



Student video competition
September 2017 – April 2018

Family History Project guideline

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General Overview: The Centropa Jewish Network Student Competition

For the third year, the Centropa Jewish Network (CJN) announces a cross-cultural video competition for students. This is an opportunity for students to discover and share their experiences of Jewish life and culture in their countries. Students in Jewish schools in the US, Europe and Israel are invited to compete in any of the four categories, and by sharing their own projects, connect and learn from each other.

The best videos of the competition will receive valuable prizes. For each category, we reward the first place video with a 400 EUR gift card, the runners-up with a 150 EUR gift card, while honorable mentions and the Audience prize winners will receive cinema tickets.

Project Goals:

- Connect students from the US, Israel and various countries of Europe, so they can learn about their own Jewish community, and from each other.
- To develop students' skills in the areas of research, presentation, cooperation/teamwork, ICT (info communication technology) systems, narrative writing and video editing. This project brings together many subjects: History, Computer Studies, Jewish Studies, Media Studies, and last but not least English Language.
- Produce high quality videos or presentations which are historically accurate, creative, and tell us an interesting story about some aspect of Jewish life or culture in the students' community.

Requirements:

All material submitted to the competition must meet the following criteria. Please note that the videos not meeting these criteria will not be accepted.

- The project must be a visual presentation of a topic: a video, PowerPoint, or Prezi.
- Students have to create the videos on their own. They might get professional support, but the final film has to be their own work solely. Students can work individually or in groups, where every student is responsible for a different task according to their interests and skills.
- The final product should not be longer than 5 minutes.
- All videos or presentations must have English narration or English subtitles.

- To submit your videos, upload them to Youtube, and then to the [Centropa Border Jumping](#) page. Upload the video until the deadline, which is the 27th of April, 2018.

The Family History Project

Your family story is history. The events of the 20th and 21st centuries shaped your family's story and this project will help you discover how. Where you live, the culture you identify with, who you are in the world – the events of the past century contributed to each of these. Through this project you will share your story with students in other countries, and learn about their Jewish stories as well.

In this project, each student will have the following options:

- research either his or her own family history;
- research the family story of a chosen Jewish individual from the [Centropa database](#);
- research the family story of a person who appears in a school tableau portrayed in your school.

For this film project you will tell the story of a chosen Jewish person through words, images (moving or still) and music. You will research the historical context and show how that person was shaped by those historical events.

Step-by-step instructions: how to plan, organize and create the film

1. First, look at good examples!

As a first step, we recommend you to watch several of Centropa's short [multimedia films](#) to learn what a good, short film looks like. If you have time in class, here is an [assignment about analyzing a Centropa film](#), which can help you think about how to design your own project. We also recommend you to look at the winning videos of last years' student competition. You can watch the [winners here](#), the [runner ups here](#).

After watching the films and answering the given questions, you hopefully have some ideas about what a good film looks and feels like, and how you would like to plan your own video. So let's start!

2. Find the Story

The first thing you need is a topic, a person you have identified from your ancestors with a good family story, or an event that shaped the history of your family. Once you have your topic you need to make a bullet summary of your information. Talk your topic through with a friend, your mom or dad, a classmate and your teacher. Decide which part of the story you want to focus on, where you will research the information to tell the story (including the historical context), and who from your family you will interview for (hopefully) firsthand information.

Your film will be much more powerful if you can show how 20th century historical events shaped the individual family. Research the relevant historical events important for your story.

Sources: Using the Internet to search for historical facts is not a problem as long as you *make sure your sources provide accurate information and are reputable*. You must follow your school's guidelines for citing those sources. Examples of acceptable sources: [Yad Vashem](#), the [US Holocaust Museum](#), the [Virtual Jewish Library](#) – but there are many other respectable sources in each country and language.

For historical dates and numbers, especially regarding the Holocaust, you need *two sources for every fact*. **Students and teachers in other countries will see your films so be sure to give them accurate information.**

3. Collecting the material for your film

A) Photographs and documents

Family Photos

When you interview your relative(s) be sure to gather and scan photos important to them, particularly the ones that will help you tell their story. If you're telling the story of your grandmother, ask for photos from when she was a child, teen, and adult. Use the photographs in the interview: Who is in the photograph? Where was it taken? What was happening just before or after the photograph was taken? Are there any memories that the photograph evokes for them? Choose photos that visually tell the story you will narrate. If your grandmother loved to hike and she has a photo of her on a hike you would include that.

If you scan a photo with several people in it, be sure to right down the names of the people in the photograph on a sheet of paper so that you remember. Usually, when people share a photograph they say, "this is, and that is." If you are recording the interview this will not help you remember. In addition, by writing by writing the information on a separate sheet of paper you can ask for the correct spelling, and later on remember who each person is in the photograph. For example, "Tibor Kertesz is on the left, Roszi Kenesei is in the back, on the left, Miksa Nemeth is standing in the back, middle." Otherwise, you will likely forget all of the names and who is who, which might be useful when writing the script for your film.

Websites

You will also need photos that convey the historical context for your film. You can search particular sites – such as Yad Vashem or the United States Holocaust Museum, to find these images. If you search Google and type in the name of a town + Jewish, you may get lots of photos. High resolution photos, at least 1084 x 824, will look best on video. Be sure to properly cite the source of every photo.

Libraries, museums or archives

Local museums or archives will have photos specific to your town's history. They will be a great resource for you to find photos or historical information to add to your film. Scanning the photos in their collections may cost money. We recommend you call first to find out what is available – it's possible they have some materials on their website.

Another option is to take a photo with your camera of a photo sitting on a desk. However, it is important to make a good quality photo. Take your picture in high resolution!

