

# Ordinary Objects, Extraordinary Journeys

## A resource for schools



HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL  
DAY TRUST

*Learning from genocide -  
for a better future*

# ORDINARY OBJECTS EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEYS

[ooej.org.uk](http://ooej.org.uk)

## What is Ordinary Objects, Extraordinary Journeys?

Ordinary Objects, Extraordinary Journeys (OOEJ) is an online Holocaust learning resource. It features four people affected by the Holocaust, their stories, objects and journeys.

It was created by Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and The National Holocaust Centre and Museum, together with the Jewish Museum of Greece.

Please note, we recommend the site is suitable for age 13+ for free exploration. However, this learning resource offers safe ways that younger students can also take part.

## Navigating the site

The site has three entry points for users – people, object and journey. All the content can be explored in whatever order you like, and the end of each page gives you options of where to go next.

If you are able to give older students the opportunity to explore the site themselves, this gives them agency to learn about the featured stories according to their own curiosity.

However, we do not recommend this approach for under 13-year-olds, and we know that not all schools will have the facilities available for students to explore the site independently as part of a session. Don't worry - that won't exclude you from making use of this resource.

PEOPLE →  
← OBJECT  
JOURNEY →

## Using OOEJ in school

We have provided ideas below for how you might use OOEJ as part of a history curriculum, or to mark Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January each year. We have also created a PowerPoint featuring some of the site content.

OOEJ is a rich learning resource, and teachers will also have their own ideas about how to use it. We would love to hear about your experience of the site – please let us know about your activities by emailing [education@hmd.org.uk](mailto:education@hmd.org.uk).

## People

The four **people** featured were chosen to provide a diversity of Holocaust experiences, revealing that the Holocaust reached across Europe, affecting Jews of different ages, nationalities, and social status.

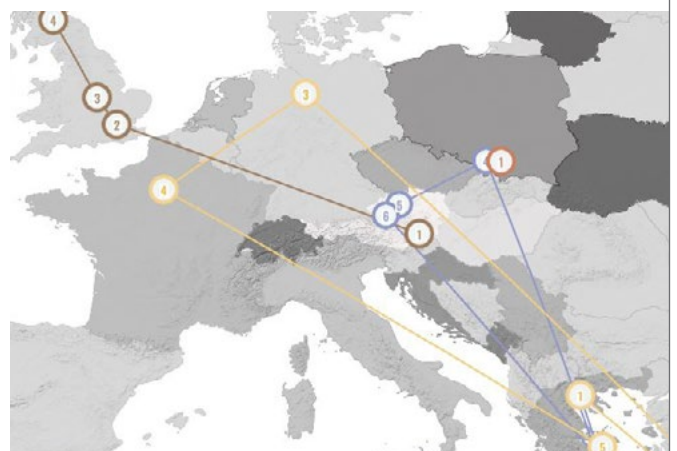
## Objects

The **objects** have been photographed from different angles, allowing students to see close up details. Some have been turned into 3D images that can be explored interactively through the site.



## Journeys

The **journeys** made by each person have been mapped, and on the Journey page you can follow each step of the journey made and learn about what was happening at each point. By clicking on Journey from the home page you can see all four routes overlaid, revealing the breadth and complexity of just these four people's Holocaust experiences.



## Using OOEJ as part of your Holocaust curriculum

OOEJ can support the teaching of the Holocaust through your History curriculum or through a cross-curricular approach. Below is an overview of the contents of the site, and the themes covered to help you weave the site into your scheme of work.

The site does not provide full context of what the Holocaust was, so it is best to provide that before engaging with these stories.

Alongside this resource we have provided a PowerPoint featuring each person, their objects and journeys to make it easy to share the site in the classroom. The slide numbers are provided below so you can easily select the right slides for your session. Teacher notes are included with the slides.

