

REGISTRATION AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES: INSTRUCTIONS

Topic:	Jews from Arab Countries: Interview and Research
Subject Areas:	Communication skills; Israel Studies, Analytical/ Higher Order Thinking, Reading, Writing
Type of Lesson	Follow Up Assignment/Project

GOALS

1. Students will explore the plight and flight of Jews in various Arab countries; and
2. Students will collect registration data from *Sephardi-Mizrahi* Jewish interviewees.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will recognize the long and varied existence of Jewish communities in Arab countries before Jews were displaced;
2. Students will comprehend the losses suffered by *Sephardi-Mizrahi* Jew in having to leave their homes in their place of birth;
3. Students will gain interview and/or research skills (either by conducting interviews or in-depth research).

POTENTIAL ACTIVITY # 1: Interview and Registration

As one follow up assignment or project, for those able to, students can interview a *Sephardi-Mizrahi* Jew who came from an Arab country. This could be anyone the students know - a family member; a teacher at school; a member of their synagogue; etc.

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY # 1

1. Introduction and Registration Form with instructions (See below, this section, p. 26)
2. Pre-Interview training material; (See below, this section, p. 28)
3. Interview Set-Up and Outline; (See below, this section, p. 30)
4. List of questions for students to conduct the interview. (See below, this section, p. 31)

POTENTIAL ACTIVITY # 2: RESEARCH ON COUNTRY PROFILES

Students can conduct meaningful research on the variety of experiences for Jews and Jewish communities in up to 10 different Arab countries.

The teacher can divide the class into small groups Each group could chose one of 10 Arab countries – Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Aden. Each has a different Jewish history but the commonality throughout is the displacement of Jews from these countries. From up to 1,000,000 Jews at the turn of the century, fewer than 7,000 Jews remain in all these Arab countries today.

The groups could research:

- a. Life as it Was (before the 20th century);
- b. Changing Times (Plight of Jews under Muslim rule)
- c. Flight and Displacement (From their country of birth); and
- d. Resettlement (Rebuilding new lives In Israel and elsewhere).

If possible, each group can then give their report to the class during Session II.

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY # 2

1. An outline on how to research and prepare a “country outline” for presentation to the class (See below, this section, p. 33)
2. Webography listing sites that provide information on the history and the life of Jews in different Arab countries (See below, this section, p. 34)

ACTIVITY # 1: INTRODUCTION AND REGISTRATION FORM

For Students Able to Interview a Sephardi-Mizrahi Jew

Dear Student:

Just imagine -- by doing one task, you can make a real difference by recording Jewish history and ensuring rights for Jews from Arab countries.

How's that possible? Simply, you and thousands of other students around the world are collecting the personal stories of Jews who were displaced from Arab countries. This information is being gathered to record and preserve the history of the hundreds of thousands of Jews who were forced to flee their native homes in Arab countries.

Why is this important? As you learned from the film “*The Forgotten Refugees*” the word ‘refugees’ in the context of the Middle East must include the over 850,000 Jews uprooted since 1948 from thousands of Jewish communities. Their families had lived in the region for 2,500 years -- fully a 1,000 years before the advent of Islam.

They were forgotten but now it is only fair that the Jewish refugees’ stories be told. Their history and cultural contributions should be recognized and celebrated, too. And this is what this activity is all about.

How then can you help accomplish this goal? Follow the interview outline that will be provided to you. It should help you – and the person you interview -- get the most out of the discussion. It is important to remember that there is a dual focus for the interview:

1. The interview and the interviewees – the collection of their information; and
2. Collecting your reactions to share with the class

Good luck – and thank you.



REGISTRATION FORM

INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS AND REDRESS CAMPAIGN

Sephardic Jews in 20 countries are now recording their family histories and registering the communal and individual losses of Jewish refugees who were uprooted from Arab countries.

SECTION 1. TO BE COMPLETED BY PERSON FILLING OUT THIS REGISTRATION FORM											
Name			Address				City, State				
Zip/Postal Code		Country		Phone Number			E-mail Address				
If you are filling this Registration Form out for someone else, what is your relationship to them:											
SECTION 2. FAMILY REGISTRATION [Name of person or family that left the Arab country]											
FAMILY NAME:				FIRST NAME:				MAIDEN NAME OR OTHER:			
SECTION 3. COUNTRY OF ORIGIN											
ADEN	ALGERIA	EGYPT	LEBANON	LIBYA	MOROCCO	IRAN	IRAQ	SUDAN	SYRIA	TUNISIA	YEMEN
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name of Village, Town or City In Country of Origin?				Occupation?			Year of Departure?				
Where did person go after leaving country of origin?				How long did they stay there?			Where did they finally resettle?				
SECTION 4. LOST ASSETS [Please list any assets confiscated or abandoned in the country of origin.]											
Family Assets (homes, business, property, pensions, etc.)						Communal Assets (synagogues, schools, cemeteries, etc.)					

