

# WORKSHOP GUIDELINE: JEWISH WARSAW



## RATIONAL

This activity is based on the content of "Jewish Warsaw - A Story About the Human Spirit," an exhibit at the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum. The exhibit describes the fate of Warsaw's Jews and depicts the life Jews lived between the two world wars. The workshop's participants receive innovative, interactive online access to historical content, encouraging them to learn immersively as the stories of young Jews in the interwar period "come to life." During the activity, the participants are repeatedly exposed to dilemmas and challenges that young Jews faced at that time. The activity focuses on four figures who represent a broad ideological cross-section of Jewish youth, and thus it delves into the complexity of Warsaw's Jewish life in those days. The paths of the characters intersect in the course of the activity, highlighting the conflicts and the various ideological positions, so that the participants experience the many different viewpoints and the dynamic, vibrant environment was once typified Jewish Warsaw.

---

## GOALS

- To present content from the exhibit "Jewish Warsaw - A Story About the Human Spirit" by means of an innovative, interactive activity encouraging active learning, presenting questions and dilemmas, promoting discussion and clarification of the topic's current relevance.
- To delve into the historical content from a range of personal points of view that expose the participants to the varied identities that the Jewish world of that time comprised, and to the vibrant lives of Warsaw's young Jews between the two World Wars.

# THE COURSE OF THE ACTIVITY

---

The workshop includes both computer-based or tablet-based activity, for pairs and threes, and activity designed to involve all the participants together.

## **To begin the activity, proceed as follows:**

- Go to the activity site and press the Enter button, which is intended for the teachers\presenters, at the upper right.
- After a brief registration procedure, you will be redirected to the activity's administrative screen. Send the participants the link for entering the activity (located on the right side of the screen).
- From this point, as the participants take part in the activity, you can monitor their progress.
- The activity is divided into the following stages:** An introductory video, assignment of a character, a short poll about beliefs, a deeper look at the character through quotations and photos, an interactive task, uploading a post, debating and results, and a concluding video. The activity once more involves all the participants together when the posts have been uploaded to the social network.
- In the final parts of the activity, the students/participants can advance only after you give permission from the administrative screen.



**FACILITATOR**

This activity invites the participants to journey, as it were, into the lives of young Jews in Warsaw between the World Wars, and these questions will come up: Who were they? What issues occupied their minds? What did they argue over?

To begin with, help the participants briefly share their mental images of Jews their own age in interwar Poland. Those images are important as a way of pointing up stereotypes that the participants apply to Jews of nearly a century ago.

# OPENING

You're invited on a journey into the lives of young Jews in Warsaw between the two World Wars. It's a city where every third person walking down the street is a Jew... Who were they? What issues occupied their minds? What did they argue over?

To begin with, I would like to ask, what are your ideas of what a person's identity is made up of (for example, beliefs, personal tastes, political opinions, and so on). Now try to imagine what makes up the identity of Jews your age in Poland before the Holocaust. What do you know about them? Were they all the same? How did they dress? What was their language? What did they believe in? What did they oppose? What was being Jewish about for them, and how did they express it?

---



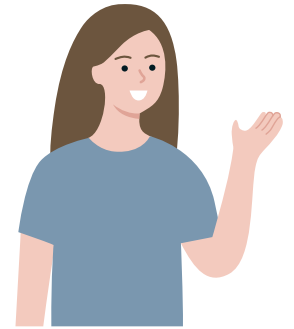
## GUIDELINES

Divide the group into pairs or threes, and then sit them down with computers or tablets.

After receiving the upcoming explanation, the participants are to follow the instructions that will appear on the activity screen. From this point on, you need to check (via the administrative screen), that everyone is managing to progress through the activity. The workshop includes the following stages: an introductory video, assignment of a character, a questionnaire about beliefs, a deeper look at the character through quotations and photos, an interactive task, uploading a post, debating and results, and a concluding video.

The activity once more involves all the participants together when the posts have been uploaded to the social network.

---



## FACILITATOR

During the coming hour, you'll experience the world of young Jews from Warsaw between the two World Wars. All the characters are real, and each has its own story, beliefs, dilemmas, and more. During this activity, you'll receive various tasks that will help you deepen your acquaintance with the character. As you begin, type the invitation code that's been sent to you. Then you'll be asked to type your name and e-mail address. As the activity gets under way, you'll watch a video that briefly provides background about the Jews who lived in Warsaw between the two World Wars, about the movements they belonged to, and about your characters. From there on, you'll receive instructions on the screen explaining how to proceed through the activity.\*



## GUIDELINES

\* The instruction icon is a light bulb at the right side of the screen.

## PART TWO

Now that your characters have "uploaded a post" to the social network, let's look at them together on the main screen.

I'd like to ask a number of you to tell briefly about your characters by using the posts that you've shared.

**To the facilitator:** In this stage, it's important to expand on the various movements/ideologies after the participants have brought them up.

### Possible questions for discussion:

- What have you learned about your characters and the movements/ideologies that they represent? What surprised you?
- Why did you choose the particular posts to represent your characters?
- What did you think of your characters? Could you relate to them? Did you feel opposed to them?



## GUIDELINES

---

## PART THREE

In this last part of the activity, we'll hold a debate among delegates of the four ideological movements. There's a choice of two questions for the debate. Each presents a conflict among young Jews of that time. A. Is Israel the Jewish home for every Jewish person in the world? B. What does it mean to be Jewish?

You can see the dilemmas on the administrative screen after clicking the "**Debate Activity**" button. Choose one of the dilemmas, and then divide the participants into four groups according to their characters (Róża - Orthodoxy; Marek - The Bund; Bracha - Zionist youth movement; Abraham - Poland as homeland). For the coming debate, the screen associates various arguments with each character. Each group is to choose a delegate and prepare for the debate.



## FACILITATOR

---

## THE DEBATE

The four delegates are now asked to sit facing the others. You will receive one minute to present your arguments. Then the delegates of the other movements, and the audience, may respond.

After the stage of arguments, everyone is asked to return to their computers (or tablets) and vote for the delegate who succeeded in convince you towards their position during the debate.



## GUIDELINES



### **Possible questions for discussion:**

·Which arguments convinced you during the debate? Which arguments did you really disagree with?

·Why, in your opinion, did the vote turned out as it did?

·Are the arguments that the delegates raised relevant today? If so, how?

With the end of the activity near, most of you can now discover what became of your character. Then watch the short concluding video.

---

## SUMMARY

### **Question: What new insights did you experience during this activity?**

In the city of Warsaw, roughly a third of the people were Jews. Who were they? How did they live? What did they believe in? The purpose of this activity was to show you the lives of polish Jews before world war ii, so that you would have some familiarity about their lives during the last days before the war and the holocaust descended on them. So that you'll remember them not only as Holocaust victims but as a Jewish community that was alive and vibrant. Those young Jews that you've accompanied through the past hour are typical of a wide variety of youngsters with differing ideologies and beliefs, full of hopes and dreams, fears and hesitancy and belief – just like yourselves.

Abba Kovner – a member of the Hashomer Hatzair movement, a partisan, and a poet – wrote that when he thought of everything the Jewish people had lost during the Holocaust, he was doubly sad for the young generation who will grow up and reach old age and may never even know what they should weep for.

The memory of the Holocaust isn't only about an inconceivable number of victims or about the hideous ways in which they were murdered. It's also about the rich Jewish life that flourished for hundreds of years before the Holocaust and that exists no more.



## GUIDELINES

---