Introductory and overview slides				Slide numbers
Introductory film				Slide 1
Introduce the Ordinary Objects, Extraordinary Journeys project				Slide 2
Overview of the Holocaust in Greece as introduction for Eda and Daniel's stories				Slide 6
Person	Objects(s)	Countries featured	Themes/topics covered	Slide numbers
Julie Weiss	Chess set Medals Photographs Mezuzah Jewellery box Opera glasses	Austria England Scotland	Escape Refugeeism Starting a new life	3-5
Eda de Botton	Socks Bergen-Belsen album also featured	Greece Palestine Germany France	Ghetto Concentration camp Family separation Rescue (Catholics) Reunion	7-11
Julius Feldman	Diary	Poland	Ghetto Concentration camp Resistance Murder	12-16
Daniel Bennahmias	Auschwitz uniform	Greece Poland Austria USA	Greek experience Living in hiding Concentration camps <i>Sonderkommando</i> Death March Liberation	17-20

# Using OOEJ to mark Holocaust Memorial Day

OOEJ can provide a whole school focus for Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January. We have provided some ideas below, you may have your own ideas too.

## 'Ordinary objects' lesson

### Starter

'Ordinary objects' with hidden stories or meaning is a great way in – students could bring in their own meaningful objects to share, and discuss what they would take with them (and why) if they had to flee their home.

### Lesson

Use the site or PowerPoint to explore what some or all of the people featured on OOEJ took with them, and objects that became part of their Holocaust journeys. Students will learn why they had to leave their homes, and what happened to them next. You can use the OOEJ site to look at these objects in detail, and view the interactive 3D images.



### End/Follow up

Explore stories of current refugees, and the items they carry, through the link in the 'Contemporary relevance and taking action' section below.

## Tutor times

A week of 30-minute tutor time sessions could be led by individual tutors, or a History teacher could 'beam' live into all classrooms to deliver the session simultaneously.

<b>Monday</b> <b>Slides 1-5</b>	Watch intro film on PowerPoint What is Holocaust Memorial Day? What is Ordinary Objects, Extraordinary Journeys? Julie Weiss, her objects and journey
<b>Tuesday</b> <b>Slides 6-11</b>	Eda de Botton and Reina's socks
<b>Wednesday</b> <b>Slides 12-16</b>	Julius Feldman, his diary and resistance
<b>Thursday</b> <b>Slides 17-20</b>	Daniel Bennahmias's unique story Content warning – this story features the Auschwitz experiences of the <i>Sonderkommando</i>
<b>Friday</b>	Display planning - featuring the people, objects and maps learnt about OR <b>'Bags and Belongings'</b> - Contemporary stories of refugees, their journeys and belongings

## Year group focus

Each year group could be given one person from the website to learn about. This could be delivered through a drop-day, in tutor times, through special library sessions, or in lesson time in History, RE or English.

Please note the following when deciding which stories to give to different age groups:

- **Julie Weiss' story** is one of escape, so would be more suitable as an introduction.
- **Eda's story** focuses on family, but also features separation, living in ghettos, concentration camp experience and post-survival trauma.
- **Julius Feldman** was murdered by the Nazis. His object is a diary that he wrote in secret and kept hidden. This story is useful for focusing on testimony, documentation and resistance.
- **Daniel Bennahmias' story** is more suitable for older students with some existing knowledge of the Holocaust – it features imprisonment in Auschwitz-Birkenau and enforced work at the crematoria in the *Sonderkommando* unit.



Julius Feldman as a child  
© National Holocaust  
Centre and Museum

## Outcomes

Having learnt about their focus person, students can choose an outcome for their learning – creating a display, making a short film, an assembly to present what they've learnt to another year group, an arts project and exhibition, poetry writing etc.

These outcomes might focus on:

- **The objects** – what can we learn from an object, what lies beneath its 'ordinary' exterior?
- **The people** – Writing projects to share their stories, an art project creating portraits of them.
- **The maps** – With just these four stories mapped together we can see that the Holocaust reaches across Europe and beyond. The Nazis and their collaborators were ruthless in their mission to find, imprison and kill every Jewish person.