Completed registration forms will be hand delivered to Israel's *Ministry of Justice* where they will be catalogued and preserved. When and if necessary, the information gathered may be used as the factual basis necessary to assert the rights of Jewish refugees displaced from Arab countries and Iran. All information will remain strictly confidential at all times.

Please fill out and mail this Registration Form to:

JUSTICE FOR JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES • 15 West 16th Street • 6TH Fl. • New York, NY 10011 USA

Phone: 917-606-8262 - Fax: 212-294-8348 - E-Mail: info@justiceforjews.com

PRE-INTERVIEW TRAINING: HOW TO CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW

1. How to prepare for this (and any) interview: By previewing the material and gaining some information about the person and his/ her country of origin, you'll be able to ask more intelligent and relevant questions; respond thoughtfully to any questions the interviewee might pose; and later reflect deeply about the information you heard. It is important to:
 - *Practice succinctly describing the purpose of the interview.* If you can't say it, you don't understand it.
 - *Outline* in your mind and concretely state *the type of information you hope to get by the end of the interview.*
 - Review the registry form.
 - *Call before* to set the appointment and then again to confirm the appointment [pre-call script forthcoming: e.g. who you are; what you are doing; why you are calling them; how long it will take; why their participation is so important, etc.]
 - *Preview the material:* To better understand what is being mentioned you have to do some preparation about the topic in general (read materials) and the person being interviewed:
 - i. For example, if you know from which country the person fled, review specific material related to that country to familiarize yourself with names, words, history, etc.
 - ii. In addition to the questions on the registry form, jot down a few questions about which you are curious or that were generated by the material preview or the video, BUT
 - Go in with your ears open and without pre-conceptions.
 - Be especially aware of your personal appearance and grooming. If you want people to think you are on a serious mission, consider everything through their eyes: dress, demeanor, manner of speech. Act like a serious person on an important mission. *You are representing your school and undertaking an important responsibility.*
2. How to relate to interviewees: *Derech erez*, politeness, attentiveness, responsiveness, seriousness of purpose are the qualities of a good interviewer. Always be friendly, respectful, and pleasant. These attributes can help ensure your success in collecting the needed information. And a good sense of humor can also help. Therefore:
 - Always treat the interviewees with the utmost *respect*
 - *Listen.* Really listen.
 - *Respond* to his/ her questions and concerns (See attached Frequently Asked Questions)
3. Tips on conducting the interview:
 - *Be prompt.* Being late is just plain annoying and interferes with your ability to build trust with an informant.
 - If you are going to be late, call to let the informant know. Most informants understand that some delays cannot be avoided.
 - *Be prepared.* Arrive with all materials ready to use (other than quickly setting up the tape recorder, if you use one).
 - If you plan to record the interview, first ask the informant if he or she minds your doing so. Only after the informant provides permission should you turn on the tape recorder.
 - *Begin the interview by repeating the purpose.* Then ask the questions.

NOTE: As the interviewee responds to your questions, make sure that you clearly and completely understand the responses. If you do not, ask the person to clarify points that seem unclear, amplify points that seem ambiguous, and verify points (for this purpose, you might use closed questions, such as "Did you say that...")

Also: Interviewing successfully is a gentle art, so

- *Don't jump right into the questions.* Make some small talk to make the interviewee -- and yourself -- more comfortable.
- *Listen to the tone of the interviewee's voice* to know when to get into it and whether to push even more.
- *Always ask questions;* don't make speeches.
- Avoid "double-barreled" questions, that is, questions that really ask two things at once, such as "Were you in a Jewish School and did your father own a store?"
- Avoid negatives in questions; focus, instead, on the positive. Negative questions are also easily misunderstood.
- *Use clear – and, if necessary, simple language* so that your interviewee will understand your questions and terms, and be prepared to provide a clear definition.
- *Actively listen to what the participant says.* People provide you with information when they believe that you are listening to them.
- Whenever possible, use the informants own words as a means of reflecting back their own responses to encourage further discussion. For example, suppose the informant told you that "We often felt in danger."
You respond. "Really in danger?"
"Oh yes," the informant replies, and then will proceed to explain how.
- *Take notes, but also look at the informant.*
- *Before closing the interview, summarize the main points* with the informant to verify that you correctly understand the information provided.
- *Review the material on the registry form* to confirm you have it right.
- *Say thank you* when you are finished and even send a thank you note to the home afterwards.