When using a photograph or document, always check for copyright permission!

B) Interviews

The best films tell stories learned from the very people who lived them, so you might want to interview several people who can tell your family stories. If you want to get the most out of the interview, you need to be prepared and we suggest the following:

Think about what you really want to know from the people you interview and write up a list of questions that will help you get that information. We recommend starting a week or two ahead of time to think about these questions because some questions might not occur to you until you've starting really thinking about what you want to learn from your interviewees. Be sure to include questions such as: "What did it feel like when X happened? What did you think was happening when X happened?" You will learn much more interesting information if you also ask about your interviewee's experience, and asking open-ended questions that allow the person you're interviewing to share as many memories as possible.

You will ask relatives about their experiences before, during and after WWII; ask for stories of what being Jewish was like before the war and how their Jewish identities may have changed under socialism; how they rebuilt their lives after the war; and where some of their family may have immigrated. In addition, you should ask about what your families currently do, if anything, to identify as Jews, as well as how Jewish life in the family has changed from generation to generation.

Some questions you might ask:

- Where did you live before the war?
- How did your parents earn a living before the war?
- Where were you when war broke out?
- How did your family survive the war?
- Where did your family end up after the war?
- How did they rebuild their lives?
- Did you always know you were Jewish?
- What were three important turning points or events in your life (or your family's history)? What made them so important and how did they shape your family's experience? [You can use the answer to this question to shape the story for the entire film.]

If your family was Jewish, don't forget to ask the following questions:

- Describe any Jewish traditions your family observed.
- Did any of your family members make aliyah (move to Israel) before the war? Or perhaps they emigrated somewhere else from your country?
- How did your family rebuild your Jewish lives after socialism?

Consider bringing flowers or some chocolate or a small gift to show your interviewee that you appreciate their time and their willingness to share their memories with you.

C) Shooting photo and video

Whether you are recording the interview with a camera on only an audio recorder, you need to find a nice, quiet place for the interview. If using a camera, the space must have excellent

light so that the interviewee is not in shadows, e.g. a garden or a room with a window. If using a camera, use a tripod! We suggest you to use a good quality digital camera, but if you don't have one, you can also use your phone. [Here you can find a video with some very useful tips about how to make a good video with a smartphone.](#)

Sound: this is the most important part of an interview, and a little tricky because you will be able to hear the interviewee but that doesn't mean the mic is picking up his or her voice clearly. We advise you to use a sound recorder, as the microphone on the camera usually won't be good enough. Smart phones usually have a good sound recorder. Place it close to your interviewee, but make sure it is not visible for the camera.

When shooting video, here are a few basic rules:

- If the thing or person you are shooting is moving, then hold the video camera and shoot it. If the person is sitting, or standing in one place, use a tripod!
- If you want to show us a building, for example, then slowly pan the camera up or down.
- Each shot should last a minimum of 20 seconds.

4. Creating a storyboard, writing the script for the film

Now that you've gathered your family story, photos, and video, you need to create a storyboard or script - in English. What is a storyboard? It is the story you will tell – in words *and* in images. Next to each sentence you place the images that will be on screen when you read that part of the script.

We suggest you follow several guidelines when creating your script:

- Make it true. Everything must be historically accurate, fact-checked.
- Make it beautiful. The images must draw people in and make people want to watch (and how you put them together to tell the story must do the same).
- Make us care. Tell us more than facts. Why is this story important? What makes it interesting? Most people like stories that they can relate to, so one question you might ask yourself is: what is the human part of this story that anyone can relate to?

When working on the script there are two options:

- a) writing the script and making the video in English
- b) making the video in your mother tongue and creating English subtitles.

Important: when you finish your script, be sure to show it to your teacher to check for grammar and storytelling. Your teacher will be able to show you where you should add more information, or perhaps another photo. Your teacher can also check your historical facts.

5. Instructions how to edit, cut, save, and upload the film

Since every school and student has different equipment, there are two options for making your film:

- a) For those who don't have the time or equipment to make a full-fledged film we recommend that you put together a PowerPoint (PPT) or Prezi (www.prezi.com) presentation and record it with Screencast-o-matic (www.screencast-o-matic.com), which will allow you to capture your computer screen as you run the PPT slideshow or Prezi and add narration. If you haven't used Prezi before, we recommend you to visit their webpage and watch their short tutorials. Prezi

is easy to use, and it is great for the visual representation of various topics, especially because of its zooming function that allows you to “zoom in” to the most important things in your story.

b) Those who have the time and resources to create a video that you will edit together, this can be done in 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. You can find some help on the [Centropa website](#) as well.

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 in your computer:
 - a. Images
 - b. Video Clips
 - c. Audio Files
 - d. Sound Effects (If you use background music, make sure to use non-copyrighted material so that you can upload your video to YouTube.)

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!

At the end of the film, list all the names of the students who participated, thank anyone you interviewed, whoever helped you find information, and whoever worked with you to put together your project. Don't forget to cite every source in your credits!

4. Converting

- a) Finalize your film into a .MOV or a .MP4
- b) Save the finalized version to your computer

5. Sharing & submitting

- a) Share the saved file online on Youtube
- b) Ask your teacher to upload your film to our [Border Jumping website](#) so that students around the world can watch and comment on your film.
- c) After uploading your film to our Border Jumping page, write to the coordinator and let him know that you submitted the video!
- d) **Submit your video to our competition until 27th of April, 2018!**

Got more questions?

**Do not hesitate to ask us at Centropa (Borbála Pál: pal@centropa.org) or
Lowell Blackman, Coordinator of the Family History Project (lowell418@gmail.com)**