Using a large map of Europe, string and staples, students can chart the journeys of all four people. What other Holocaust stories have students learnt about that they can add to the map?

Alternatively you could decide in advance on a whole school outcome – for example:

- A large scale whole school exhibition/display – all students contribute.
- A 'pledge wall' – all students making a pledge for the future in response to what they have learnt.
- A Holocaust Memorial Day event for parents and the local community – students presenting what they've learnt through displays, presentations, performance and readings.
- A series of assemblies with student contributions.





## Contemporary relevance and taking action

On Holocaust Memorial Day we want students to:

- **Learn** more about the Holocaust and genocides
- **Feel** a connection and empathy for those affected
- **Be motivated to take action** as a result of what they have learnt

Explore with students not just what they have learnt from this project, but also what they feel about it. **People are still targeted today** because of their identity – their nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexuality or place in society. There are countries around the world at risk of genocide right now.

### Discuss with students what actions they could take to:

- Continue learning about these situations
- Raise awareness of these issues and this history
- Make the world safer for everybody

Get ideas for actions you can take to create a better future here:

[hmd.org.uk/takeaction](http://hmd.org.uk/takeaction)



Rohingya Muslim refugees flee persecution in Myanmar © Kevin Frayer / Stringer /Getty

As a follow-up activity students may be interested to learn the stories of refugees fleeing danger today, and the 'ordinary objects' that are meaningful to them. For example *The New Humanitarian Newspaper* did a series of articles called '**Bags and Belongings**', featuring people from Syria, Afghanistan, Myanmar and Gambia.

To find more life stories of people affected by the Holocaust, Nazi persecution of other groups, and the genocides that followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur, visit [hmd.org.uk/resources](http://hmd.org.uk/resources). You will also find more schools materials, more artefacts and other resources such as films and poems.

## Important note for teachers - after the lesson:

**Please let us know** that you and your class have marked HMD. We would love to hear about any follow up activities. Please contact the Education Officer on [education@hmd.org.uk](mailto:education@hmd.org.uk). This helps us to know how resources are used in schools, and your school may be featured as a case study when we talk about the range of activities taking place across the UK for HMD.

## Take the learning further:

Learn more about genocides at [hmd.org.uk/holocaustandgenocides](http://hmd.org.uk/holocaustandgenocides).

Find secondary school assemblies and lesson plans at [hmd.org.uk/schools](http://hmd.org.uk/schools).

Find more resources such as life stories, films and activities at [hmd.org.uk/resources](http://hmd.org.uk/resources).



@HMD\_UK



HMD.UK



holocaustmemorialdaytrust

The Ordinary Objects, Extraordinary Journeys website was created by Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, The Jewish Museum of Greece and The National Holocaust Centre and Museum.



HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL  
DAY TRUST

*Learning from genocide -  
for a better future*



THE JEWISH  
MUSEUM  
OF GREECE



THE NATIONAL  
HOLOCAUST CENTRE  
AND MUSEUM

The project was funded by Arts Council England, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and Leon Greenman Charitable Trust.



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



INTERNATIONAL  
HOLOCAUST  
REMEMBRANCE  
ALLIANCE

Leon Greenman  
Charitable Trust

## Find out more...

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust: [hmd.org.uk](http://hmd.org.uk)  
Discover resources for educators and other materials for  
your activities: [hmd.org.uk/resources](http://hmd.org.uk/resources)

[hmd.org.uk](http://hmd.org.uk)  
[enquiries@hmd.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@hmd.org.uk)  
020 7785 7029

[hmd\\_uk](https://twitter.com/hmd_uk)  
 [hmd.uk](https://www.facebook.com/hmd.uk)  
 [holocaustmemorialdaytrust](https://www.instagram.com/holocaustmemorialdaytrust)  
 [linkedin.com/company/hmd-uk](https://www.linkedin.com/company/hmd-uk)

*Learning from genocide - for a better future*