4. How to make sure the information is usable: Data that is not able to passed on is useless, and a waste of your time and that of the interviewee, so:

- *Write legibly.*
- If you hear a word you do not understand, make sure to ask for a clarification.
- Get the spelling right (it can make the difference in proving the person's rights)
- Make sure that the registry kit is filled out completely

5. And how to learn even more!!!

- *Focus on the information from the interviewee.* Only afterwards jot down your reactions, including: what new thing did you learn; what did you not expect.
- Transcribe your notes

6. What to do with the information once you get it

- Review the form to make sure it is complete and legible
- Return it to teacher

INTRODUCTION FOR INTERVIEWER AND INTERVIEWEE

The International Rights and Redress Campaign was launched with the support of the Jewish leadership of 16 countries. The campaign seeks to:

- (1) *Record and publicize the mass violations of human rights suffered by Jews under Arab regimes; and*
- (2) *Document the loss of extensive communal and individual assets. Once collected, the documentation will be catalogued and preserved by a special unit in Israel's Ministry of Justice.*

Once collected, this documentation will be catalogued by a special unit in Israel's Ministry of Justice, established to assert the rights of Jews from Arab countries.

It is imperative for anyone who was displaced from an Arab country, or their descendants, to register their stories and record their losses. If we do not do so now, before memories fade and living witnesses pass on, this important part of Jewish history and Sephardic legacy will be lost forever.

Why is it important now to register the family narratives and losses of Jews who were displaced from Arab countries?

- 1) If *Sephardi-Mizrahi* Jews don't tell their story, who will? Our children and grandchildren need to know where our people came from and what they lived through.
- 2) Only 30% of those who left Arab countries are still alive to tell their stories. This is our last, best chance to record this period of Jewish history; to ensure that the story and legacy of 3,500 years of *Sephardi-Mizrahi* Jewish life in the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf is not lost forever.
- 3) We must collect the evidence to prove false those in the Arab world who claim that there were never any large Jewish communities; that Jews were treated well; and that they left of their own free will. We must refute these distortions of history.
- 4) We must register the testimonies and preserve the evidence that will comprise any future claims for reparations for the individual and communal properties and other assets that were expropriated and/or lost.
- 5) We must ensure justice for Jewish refugees from Arab countries, for no peace can be reached without recognition of, and redress for, the uprooting of centuries-old Jewish communities and the displacement of up to one million Jews from North Africa, the Gulf and the Middle East.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERVIEWS

1. Please tell me your name as you use it here in the U.S. and as you were called in your home country.
2. Where were you born and when?
3. Who lived with you, Parents, grandparents, siblings, extended family? What were their names? Who lived near you in your family? How far away?
4. Where did your family live? In what city and what neighborhood?
5. What was the neighborhood like? Please describe it to me. What did it look like, what were the sounds?
6. What was your favorite food as a child? Favorite song? Who did you play with? What was your favorite thing to do as a child? Where was your favorite place? What was your favorite Jewish Holiday?
7. Who taught you to read, do skilled things (sewing, cooking, fixing things, playing games)?
8. What school(s) did you attend? How were you treated in school as a Jew?
9. What was religious life like for you? Did your family practice Judaism through synagogue worship? Would you consider your family assimilated?
10. What business was your family in, how did they make a living?
11. How were your relationships with the neighbors? Jewish and Muslim?
12. What happened to your family as you grew up regarding their business, relations with officials and neighbors?
13. What made your family leave the country? How did you leave?
14. How much time did you have to leave? Were you able to sell or give away personal items? Who did you sell or give them to?
15. What was the most difficult part of leaving? What did you miss most immediately after you left? What do you still miss?
16. What pictures, documents, papers do you have that can help you remember what life was like, what you or your family owned and what you did?

17. Where did you go? Did you stay in Israel, in the transition camps? What was that like? How long were you there? Why did you leave?
18. If interviewee is from Iraqi – Ask about the *Farhoud*
19. If interviewee is from Egypt – Ask about Prison camps
20. If interviewee is from Libya - Ask about Riots
21. Ask about their recollections of living in the in Middle East. What do you remember about 1948, Israel’s establishment, 1956 Suez Canal and Sinai, 1967 – 6 day war ,and 1973 Yom Kippur war. What was it like? What happened to you? What did you see? What did people say to you?



**MAKE SURE EVERY INTERVIEWEE
FILLS OUT TO REGISTRATION FORM**

Activity # 2: HOW TO PREPARE A 'COUNTRY PROFILE'

Students will research and present a 'country profile' on one of the 10 Arab countries in which Jews lived in North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf region. A listing of appropriate websites by country is provided to assist students in this task.

