the occupations of the Jewish people in our town?
- g. What happened here during the Holocaust?
- h. What happened to the Jews of our town after the Holocaust?
- i. Describe the Jewish community today and its activities.

Note on sources: We know that students will refer to the internet for their facts. That is not a problem, so long as the students *site specific, reputable sources* for their information. We must leave this decision to the teachers' discretion, as they vary from language to language. Obviously, Yad Vashem, the US Holocaust Museum, the Virtual Jewish Library are all acceptable resources and we are sure there are many others in each country & language.

When it comes to listing Jewish population figures and dates and numbers regarding the Holocaust, students should be told to provide at least *two sources for every fact*, just to

be sure. Remember: these stories will be seen by experts around the world.

Step 2: Locating good photos to tell the story with.



Where to get good photos: Aside from websites, national and city libraries and archives will have photos about Jewish history or places. So will local Jewish museums. Remember, if you search in Google and type in the name of a town + Jewish, you may get lots of photos.

But be careful to choose high res photos, at least 1084 x 824—otherwise, they will not look good on video.



Going to a museum or archive: Getting pictures to scan should not prove too difficult, but it might take a long time and might cost money.

Therefore, students can, if they are serious about it, simply take a good photo with their own camera of a photo sitting on a desk—and then use that. However, it is important to make a good quality photo. See sample above. And be sure to shoot in high resolution! Later, you can use a photo editing program to cut the photo out.



Step 3. At this point, you have some old photos and you have done good research. Students should now visit the Jewish sites in their town (or nearby town) and take good photos with their digital cameras or shoot video. Many cell phones now offer the option for shooting video, but it would be better to use something of higher quality, if possible.

When shooting video, here are a few basic rules:

--If the thing or person you are shooting is moving, then you can hold the video camera and shoot it. If the person is sitting, or if you are shooting a synagogue or cemetery, *then use a tripod!*

--If you want to show us the dome of a synagogue and the altar, then slowly pan up or down.

--Each shot should last a minimum of 20 seconds.

--If you are going to be listening to someone, try and find a way to get a small microphone in front of him or her, because the microphone on the camcorder usually won't be good enough—especially if they are outside on the street, where there is too much noise. We realize you may not be able to find a mike for this, but do try.

--IF YOU WANT TO RECORD SOMEONE SPEAKING AND YOU DON'T HAVE AN EXTERNAL MICROPHONE AND ONLY HAVE THE MICROPHONE FROM THE CAMCORDER

--shoot inside

--use a closed off room where you will have quiet










--use a tripod



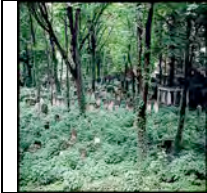






Step 4. The students then need to create a story board or script—in English. The script needs to be in MS word, and the photos dragged and dropped into the word doc. (please note: don't drag high res photos into your word doc as it will crash!).

Remember: students need to be told, over and over again, *"We want you to tell us a story. Use photos or video or both, but make it a story for us."* If your school has a creative writing course, then this teacher should certainly be able to help.

Here is an example of a basic story line on a town's Jewish history—but remember, you can use video or still photos or both. That's up to you.