This following suggested order can be useful for teaching and discussion purposes. However, it can be noted that, especially during phases one and two, there was great overlap and a long history of second-class citizenship.

Among the issues to be addressed in a 'country profile' include:

Phase 1: Life As it Was – Before the 20th century

- When and how did Jews arrive in the country?
- How many Jews lived there at the turn of the century? In 1940? Today?
- Describe Jewish life in Arab countries?
- What roles did they play in society economic, political, cultural, etc.
- What are the important contributions of Sephardi-Mizrahi Jews to Judaism?

Phase 2: Changing Jewish Life under Muslim Rule

- Concept of *Dhimmi*
- Discrimination against Jews
- Pogroms
- Expulsions

Phase 3: Flight and Displacement – Life in the 20th Century

- Why did Jews decide to leave?
- When did they leave?
- How did they leave?
- What were they able to bring out?

Phase 4: Resettlement – Building New Lives in Israel and Elsewhere

- Where did they go?
- How were they received in their new country?
- What hardships did they have to endure?
- How are they faring today?

WEBOGRAPHY: COUNTRY SPECIFIC REFERENCE MATERIAL

Aden	Article on the Jews of Iraq and the country of Aden. http://www.dangoor.com/issue76/articles/76019.htm
Aden	Photos from the final days of the Jewish community at Aden. http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~kraut/Family_Photos/pages/Aden.html
Algeria	Personal narrative of an Algerian Jew. http://www.jimena.org/Benhamou.htm
Algeria	Story of the Jews of Algeria from the Museum of the Diaspora. http://www.bh.org.il/communities/Archive/Oran.asp
Algeria	Basic information on Jewish life in Algeria. http://www.kosherdelight.com/Algeria.htm
Algeria	Lists of Jewish Voters from Algeria. http://www.sephardicstudies.org/constantine.html
Egypt	20 th Century exodus of Jews from Egypt. http://www.hsje.org/second_exodus.htm
Egypt	Displacement information and statistics of Jews from Arab countries. from the Historical Society of Jews from Egypt. http://www.hsje.org/displacement_of_Jews_from_Arab_c.htm
Egypt	Newsletters, publications, photos and information about the Jews of Egypt. created by the <i>International Association of Jews from Egypt</i> . www.iajegypt.org
Iran	Article on Jewish life in Persia. http://www.sefarad.org/publication/lm/049/html/page8.html
Iran	History of the Jews of Persia. http://www.parstimes.com/history/jews_persia.html
Iran	The Jews of Iran. http://www.sephardicstudies.org/iran.html
Iraq	Site about Iraqi Jews that left Baghdad during the '60s and '70s. http://www.samba.co.il/iraqijews/
Iraq	'The Scribe' is an online journal of Iraqi/Babylonian Jewish history. http://www.dangoor.com/scribe.html
Iraq	Article on the Jews of Iraq and the country of Aden. http://www.dangoor.com/issue76/articles/76019.htm
Libya	A reference list of books about the Jews of Libya. http://www-geography.berkeley.edu/projectsresources/libya/biblio.html
Libya	Explanation of the history of Jews from Libya with testimonies, newsletters and cultural artifacts. http://geoimages.berkeley.edu/libyajew

Morocco	Article on the Jews of Morocco http://www.sefarad.org/publication/lm/017/morocco.html
Morocco	A long list of links about the Jews of Morocco. http://rickgold.home.mindspring.com/links1.htm#Moroccan%20Jews
Morocco	Focusing on the history, culture and synagogues of Jewish Morocco. http://www.jewishglobe.com/morocco
Morocco	Jewish life in Fez, Morocco. http://www.bh.org.il/communities/Archive/Fez.asp
Morocco	Article by the WZO on Morocco. http://www.wzo.org.il/en/resources/view.asp?id=1446
Sudan	Book on the Jews of Sudan. http://www.orthohelp.com/geneal/book.htm
Syria	Well written article on the history of the Jews of Aleppo, Syria. http://www.manfredlehmann.com/sieg292.html
Tunisia	Article on modern-day Tunisian Jews. http://lexicorient.com/tunisia/hara_kbira.htm
Tunisia	Academic paper on the Jews of Tunisia. http://www.u.arizona.edu/%7Eshaked/Tunisia/Jews.html
Tunisia	Tunisian-Jewish culture http://www.harissa.com/accueileng.htm
Yemen	Well written article on the history of the Jews of Yemen. http://www.manfredlehmann.com/sieg282.html
Yemen	Religious and cultural information on the Jewish community from Yemen. http://www.chayas.com/
Yemen	Site about Temani Heritage, presenting an overview of life for the Jews from Yemen. http://www.temaniheritage.org.uk/history.html