	<p>This is a picture of our town, which was founded in 1120. Around 500,000 people live here today, and we would like to introduce you to our town's Jewish history.</p>
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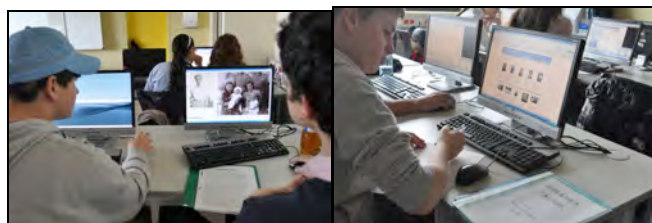
	<p>Jews lived here since the 1300s, and at their peak, in 1920, there were 11,000 Jews here.</p>
	<p>Jewish families contributed in many ways to the growth of our city. They were workers, tavern owners, doctors, lawyers</p>
	<p>Many of the shops were owned by Jewish families, like the one owned by Mr Herskovits.</p>
	<p>We had two Jewish schools in our town. Here is the graduating class of 1920.</p>
	<p>And here is another picture. That is not Hebrew written above, by the way—that's Yiddish, and it reads: _____.</p>
	<p>Hashomer Hatzair was very important in our town, and we have several pictures of the Hashomer "ken." Hashomer was: <i>[give a description]</i></p>
 <p><small>Troops of Betar in Uniform Berlin 1930 (Photo Institut Jabotinsky)</small></p>	<p>But of course, if there was one Jewish youth group, there would naturally be a competitor, and we also had a Betar club here, too.</p>
	<p>And sports was always important here—this is a picture of the Makabi swim team from the 1930s</p>
	<p>The Holocaust came to our city in 1941. Although around 4,500 Jews escaped, around 5,000 were deported to the death camps in 1942 and most were killed there. Here are some identity papers of Jews in our town. We took this picture in our city archive.</p>
	<p>Here is a photo of the place where the Jews were shot. It is called _____.</p>

		<p>Today we have one synagogue in our city, and this is Mr Karp, who is the president of the community.</p>
		<p>This is the interior of the synagogue, and it is quite beautiful. The architect's name was Leo Roston and it was built in 1899. Here are some details of the synagogue: -- -- --</p>
		<p>Our Jewish cemetery is also beautiful, with around 5,000 graves, but it is obviously overgrown.</p>
		<p>Here is a monument in the Jewish cemetery to those who were deported. We counted 98 names on this memorial, and it was for Jews killed in work camps in _____.</p>
		<p>Mr Bernzweig is a member of the Jewish community. He was a dentist, survived Auschwitz, and lives in our city today.</p>
		<p>Mr Karp and Mr Bernzweig have Friday evening services in the synagogue and they say traditional prayers.</p>
		<p>Although there are not many Jews today in our town, we do have a Sunday school, where twenty children attend.</p>
		<p>We have a very lively Jewish school in our city, and students from our school now work as doctors, lawyers and scientists!</p>
		<p>We hope you have enjoyed this virtual visit to our Jewish community. We have learned that in the Jewish religion, Zachor is a very important word. It means to remember. And we remember our Jewish community.</p>

Please remember—this is only meant to be a guideline, a template. Naturally, if you can

film a Hanukkah party or a choir of the older people in the community singing, these would be interesting, too.

Important: when students have finished their script, they need to submit it to the English teacher for a grammar check and story telling flow. They should also submit the script to the history teacher, who can do some fact checking, just to be sure. We at Centropa would also be glad to read the scripts for you.



Step 5. Students then need to make their video, which can be done in so many programs now—Microsoft Movie Maker, Sony Vegas, Apple iMovie, etc. If your school has an IT department or a teacher that specializes in video or film, then please have them help, too. They will record their English language voice over.

As some basic tips, consider the following steps, regardless of your choice of software

1. Collecting
 - a. Collect your materials and place them into a single folder
 - i. Images
 - ii. Video Clips
 - iii. Audio Files
 - iv. Sound Effects
2. Importing
 - a. Open your software and make sure you have access to “import” the materials you collected into your software
 - b. Import all materials so that you can arrange them into an organized film
3. Arrangement
 - a. Your software will have a “timeline” or “project area” where you can arrange your materials to create your film.
 - b. Consider performing your narration first, at the speed and tone you wish, and then add the materials.
 - c. Once narration is complete, add your images, audio files, video clips and sound effects

**Remember to save frequently during this process!
4. Converting
 - a. Finalize your film into a .MOV or a .MP4
 - b. Save the finalized version to your computer
 - c. Use the saved file to share online

At the end of the film, they should list all the names of the students who participated, and they should thank the city library, Jewish community—or whoever helped them with their research.

The final step is to upload the film, and we can review those instructions with you. Your clever students will know how to upload to blip or youtube.